

**Preparing for Reunion and Reintegration**

**OPERATION:**

**Military**



**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

**Guide**





# OPERATION: BOOTS OFF

## *Operation: Boots Off* Guide

*Operation: Boots Off* supports the *Operation: Military Kids* initiative.



Material is provided by:

The 4-H/Army Youth Development Project,  
a partnership of U.S. Army Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS)  
National 4-H Headquarters,  
Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service,  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction  
under special project number 2008-48661-04797.



**June 2009**



# Operation: Boots Off Guide

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	7
Introductory Letter .....	8

### Chapter One: Introduction

• What is the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project? .....	11
• What is Operation: Military Kids? .....	12
• What is <i>Operation: Boots Off</i> ? .....	13
• What is the <i>Operation: Boots Off</i> Guide? .....	16

### Chapter Two: Facilitator Information

• Implementation of <i>Operation: Boots Off</i> – Coming Home .....	21
• Youth Development Characteristics .....	22
• Essential Elements of Youth Development .....	25
• Character .....	26
• Life Skills Model .....	26
• Experiential Learning Model .....	28
• Registration Setup .....	30
• About Chapters Three, Four, and Five (and Appendix 3) .....	31
• Facilitator Tips .....	32

### Chapter Three: *Operation: Boots Off* – Coming Home Activities

• Schedules .....	37
• Session 1 – Getting Acquainted .....	38
• Session 2 – Redeployment .....	39
• Session 3 – Reunion and Reintegration .....	40
• Session 4 – Normalcy .....	41

## **Chapter Four: *Operation: Boots Off* – Reconnecting Activities**

- Session 1 – Getting Acquainted..... 93
- Session 2 – Connecting..... 94
- Session 3 – Looking Back – Moving Forward..... 95
- Session 4 – Closing..... 96

## **Chapter Five: *Operation: Boots Off* – Time Together Activities**

- Planning and Doing ..... 119
- Evaluation Form..... 121

## **Appendixes**

- Appendix 1 – Handouts ..... 125
- Appendix 2 – Registration Materials ..... 143
- Appendix 3 – Additional Activities ..... 159
- Appendix 4 – Resources and References ..... 172
- Appendix 5 – Items for Local Reproduction..... 176

# Acknowledgments

## CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

**Carole Agnello**, Youth Development Specialist, Army CYSS Center of Expertise, FMWRC-CYS Services, Army CYSS

**Kelly Oram**, Curriculum Development Specialist, 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County

**Mary Jo Williams**, Character Education Specialist, 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, University of Missouri

## CONTENT AND EDITORIAL REVIEW

**Darrin Allen**, Operation: Military Kids National Coordinator, 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, Virginia Polytechnic University

**Nancy Campbell**, Youth Education Support Services Program Manager, FMWRC-CYS Services, Army CYSS

**CPT Gary Charlton**, 174th Fighter Wing

**Nora Clouse**, Outreach Services Program Manager Community Based Services, FMWRC-CYS Services, Army CYSS

**Amanda Downey**, Operation READY Educator, Army Community Service, Ft Drum

**Angela Huebner**, Associate Professor, Department of Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic University

**C. Eddy Mentzer**, Interim 4-H Military Partnership Coordinator, Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture

**Deborah Stellfox**, Operation READY Program Manager/Family Readiness Coordinator, Army Community Service, Ft Drum

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

**Shelly Aiken**, New York State National Guard Youth Program Coordinator  
Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Jefferson County (CCEJC)

**Chaplain Olsen**, New York National Guard

**Kristy Urdiano**, New York State Operation: Military Kids Project Coordinator

**Allison Allen, Cynthia Burleson, Michelle Czemia, Kathy Foley, Jackie Madera, Nancy Marcussen, Tania Philpot**, 2006 members of the Ft Drum 1st BCT Steering Committee

**Mona Johnson**, Director, Teaching and Learning Support, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction





Dear Military Child & Youth Professional:

Thank you for utilizing the *Operation: Boots Off* Guide and the curriculum it contains.

It's an important part of the Operation: Military Kids (OMK) initiative, a collaboration of national, state, and local partners that supports the Families of Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserve Service Members who've been mobilized or deployed in Overseas Contingency Operations.

The objective of the *Operation: Boots Off* curriculum is to prepare kids for the return of their Service – a stressful time for any military Family. *Operation: Boots Off* helps young people map out and implement individualized plans that will assist them in navigating the Reunion and Reintegration process in a meaningful and educational way.

Sincerely,

M.–A. Lucas  
Director, Child, Youth and School Services  
HQ Department of Army

C. Eddy Mentzer  
Military Partnership Coordinator  
Cooperative State Research Education  
Extension Service/U.S. Department of Agriculture





**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Chapter One

Introduction



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## What is the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project?

Army Child, Youth & School Services (CYSS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) share a common mission of providing positive youth development programs to build the skills and competencies youth need to lead productive, healthy, and self-sufficient lives wherever they reside. These two federal agencies created a partnership – the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project – to accomplish their common mission and to make efficient use of public resources.

National 4-H Headquarters at USDA/CSREES provides leadership for 4-H Youth Development Programs in Land Grant universities and 3,150 U.S. counties as part of the Cooperative Extension System. Youth aged 5-19 participate in a wide variety of 4-H programs led by youth development professionals and volunteers across the country. Army CYSS programs provide quality child care and youth programs on Army installations worldwide for children and youth ages 4 weeks through 18 years.

The 4-H/Army Youth Development partnership assists Army CYSS program staff to provide predictable, quality youth programs and introduces 4-H to military youth on installations and in communities worldwide. The partnership also makes significant contributions to:

- Mission readiness – Service Members focus on their mission, knowing their children are in safe and supportive environments with caring adults.
- Reaching new audiences – 4-H reaches a new audience of youth not previously served.
- Wise uses of public resources – Federal agencies improve programs and use tax dollars effectively.

The partnership is successful for several reasons:

- The CSREES has Cooperative Agreements with five universities to implement the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project. Through these agreements, faculty are contracted to administer programs, develop educational materials, conduct trainings, and provide technical assistance for Army youth programs.
- 4-H Youth Development and Technology specialists are on loan from their universities for assignments at six Army Regional offices, working directly with regional Army CYSS staff to assist all installations served by their Region.
- Each state has identified one State 4-H Military Liaison to coordinate military support efforts. Programs are increasingly integrated into the ongoing work and mission of Cooperative Extension.
- Army CYSS staff members have positively embraced the benefits of the partnership and opened the doors for programming on installations around the world. Such support has resulted in the establishment of 450 4-H clubs at 125 installations worldwide; the enrollment of almost 12,000 new 4-H members; and the involvement of 1,000 Army staff in implementing 4-H Clubs.



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

Through the efforts of the partnership, Active Duty Service Members are better prepared to focus on the mission at hand, assured their children and Families are being supported at home. At the same time, CSREES is reaching out to a whole new audience of youth and parents who had not previously been involved in 4-H.

## *What is Operation: Military Kids?*

Operation: Military Kids focuses on those young people whose parents are being called to duty in increasing numbers by the National Guard and Reserve for extended assignments. While these youth may or may not relocate, their lives are changed dramatically when parents suddenly are mobilized or deployed and leave for extended and often dangerous assignments. Families of National Guard and Reserve are usually not on military installations, but rather dispersed throughout the United States in rural areas, small towns, suburbs, and cities. In addition, many live 50 to 100 miles away from any other National Guard or Reserve Families and from the normal military support mechanisms. They may lack connections to other military Families and youth who are experiencing deployments and separations. Until deployment, these Families have been civilians and may have had little or no experience dealing with the military. Clearly, they face new challenges and risks.

### **Objectives of the Operation: Military Kids initiative:**

- Create community support networks for military youth “in our own backyard” when Service Member parents are deployed.
- Deliver recreational, social and educational programs for military youth living in civilian communities.
- Support military kids coping with the stress of knowing their deployed parents may be in harm’s way.
- Collaborate with schools to ensure faculties and staff are attuned to the unique needs of military students whose parents are deployed.
- Educate the public on how the deployment cycle affects Service Members, Families, kids, and the community as a whole.
- Incorporate military Families into ongoing Partner Programs offered by 4-H Clubs, Boys & Girls Clubs, The American Legion, and other civic organizations in the communities where they live.

The Operation: Military Kids initiative includes four major core support elements – Ready, Set, Go! Training, Speak Out for Military Kids, Mobile Technology Labs, and Hero Packs Project. More information can be found on these Operation: Military Kids elements at [www.operationMilitarykids.org](http://www.operationMilitarykids.org). *Operation: Boots Off* and *Operation: Boots On* are additional Operation: Military Kids support program options.



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## *Operation: Military Kids Partners*



*Operation: Military Kids* is successful because of its collaborative effort on national, state, and local levels. The national or core partners for *Operation: Military Kids* are Army CYSS, National Guard, Reserve, The American Legion, USDA/CSREES – National 4-H Headquarters, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and the Military Child Education Coalition. A core partner is an organization that has made a commitment at the national level to participate in and support the *Operation: Military Kids* initiative.

State 4-H Military Liaisons connect national partners to individual states. Each State 4-H Military Liaison serves as *Operation: Military Kids* Project Director. He or she also assembles an *Operation: Military Kids* team composed of representatives from core partnerships and the state department of education. The team creates long-term state and community support networks that include businesses, civic, service, and faith-based organizations. Its dual mission is to educate citizens on the impact of war and deployments on military children and Families, as well as to develop and deliver educational programs for youth and Families of deployed Service Members.

## *What is Operation: Boots Off?*

“Congratulations, it’s official – your Service Member is **coming home!**” That’s the statement military Families long to hear as they navigate the deployment cycle of their Service Member. But even though military Families are filled with joy, they’re often also fearful.

To be mission-ready, the deployed military Family member had to move from:

- Active-duty or civilian job to full-time warrior
- Security to insecurity
- Comfort to discomfort
- Order to chaos
- Law to lawlessness
- Cooperation to survival
- Trust to mistrust
- Family to “me”

For a Service Member who’s been gone for ten weeks, six months, or more than a year to re-engage with the Family left behind, isn’t an easy task. Because the Family has evolved during the Service Member’s absence, there will be a “new” normal. Learning to live together again after an extended separation means that Reunion and Reintegration can be at least as stressful as deployment, if not more. However, if handled in a healthy manner, it can be a time to reconnect on a new, more satisfying level.



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

A Service Member faces serious challenges upon returning home:

- Replace hi op-tempo of war with another “high”
- Define personal meaning and purpose outside of combat
- Move from simplicity of self to complexity of Family
- Overcome alienation with Family, friends, and community
- Accept that Family is more independent, with new roles and rules
- Make peace with self, faith, and others

Most military Families experience four phases during the Reunion and Reintegration process: Redeployment, Reunion, Reintegration, and Normalcy.

**Redeployment** is the Anticipation Phase. The weeks and days before Reunion are filled with mounting excitement, tension, and nervousness. Days may be spent in busy preparation for a spouse’s return. Fantasies of an even better relationship may surface and take the place of reality as the day of homecoming draws closer. When the experience of homecoming fades, it’s often followed by a stage of renewal and the possible renegotiations of roles and responsibilities. (See Guide Appendixes for more helpful tips on planning for a Service Member’s homecoming).

**Reunion** is the Honeymoon and Disruption Phase. During the honeymoon there are feelings of euphoria and excitement and relief. Families catch up and share experiences and begin to reestablish intimacy. The honeymoon usually lasts six to eight weeks until disruption by the first serious disagreement. Pressure is intensified, expectations are unmet, and Families are sensitive to each other’s presence. Reality hits.

**Reintegration** is the Stabilization Phase. The time it takes Families to stabilize with new routines, roles, and goals can vary widely. Many experience only minor difficulty in adjusting to new routines. Readjustment may be a longer process for others.

**Normalcy** is the Acceptance Phase. Families have navigated the Reunion and Reintegration process, adjusted to changes, and found satisfaction in their “new” post-deployment lives.



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

In navigating the Reunion and Reintegration process, a Service Member needs:

- To be welcomed home
- Affirmation for what he or she did
- Patient support
- Encouragement to re-engage
- Opportunities to succeed
- A commitment for quality communication

On the other side of Reunion and Integration, Family members must address:

- Their Service Member not readjusting to civilian life well
- Inability to understand why actions or situations cause odd behavior by their Service Member, especially if they haven't been kept in the mission information loop
- Loss of their feeling of independence
- Renegotiating household roles and responsibilities
- Next deployment dates looming
- High levels of stress

To successfully navigate the Reunion and Reintegration process, a Family needs:

- Acknowledgement
- Recognition
- Quality communication
- Understanding that the structure of the Family needs to stay
- Time to become a real Family again



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## What is the *Operation: Boots Off* Guide?

Overseas Contingency Operations have increased the number and frequency of military deployments. State 4-H Military Liaisons have worked with Army CYS Services and National 4-H Headquarters to develop a coordinated response for affected children and youth of Active Duty, National Guard and Reserve Service Members.

This *Operation: Boots Off* Guide is designed for use with groups of military children and youth during after-school programs, lock-ins, Family Readiness Group meetings and events, special military days, or other situations where youth may need to prepare for reunion and reintegration with their Service Members. *Operation: Boots Off* can be used by Operation: Military Kids volunteers, military Child & Youth professionals, National Guard or Reserve Family & Youth Coordinators, and others with interest in supporting youth whose loved ones are deployed.

The curriculum is written to prepare for the four Phases of Reunion and Reintegration:

1. **Redeployment**
2. **Reunion**
3. **Reintegration**
4. **Normalcy**

This Guide is divided into three distinct experiences that can be as long as two days or as short as a few hours.

<p><b><i>Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home</i></b></p> <p>A fifteen-hour workshop recommended for 12 to 18-year-olds; short sessions can be combined to meet group needs, availability and space as determined by the planning team.</p>	<p><b><i>Operation: Boots Off – Reconnecting</i></b></p> <p>An eight-hour sequel to <b><i>Coming Home</i></b> for returning Service Members and their children to share with others who participated.</p>	<p><b><i>Operation: Boots Off – Time Together</i></b></p> <p>Four separate outings or activities scheduled quarterly over twelve months; the planning team for <b><i>Coming Home</i></b> helps everyone brainstorm ideas and facilitates events for groups or individual families to enjoy.</p>
---	---	---



# Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Guide contains step-by-step instructions for implementing the *Operation: Boots Off* curriculum. Each section contains a variety of activities that take participants through a military Family's reunion and reintegration process, and includes:

- Suggested lists of materials needed.
- Descriptions of how activities should be conducted.
- Debrief questions based on the Experiential Learning Model to help participants get the most from the activities.

The Guide Appendixes provide additional resources that may be used to enhance the *Operation: Boots Off* curriculum.

*Coming Home* was developed in support of Army CYS Services and National 4-H outreach efforts. The goal is to provide military youth with skills they may find useful during homecoming of their Service Members. Each session follows the activity-based 4-H Experiential Learning Model.

## **Special Needs Awareness**

Military Child & Youth programs require awareness of physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and dietary restrictions of all youth in its programs. If any of these restrictions exist, specific procedures should be followed to provide safe and healthy environments for learning. This may require gathering information about particular special needs and making accommodations before each program.

Mental health professionals should assist in handling emotions that may be result from homecoming and participation in *Operation: Boots Off*. Military Family Life Consultants (MFLCs) are available to work with planning teams and attend workshops or activities; Child & Youth professionals should be able to arrange for an MFLC's participation.







**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Chapter Two

Facilitator Information



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Implementation of *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*

***Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*** will help military youth:

- Understand the process of their individual Families' Service Member homecomings.
- Develop skills for homecoming and beyond.
- Learn how to make the homecoming positive for themselves and their Families.
- Share with others who have similar experiences.

### **Why should you conduct *Coming Home*?**

*Coming Home* helps military kids better plan for their loved ones' homecomings. These times, although joyful, can be challenging for young people, and it's important for them to map out plans for success.

### **Where should you conduct *Coming Home*?**

*Coming Home* is designed for use with groups of military school-age, middle school and teen youth during lock-ins, Family Readiness Group events, and on special military days. It can also be used to reinforce Speak Out for Military Kids, and in other situations where youth may benefit from learning about the phases of homecoming. *Coming Home* can be used by Operation: Military Kids volunteers, Child & Youth program staff, National Guard or Reserve personnel with the background and interest in supporting youth who's Service Members are returning. The Guide is designed in 2 to 2½-hour sessions that can be used in a variety of ways. Sample agendas are included in Appendix 4. The experience can be conducted with a group as small as ten or as large as sixty.

### **How should you prepare to conduct *Coming Home*?**

Prior to planning *Coming Home*, make sure that adult staff and volunteers understand the seriousness of the issue. It may be helpful to practice a few of the activities to help them understand what will take place during *Coming Home*. It's important that they understand the stresses military Families may experience during the homecoming.

This is a very emotional time for military Families. Family members and youth may have a difficult time talking about their situations. Everyone involved in *Coming Home* must consider what they say about war or the United States' political agenda. Negative comments, although unintentional, can be very hurtful to those who have Family members in the military.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Youth Development Characteristics

When working with young people, it's important to provide:

- Consistent and comprehensive opportunities to develop physical, social, emotional, and cognitive abilities.
- Age-appropriate experiences that promote positive youth development outcomes.

Following are general characteristics for youth of various ages. It's okay if an individual doesn't fit neatly into the categories, because everybody's different. And although young people develop at different rates, they all eventually become adults.

### Characteristics of 9 to 11-Year-Olds

#### Physical

- Girls are generally as much as two years ahead of boys in physical maturity
- Girls may be entering puberty
- Increases in body strength and hand dexterity
- Improved coordination and reaction time

#### Social

- Begin to see parents and authority figures as fallible human beings
- Rituals, rules, secret codes and made-up languages are common
- Enjoy being members of clubs
- Increased interest in competitive sports
- Prefer to be with members of the same sex
- Emotional
- Outbursts of anger are less frequent
- May belittle or defy adult authority
- Spirited, with boundless energy.

#### Intellectual

- Interested in reading fictional stories, magazines, and how-to project books
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- May be very interested in discussing a future career
- Fantasize and daydream about the future
- Capable of understanding concepts without having direct hands-on experience



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Characteristics of 12 to 14-Year-Olds

### **Physical**

- Exhibit a wide range of sexual maturity and growth patterns between genders and within gender groups
- Exhibit rapid changes in physical appearance
- Growth of hands, feet, nose, and ears may be faster than arms, legs, and face, causing concern for appearance and clumsiness

### **Social**

- Interested in activities involving opposite sex; learning to live with opposite sex
- Look more to peers than parents; seek peer recognition
- Seek acceptance and trust
- Tend to regard sex in a depersonalized way
- Search for adult role models; may belong to fan clubs
- Tend to reject ready-made solutions from adults in favor of their own
- Question authority and family values

### **Emotional**

- Compare themselves to others
- Concerned about physical development and emerging sexuality
- See themselves as always on center stage
- Work on forming sense of continuity between inner and outer selves
- Body changes can set up situations of great embarrassment
- Concerned about social graces, grooming, and being liked by friends.
- Abandon view of parents as all powerful
- Strive for independence, yet want and need parents' help
- Need information for making decisions
- Seek privacy from parents and other adults
- Want to be part of something important

### **Intellectual**

- Find justice and equality to be important issues
- Think abstractly and hypothetically
- Develop skills using logic; understand cause and effect
- Solve problems that have more than one variable



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Characteristics of 15 to 18-Year-Olds

### Physical

- Concerned about body image
- More similar to peers in size and maturity
- Tend to have realistic view of limits to which body can be tested

### Social

- Tend to romanticize sexuality, but moving toward a more realistic understanding
- Search for intimacy
- Test sexual attractiveness
- Make commitments
- Commit to follow through with service
- See adults as fallible
- Desire respect
- Apt to reject goals set by others
- Renegotiate relationships
- Want adult leadership roles

### Emotional

- Desire respect
- Begin to accept and enjoy own uniqueness, but still seek status and approval of peers
- Look for confidence of others in decisions
- Develop own set of values and beliefs
- Take on multiple roles
- Gain autonomy
- Introspective
- See selves from viewpoint of others
- Take fewer risks
- Initiate and carry out tasks without supervision of others
- Search for career possibilities
- Desire roles in determining what happens in world

### Intellectual

- Master abstract thinking; can imagine impact of present behavior on the future
- Enjoy demonstrating acquired knowledge
- Consider many perspectives on a given issue
- Develop theories to explain how things happen
- Create new possibilities from information
- Lose patience with meaningless activity



(Source: Volunteers – The Foundation of Youth Development Internet Course, University of Missouri, 4-H Center for Youth Development)

# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## 4-H Essential Elements for Youth Development

Throughout a Family member's deployment, a young person can develop many of the characteristics needed to prepare for the eventual homecoming. These are incorporated in the essential elements of **Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity**.

### **Belonging**

- Youth need to know they are cared about and accepted by others.
- They also need to experience a sense of physical and emotional safety and to feel a sense of connection to others in the group.
- Research shows that it's important for youth to have opportunities for consistent long-term relationships with adults other than their parents.
- Research also suggests that a sense of belonging may be the single most powerful positive ingredient in the lives of children and youth.

### **Mastery**

- Youth need to successfully develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes, followed by their competent demonstration.
- In order to develop self-confidence and a sense that they matter, young people need to feel like they are capable.
- Mastery is sometimes called self-efficacy.
- Settings that promote self-efficacy and mastery encourage youth to take risks, seek out challenges, and focus on self-improvement rather than comparing themselves to their peers.

### **Independence**

- Youth need to know that they're able to influence people and events through decision-making and action.
- Independence refers to adolescents' growing ability to think, feel, make decisions, and act on their own.
- By gaining a sense of independence, youth develop responsibility and discipline.

### **Generosity**

- Youth need to feel that their lives have meaning and purpose.
- They need opportunities to connect to their communities and learn how to serve and give back to others.
- As part of this process, they gain an understanding of others' needs and how to respond to those needs.
- Generosity may also include the development of values such as compassion and tolerance for diversity.



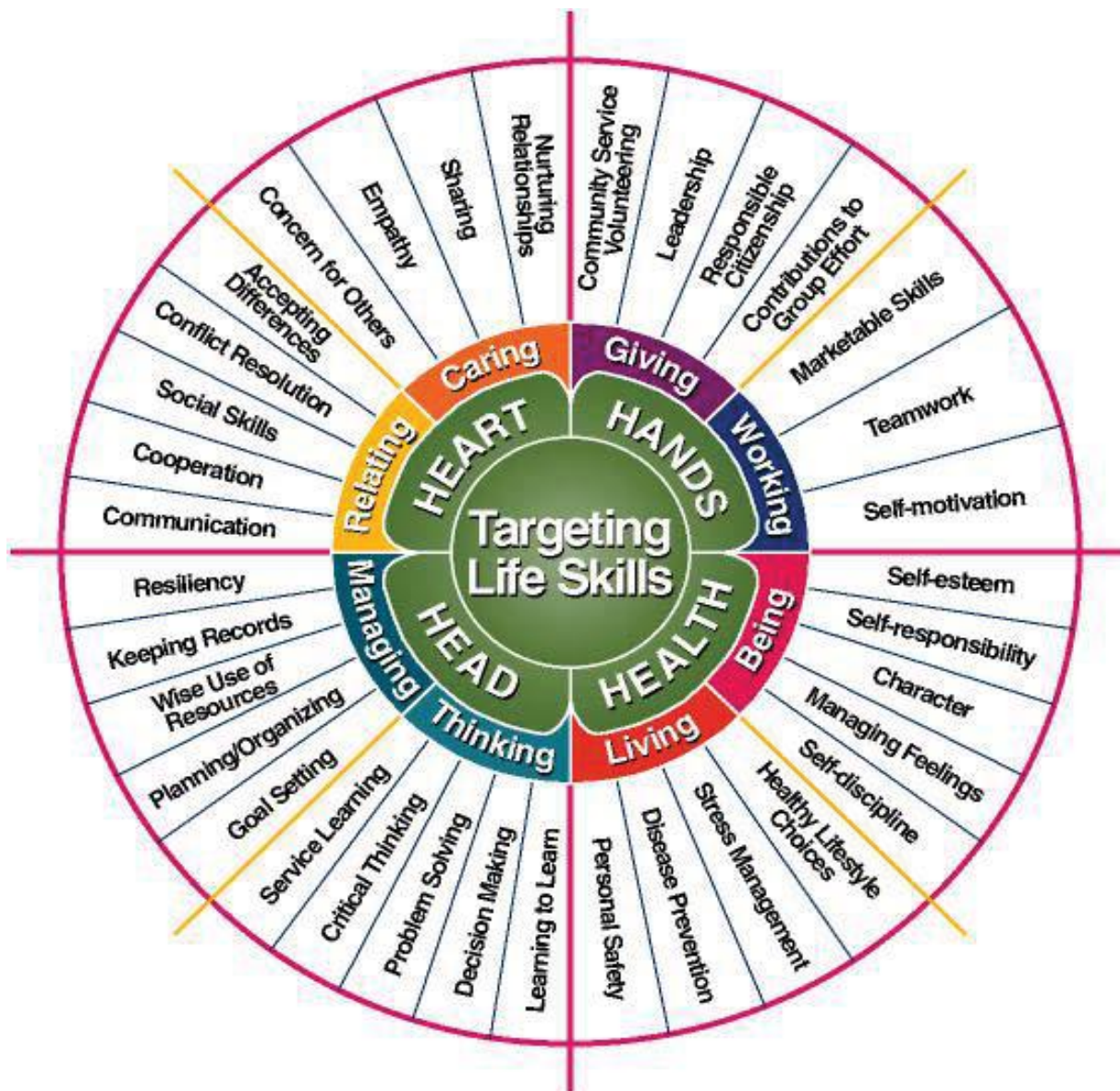
# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Character

People of character are looked up to and admired. They not only know the difference between right and wrong, but also try to do what's right. People of character set good examples and make the world a better place. Everything a person does – thinking critically, making decisions, learning new skills, building relationships – is positively affected when character is the foundation. (See more about character in Appendix 1.)

## Life Skills Model

Life skills are competencies that help people function well in their environments.



## Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

A goal of 4-H & military youth programming is to help develop everyday life skills that will support transition into adulthood, such as:

- Decision-making
- Wise use of resources
- Communication
- Accepting differences
- Leadership
- Developing useful and marketable skills
- Making healthy lifestyle choices
- Self responsibility

There are many other important skills that youth develop, but they can't be mastered in a single experience. Mastery only occurs after trying, making mistakes, and trying again. Life skills are learned in sequential steps and are related to the age and development of the learner. 4-H & military youth programming teaches life skills through hands-on activities using the Experiential Learning Model. The sequential steps of the Experiential Learning Model help youth identify what they've learned and apply it to other situations.

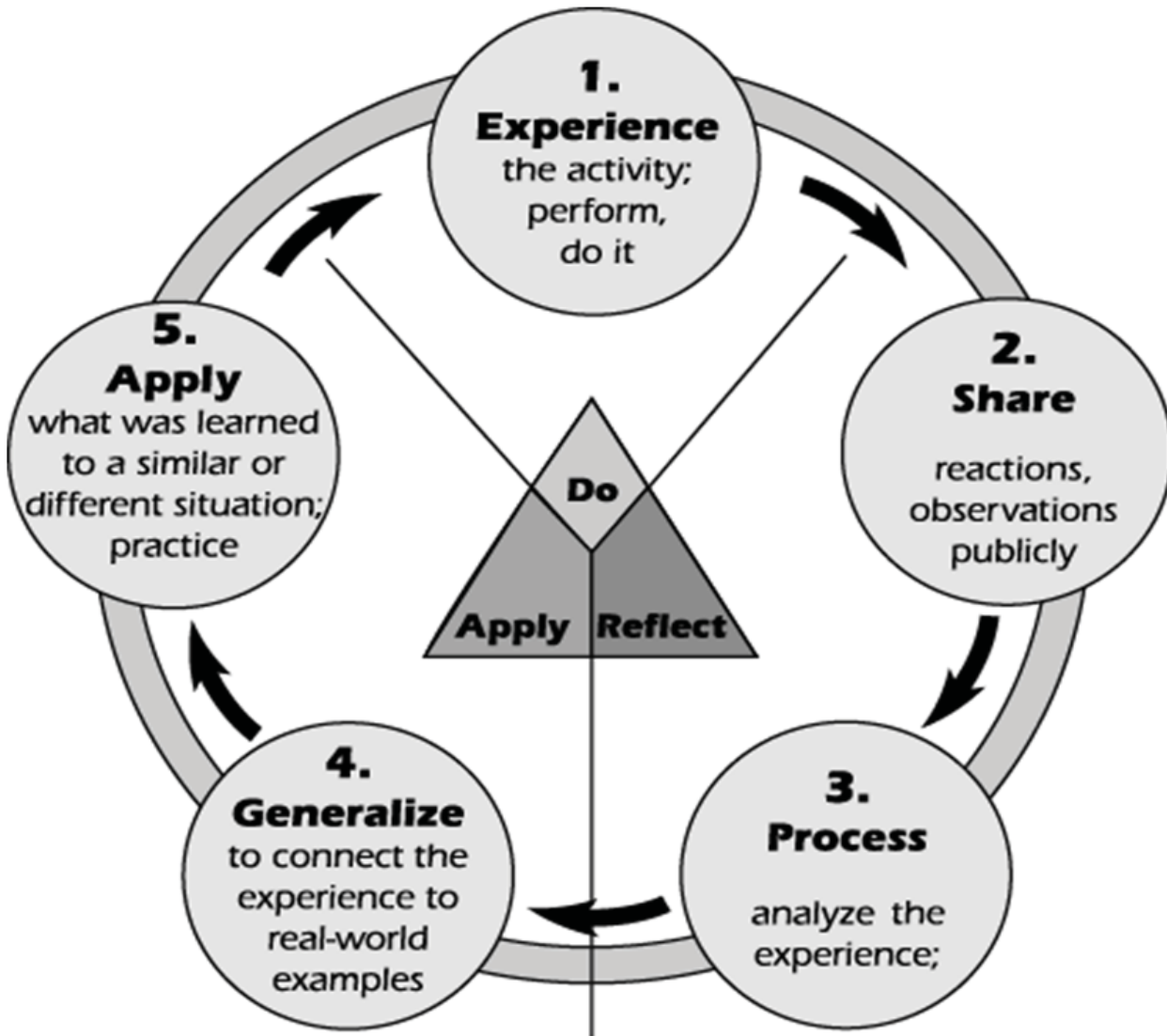
(Source: Patricia A., Hendricks, Targeting Life Skills, Iowa State University, 1996)



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Experiential Learning Model

The instructional format of this *Operation: Boots Off* Guide is based on the Experiential Learning Model used by 4-H to teach life skills. Activities using this approach are based on targeted goals – the life skills you wish to teach. The Model's five-part process lets participants do something, reflect on the experience, and apply what was learned.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Do Something

**Step One** is a planned experience that offers opportunity to learn a specific skill. It should be something new for participants and push them beyond previous experiences.

## Reflect on the Experience

**Step Two** begins with asking questions that get individuals to share reactions, observations, and feelings about the experience. Questions focus on the senses – seeing, feeling, hearing, tasting – and on levels of difficulty.

**Step Three** addresses how the experience was actually carried out. The group is encouraged to identify recurring themes. Questions prompt discussion about process, exploring how participants actually did the activity and how problems were solved.

## Apply What Was Learned

**Step Four** lets participants begin applying what was learned to what they already knew and determine how the experience was important for them. Listing key terms that capture the learning can be a helpful exercise. Questions encourage general discussion. What was learned from the experience? How does this new information relate to other things participants have learned?

**Step Five** addresses the “now what” of the experience, applying information learned to other situations. Questions are open-ended and practical. How can participants use what they learned? How might they apply the experience to other parts of their lives?

Each activity session in the *Operation: Boots Off* Guide is formatted to follow the **do**, **reflect**, and **apply** process of the Experiential Learning Model.

- Instructions to **DO** (the Experience step) are color-coded in orange.
- Instructions to **REFLECT** (the Share and Process steps) are color-coded in blue.
- Instructions to **APPLY** (the Generalize and Apply steps) are color coded in green.

For more information on the experiential learning model, refer to the 4-H 101 curriculum, found on the 4-H Military Partnership website, or visit <http://www.experientiallearning.ucdavis.edu/default.shtml>.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Registration Setup

### Supplies

- For Registration: Tables, chairs, pens; team participant list\*
- For Ice-breakers: Instructions and specified supplies
- For Workshops: Easel pad paper, markers, note paper; folders for each participant
- For Teams: Attendance sheets (one per session)\*; puzzle pieces\*
- For Participants: Registration packets\*; Certificates of Completion\*

*\* Items for local reproduction – including signs, templates, cover pages, forms, lists, charts, and handouts – are included in Attachments 1, 2 and 5.*

### Planning Group Tasks:

1. Determine the number of groups (10 -15 members per group).
2. Create participant nametags; color-coding each group will help in group management throughout the workshop.
3. Assign participants to groups; this generates attendance rosters for group leaders.
4. Identify a workshop facilitator; this person oversees the event and serves as spokesperson at large sessions (or designates the task).
5. Identify a Military Family Life Consultant; this person is a licensed social worker and a military contractor; he or she is available in case a participant requires further support.
6. Identify military personnel; it's helpful to have an Active Duty, National Guard or Reserve Service Member, spouse, or military retiree who can support participants when they encounter difficult Reunion and Reintegration issues or feelings.
7. Identify one or two facilitators for each small group; an ideal pairing is a military representative and an adult volunteer or youth development professional.
8. Identify ice-breakers.
9. Designate welcome roles.
10. Secure needed technology equipment.
11. Identify ground rules.

### Group Leader Tasks:

1. Register team members to their assigned groups.
2. Collect necessary registration paperwork; each participant should have a completed set of forms from Appendix 2.
3. Gather the group together by distributing nametags.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## About Chapters Three, Four, and Five (and Appendix 3)

Session Guides for **Coming Home**, **Reconnecting**, and **Time Together** are meant to provide a starting point for *Operation: Boots Off*. Each session takes on its own character based on the valuable knowledge and experience of the planning committee.

### Chapter Three

**Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home** is a fifteen-hour workshop recommended for 12 to 18-year-olds.

### Chapter Four

**Operation: Boots Off – Reconnecting** is an eight-hour workshop sequel to **Coming Home** for returning Service Members and their children to share with others who participated. Activities and reflection questions build upon each other to (1) prompt discussion on how the Family unit adjusted to deployment; and (2) explore how additional adjustments might be beneficial.

### Chapter Five

**Operation: Boots Off – Time Together** is four separate outings or activities scheduled quarterly over twelve months. These may be of any length, from half-day to overnight. Youth participating in **Coming Home** will brainstorm ideas for **Time Together**, with formal Action Planning near the end of the workshop.

### Appendix 3

**Additional Activities** are provided to supplement a session or to be used in place of suggested activities that you feel might not be as successful with your particular group.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Facilitator Tips

### Selecting Facilitators and Group Leaders

Try to include OMK military-affiliated partners as group leaders; people with military experience have especially relevant anecdotes and insights to share.

If returned Service Members serve as facilitators, it's important to consider their needs, as well; they may still be adjusting to "normal" life just like the participants. For example, many Service Members:

- Are easily startled by loud noises.
- Are uncomfortable in big crowds.
- Need an "adrenaline" rush.
- Experience trouble finding the middle ground in situations.
- Struggle with the importance of "silly games" compared to what they've experienced.
- Need to focus on the present and the future, not the past.

### Prior to Workshops

Each workshop requires a great deal of preparation, so be sure to read this entire Guide before starting. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with every session well in advance. After reviewing materials, you'll need to gather supplies, make copies, confirm number of participants, and prepare workshop space. Ensure that all members of the facilitation team know their roles and responsibilities.

### Lead-up Activities

It's tough to jump into workshop sessions that involve asking pointed questions, revealing personal thoughts, or touching each other when a group simply isn't ready. Lead up activities provide time to establish rapport and have fun, allowing a group to form comfortably in a gradual, non-threatening manner.

Time allotted to icebreakers and get-acquainted exercises is well spent and should be added to session times specified in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Suggested session times are for activity completion; they don't include transitions such as getting the group into circles, lines, or seated at tables. Times also vary depending on group size.

### Introductions

Introductions help set the stage for a positive learning environment and develop relationships among the learners. Introductions can be brief – people simply tell their name – or if time allows and the group is small, you may want to have everyone tell something about themselves.

### Icebreakers

Suggested in Chapters Three and Four and Appendix 5, icebreakers help set the mood for learning by enhancing group dynamics. You can add other icebreakers which relate to a particular workshop.



# Chapter 2 - Facilitator Information

## Workshop Sessions

Every workshop session is similarly arranged and includes:

- Objectives
- Activity time
- Supply list
- Facilitator's script (view these only as a guide)
- Two or three activities (each written to utilize the Experiential Learning Model)
- Reflection questions

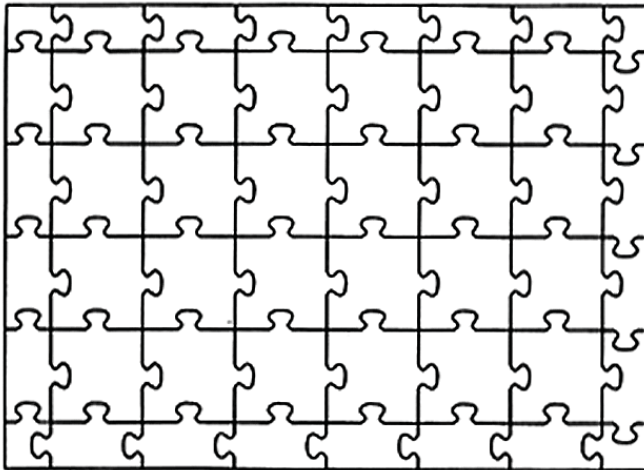
## Assembling Pieces of the Puzzle

Homecoming is a time to put pieces of the Family back together. That's why it's suggested that a large jigsaw puzzle be created throughout *Coming Home*. There are instructions for making puzzle pieces at the end of each workshop session. The number of pieces needed depends on number of participants and small breakout groups.

This symbol . . .

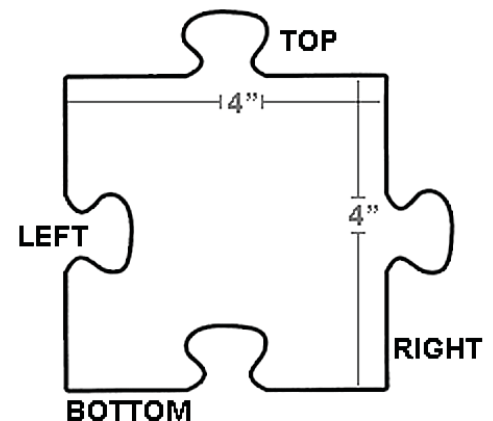


designates a puzzle-making activity.



**Completed Puzzle is 20" x 28"**

Puzzle pieces are interchangeable and fit together in any order. Just add more pieces for larger projects.



For more information about Community Puzzle, visit <http://www.communitypuzzle.com>







**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Chapter Three

Coming Home Activities



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## THREE-DAY WEEKEND

### Friday

- ✓ **SESSION 1** – Getting Acquainted
- ✓ Group Meetings
- ✓ Free time
- ✓ Movie
- ✓ Games
- ✓ Lights Out/Bed Check

### Saturday

- ✓ Wake-up
- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ **SESSION 2** - Redeployment
- ✓ Lunch
- ✓ **SESSION 3** – Reunion and Reintegration
- ✓ Dinner
- ✓ Group Activity
- ✓ Lights Out/Bed Check

### Sunday

- ✓ Wake-up
- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ **SESSION 4** - Normalcy



Some of the best sharing occurs during free time. Give group members plenty of time to network and share their experiences in informal ways.

Sessions may stand alone or be combined at your discretion.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### SESSION 1 Getting Acquainted

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Registration	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brainstorm List to post</li><li>• Brainstorm List handouts</li><li>• 3 -4 balls</li><li>• Newsprint</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Toys that are easy to throw</li><li>• Easel paper</li><li>• Bag of structures</li><li>• Puzzle piece</li></ul>
Opening	15 minutes	
Action Planning Setup	5 minutes	
Toss-A-Name	10 minutes	
Data Processing	10 minutes	
Sign In	10 minutes	
Toss-A-Name (repeated)	10 minutes	
Ground Rules	10 minutes	
Wanted Posters	15 minutes	
Structures	30 minutes	
Puzzle Piece	30 minutes	
	Total: 2 hours 45 minutes	

\* Break and snack times are not included.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## SESSION 2 Redeployment

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Group Meeting	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper</li><li>• Pencils</li><li>• Just the Facts handout</li><li>• Masking tape</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Tarp</li><li>• Newsprint</li><li>• Puzzle piece</li></ul>
Names and Sounds	10 minutes	
Dangling Sentences	10 minutes	
Just the Facts	20 minutes	
Magic Carpet	20 minutes	
Sounds of Silence	10 minutes	
Wrap-Up	10 minutes	
Puzzle Piece	30 minutes	
	Total: 2 hours	

\* Break and snack times are not included.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## SESSION 3 Reunion and Reintegration (can be one part or two)

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Catch a Dragon	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Handkerchief</li><li>• Paper</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Pencils</li><li>• Newsprint</li><li>• Puzzle pieces (2)</li></ul>
Team Meeting	5 minutes	
Inside Out	30 minutes	
Added Responsibilities	15 minutes	
Puzzle Piece #1	30 minutes	
	Part One: 1 hour 55 minutes	
39 Steps	15 minutes	
Communication Skills	10 minutes	
"I" Messages	20 minutes	
Puzzle Piece #2	30 minutes	
	Part Two: 1 hour 15 minutes	
	Total: 3 hours 10 minutes	

\* Break and snack times are not included.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### SESSION 4 Normalcy

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Group Balloon Juggle	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Balloons</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Pens</li><li>• Shield handout</li><li>• Small cardboard squares with various designs (see instructions)</li><li>• Small and large envelopes</li><li>• Newsprint</li><li>• Puzzle piece</li></ul>
Team Meeting	10 minutes	
What's Your Shield?	30 minutes	
Piecing It All Together		
Puzzle Piece	30 minutes	
Action Planning	30 minutes	
Closing	30 minutes	
	Total: 1 hour 55 minutes	

\* Break and snack times are not included.





## SESSION 1: Getting Acquainted

### Opening

**Supplies**

- None

**Activity Time:**

- 10-15 minutes

**Outcomes:**

- Participants will understand the program goals and objectives.
- Participants will be excited to get started.

**SAY:**

Welcome, you're here because you're about to welcome your Service Member home. What an exciting time! It's a time for special preparations, a time to look back at how you've grown and what you've learned about being in a military Family. It's a time of many emotions. It wouldn't be normal if you weren't really excited but also apprehensive. Everyone that is participating is experiencing some of the same feelings you are.

*Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home* is meant to help you:

- Understand the process of homecoming. (Just like the steps in deployment; there are also steps or phases in homecoming.)
- Develop or enhance skills you already have that will help you through homecoming. (These are also skills that will help you far beyond homecoming.)
- Put a plan in place that will help you and your Family with all the phases of homecoming. You've been given a folder to collect your handouts and notes. At the end of most workshop activities you'll have time to write down your thoughts. Please take as much time as you need.
- Meet others that are having the same experiences. (You'll be given a chance both during our "formal" time and also during free time to network and share helpful hints with others.)

We know that some of you have already experienced a Family member returning from deployment. In fact, you may have had this experience a number of times. You'll be an important resource for those who are experiencing the homecoming for the first time.

We also would like to know if multiple experiences change your planning and preparations.

Introduce *Coming Home* planning team including Facilitators and Military Family Life Consultant (MFLC).



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Set Up Group Action Planning for Time Together

#### Supplies

- Master Brainstorm List for posting
- Individual Brainstorm Lists

#### Activity Time:

- 5 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Participants will have a longer view of potential  
*Operation: Boots Off* results

#### SAY:

*Operation: Boots Off* is going to connect you with new people who've had many similar experiences to your own. We want to make it possible for you to stay connected with this group, have them meet your Service Member and enjoy *time together*.

#### DO

1. Post Master Brainstorm List.
2. Distribute individual Brainstorm Lists.

#### SAY:

During this workshop, ideas will come to you for activities you might share with your returning Service Member, other Family members, or fellow participants. Jot them down on your Brainstorm List, and add them to the Master List I'm posting here. Later on, we'll go over them in detail and pick some for use by the entire group.

(Brainstorm List on next page)



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities



Brainstorm List Group Outings and Activities for Families		
Short (2-4-Hours; near home)	All-Day	Overnight



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Toss-A-Name Game (Group Juggle)

**Supplies**

- 3-4 balls

**Activity Time:**

- 10 minutes

**Outcomes:**

- Team members will become familiar with others names.

**DO**

1. Ask all the participants to get into a circle.
2. Leader introduces the activity by saying his/her first name, and then tosses a ball (or any object) to the person on his/her right or left. Continuing in one direction, each person says his/her first name and continues tossing the ball in sequence until the leader again has the ball.
3. Next the leader asks everyone to raise one hand and announces that they'll call someone's name in the circle and then throw the ball to them. This will continue until everyone's received the ball. Note: Once a participant has received the ball, they should fold their hands.
4. Emphasize that they must say the person's name and they must remember to whom they threw it (no one should get the object more than one time)
5. Once everyone's received the ball, it should be tossed to the leader.
6. Announce that now that they have the pattern down, you're going to time the group.
7. Let them try several times to improve their time.
8. Celebrate the success of the group.

You'll repeat this event after completing the two following get acquainted activities.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Data Processing

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants begin to learn more about each other

### DO

1. Ask the group to form two lines facing each other. There should be about the same number of people in each line.
2. Announce that, like a computer processes data, each line is going to act as a computer and process the data requested. You'll check for speed and accuracy.
3. Ask the "computers" to get in order by (you may think of others):
  - Number of siblings each "computer member" has – largest number to smallest.
  - Number of buttons they each have on their clothing.
  - Hair length – shortest to longest.
  - Birthday – month and day (ask them to do this without talking).
  - Shoe size.
  - Number of Family member homecomings you've experienced.
4. Check answers. Ask participants to introduce themselves to the person on either side and the person across from them.



### Facilitator Note

No debrief, this one is just for fun.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Sign In

#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Markers

#### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Participants will learn names and begin to relate to one another through their deployment experiences

#### DO

1. Ask each participant to come to the newsprint, introduce themselves (name, where they are from grade in school) and sign their name.
2. Now ask each participant to return to the newsprint and sign their name again using their non-dominant hand.

#### REFLECT

- Was it hard to follow the instructions?
- What was your first reaction when you were asked to sign using your non-dominant hand?
- Was it hard to write your name?

#### APPLY

- What kinds of things have you been asked to do since your Service Member deployed that seemed easy at first?
- Did those things turn out as easy as you first thought? Explain.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Toss-A-Name Game (Group Juggle) (repeated)

#### Supplies

- 3-4 balls
- 1 odd object (ex., small stuffed animal)
- 

#### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Team members will become familiar with their team members names.

#### DO

1. Ask all participants to get into a circle.
2. Introduce the game by saying your first name, then toss a ball (or any object) to the person on your right or left. Continuing in one direction, each person says his/her first name and continues tossing the ball in sequence until you have it again.
3. Step 2 is then repeated with each participant saying their name and briefly saying their interest or experience with military Families or deployment issues.
4. Next, ask everyone to raise one hand, and announce that they'll call someone's name in the circle and then throw the ball to them. This will continue until everyone's received the ball. Note: Once a participant has received the ball, they should fold their hands.
5. Emphasize that they must say the person's name and they must remember to whom they threw it (no one should get it more than one time)
6. Once everyone's received the ball, it should be tossed to you.
7. Announce that now that they have the pattern down, you're going to time the transaction.
8. Let them try several times to improve their time.
9. After they've made several attempts, ask them if they can think of anything they could do to improve the group (they'll come up with things like: stand next to the person who is throwing it to you, or move closer). It's important that when they come up with solutions, you encourage them to implement them but not tell them how (e.g. don't start rearranging them if they want to stand next to the person they are throwing it to---wait and let the group initiate the movement and solution).
10. When this is done, ask them to go back to their original spots.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Toss-A-Name Game (Group Juggle) (cont.)

11. Tell them they are going to repeat the pattern.
12. As the ball starts going around, start adding more and more balls to the juggle.
13. Initiate the game one more time with the multiple balls, and then add the odd object to the mix. It's not to follow the original pattern. This will visually show the Squad Members how rumors can be disruptive to the team.

#### REFLECT

- What happened when more toys were added to the juggle?
- What kind of strategies did you use to make sure you caught the toys?

#### APPLY

- During the **Coming Home** experience, it may feel like we're asking you to juggle a lot of information and roles. Can you think of ways that the strategies you used to keep the toys in the air can also help us work together as a team during **Coming Home**? Describe them.
- What are some of the responsibilities that you've had to juggle the last year?

Adapted from Rhone, Carl. Silver Bullets (page 17)



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Ground Rules

### Supplies

- Easel paper
- Markers

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Set clear boundaries and acceptable behavior for the participants.

For a group to be successful, it needs to establish and agree upon some rules. We want to create an atmosphere where people feel good about themselves and others in the group. As a group, we're going to generate our rules. But first, there are some rules that are simply non-negotiable for your personal safety and the safety of the group.

### DO

Write up the list of non-negotiable ground rules (e.g. no alcohol, tobacco, drugs or weapons). This should be developed prior to the event.

### REFLECT

Review the non-negotiable rules with the group.

### APPLY

Work with the group to brainstorm a list of other ground rules to refer to throughout the training. Suggested rules might include:

- One speaker at a time
- Talk about self, not others
- Request right to be silent
- Confidentiality – what's said to the group, remains in the group
- Tolerance
- Courtesy

A copy of the ground rules should be given to each

*Operation: Boots Off* Facilitator to set the boundaries for the small groups.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Group Meetings

**Supplies**

- None

**Facilitator Note:**

The activities used in the Group Meeting are designed to:

- Put participants at ease.
- Encourage participants to share with others who have similar experiences.
- Develop sense of team among small group members.

Divide the group into their subgroups to complete the remaining three activities. It's recommended that you do all three activities to complete the session. Start up again the following day.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Wanted Posters

#### Supplies

- Newsprint or other type of large pieces of paper
- Markers or crayons

#### Activity Time

- 15 minutes

#### Outcome:

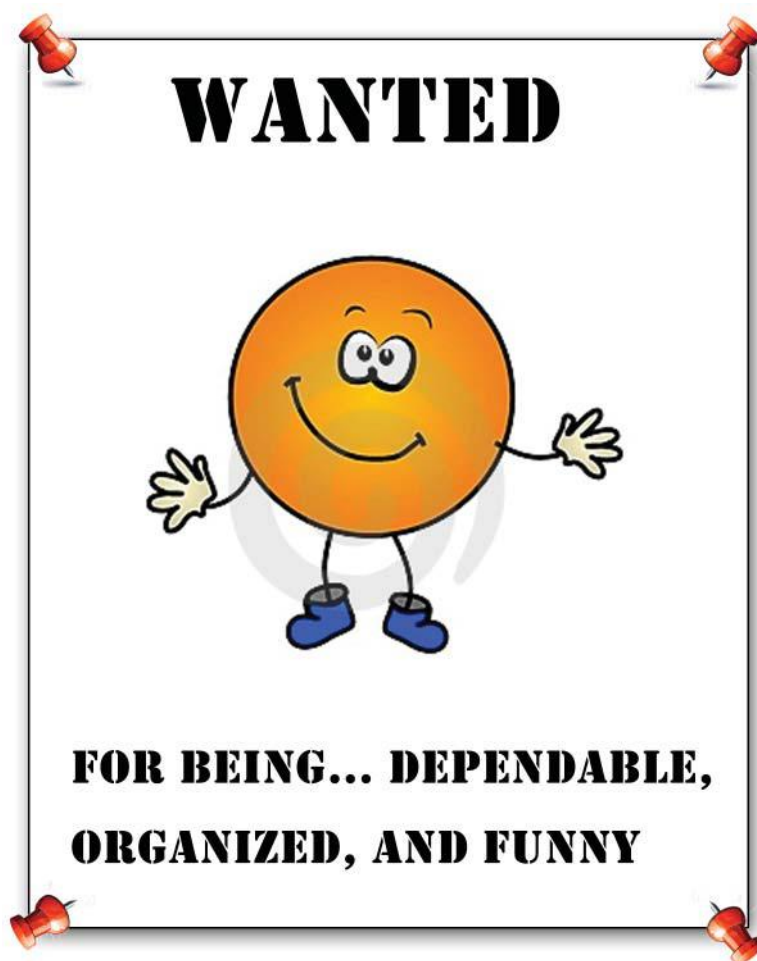
- Participants will identify personal strengths they've gained through their experience as a military child and particularly through their Family member's deployment and impending homecoming that makes them "wanted" (an integral part of) their Family unit.

#### Facilitator Note:

Collect the wanted posters and save them for the *Reconnecting* workshop. Allow time for the participants to make notes to their folders.

#### DO

Ask each participant to make a Wanted Poster including a self-portrait and list the characteristics they have that make them an important part of their Family.



#### REFLECT

Ask each member of the team to share their Wanted Poster and ask them to share an example of one of their characteristics.

# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Structures

### Supplies

- Bag of structures (pieces of one-inch diameter PVC pipe)

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Team members will begin to function as a group by creating a closed-ended structure that symbolizes their group.

### Facilitator Note:

It's healthy for the group to experience frustration, but the Group Leader should closely oversee the process to prevent any major breakdowns in the group.

### DO

1. The team members sit on the ground in a circle.
2. As a team you must use all the pieces in the bag.
3. You may only use the PVC pieces in the bag.
4. Upon completion your structure may have no open ends (all pipe ends and fitting openings must be filled or covered).
5. All team members must actively participate in building the structure.

### REFLECT

- How did the group decide what the structure should look like?
- Why was it important that everyone take part in this activity?
- Who, if anyone, monitored the progress of the structure to assure it met the directions given?
- How hard was it to build the structure?

### APPLY

- Can you see any relationship between building the structure and how your Family was "re-built" while your Service Member was deployed?
- If the Group Leader now gave the group a new rule (direction) how would that change the structure?
- Will the addition of your Family member back into your Family unit change how things are currently being done?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Structures - A Building Activity

### Bag Inventory

(pieces of one-inch diameter PVC pipe)

#### Materials for Structures

Pipe#	Size (inches)	Connectors	Description
1	27	2	Cross with four openings
2	25-1/2	5	Tee with three openings
3	24-3/4	11	90 degree elbow with two openings
4	22-7/8	2	45 degree bend with two openings
5	22-1/2	2	Straight connector with two openings
6	19-1/2	1	Cap with one opening
7	19-1/2		
8	19-1/2		
9	18-3/4	1	Bag
10	15		
11	15		
12	13-1/2		
13	12		
14	12		
15	11-5/8		
16	11-1/4		
17	9-3/4		
18	8-1/4		
19	6-3/4		
20	6-3/4		
21	6		
22	6		
23	6		
24	5-1/4		
25	4-1/2		
26	4-1/2		
27	3-3/4		



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Team Emblem



#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Markers
- Puzzle Piece

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Create a spirit of sharing with the rest of the group throughout the weekend.
- Teams will continue building trust within the group.

#### DO

1. Design a team emblem (logo) that everyone feels best represents their group. Consider experiences of the group, unique characteristics. Try to include something that you think makes your group stand out.
2. After you've determined the design and practiced making it on newsprint transfer that design to the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece will be used on the last day of the workshop.

#### REFLECT

- As you work on the group insignia talk about what each squad member might include if they were to design their personal insignia.
- Be prepared to explain the Team Emblem to the rest of the group later on.

## SESSION 2: Redeployment

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Facilitator Note:

The activities planned for Session 2 are completed in teams. Since the group will be together most of the day it's important to complete a quick check on the group and to start with an ice breaker. The following script is a suggestion and can be adapted to suite your style.

### Facilitator Note:

Scan the group to see the responses. Those that give you a thumb sideways you might ask if they would like to share what's wrong. You'll likely get a response like "I didn't get enough sleep." Assure them they'll become energized as the group begins to move through the activities. Make a mental note of those who give you thumbs down. When the group begins the ice breaker either you or another squad leader should check with those individuals to see if there's any help that can be provided.

### Group Meeting

#### SAY

How is everyone doing today? On the count of three I want you to give me a thumbs up if you're doing great; a thumbs sideways if you're OK but not great; and give me a thumbs down if things are just not going very well. Ready, one, two, three.

Yesterday we started **Coming Home** with lots of get acquainted activities, we set the ground rules and we heard from the **Coming Home** organizers. Does anyone have any questions about anything you heard yesterday? (Address any question that might arise.)

In this session we'll do activities that help us prepare for the redeployment and reunion phase of the deployment cycle.

**Redeployment** is also known as the Anticipation Phase. It's the weeks and days before Reunion. Your family may spend time preparing.

**Reunion** is the Honeymoon and Disruption Phase. The honeymoon usually lasts until the first serious disagreement. There are feelings of euphoria and excitement and relief. Families catch up and share experiences and begin to reestablish themselves. Disruption takes place in approximately six to eight weeks. Pressure is intensified, expectations are unmet and Families are sensitive to each other's presence. Reality hits.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Names and Sounds (Ice Breaker)

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants continue to learn names.

### DO

1. Ask the squad to sit in a circle.
2. Begin with one squad member and have them say their name, an animal and make the sound of the animal.
3. The entire squad should repeat the individual's name and make the sound of the animal.
4. After everyone in the circle has given their name, animal and animal sound, ask everyone to move one chair to the right.
5. The group will again go around the circle saying each person's name but will say the original animal and animal sound. (In other words the name of the person moves with the person but the animal and the sound it makes stays with the chair)
6. See how many times the group can rotate chairs and still remember the animal and animal sound.



No debrief, this one is just for fun.

# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Introduction to Session 2

### Supplies

- None

### SAY

In this session we're going to do a number of activities that help us to better understand the Pre-entry and Reunion phases of Reintegration. We've called it Ready, Set because it's the time when you know your Family Member is **coming home** and there are lots of preparations to be made and much excitement.

You may make banners and plan homecoming parties.

Then the big day comes, your loved one is home with you and it's great. There's a sense of relief, euphoria and excitement. There may also be a sense of dread and fear. That's normal. We know you have the joy and excitement down so we want to spend time in this session figuring out how to handle some of the uncertainties. Most important – have a positive mindset.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Dangling Sentences

### Supplies

- Pencils and paper (optional)

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will continue to learn more about their team members and also think about what's important to them.

### DO

1. Ask each participant to complete the sentences below either orally or write your answers on a piece of paper.
  - My secret desire is ...
  - On weekends, I like to ...
  - In a group, I am ...
  - If I had \$100, I would ...
  - I get angry when ...
  - What I want most is ...
  - I'm happiest when ...
  - My best quality is ...
  - My parents are ...
  - I have accomplished ...
2. Find a partner and use these sentences to get better acquainted. If you want, add new sentences.

### REFLECT

- What were the hardest sentences?
- Why were some easier or harder than others?
- Were there similar themes in some of your answers?

### APPLY

- What other conclusions do you have from this activity.
- What did you learn about yourself?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Just The Facts, Please

### Supplies

- Just the Facts handout

### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will see the affect assumptions can make on a discussion and ultimately on decisions.

### DO

Have you ever played telephone? You know, one person starts a message and it's whispered down the line and then you compare the message. This activity is sort of like that. I want you to imagine that you're an eyewitness to an event.

1. Begin with one participant. Ask them to study the scene and give them 45 seconds to observe the facts.
2. At the end of 45 seconds turn the picture over and ask participant #1 to take participants #2 a few paces from the group so no one else can hear and have them describe what they saw. Remember tell all the facts.
3. Continue until everyone's heard what was in the picture.
4. Ask the last participant to tell the entire group what they heard.

### REFLECT

- As the one sharing what you saw what techniques did you use to remember everything?
- As the one listening and trying to remember what was said what techniques did you use?
- Did you feel you were overloaded with information

### APPLY

- Is there a lesson to be learned from this activity as you think about everything you want to share with your returning Family Member?
- Do you think it could be confusing for them to hear everything all Family members want to share?
- When they first come home you might want to stick with just the facts. Is there another way you might share all the details later?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

Just The Facts, Please (cont.)



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Magic Carpet

#### Supplies

- Masking tape (enough for each participant to have 4, 6 inch long pieces)
- Markers
- Tarp

#### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Youth will identify the benefits and challenges of leaving your family for a year.

#### Facilitator Note:

Flipping the tarp represents overcoming their “challenges,” but the process can be extremely frustrating for the group. Be mindful of the ground rules.

#### DO

1. Lay the tarp on the ground.
2. Ask each member of the team to tear off four pieces of masking tape about six inches long.
3. Using the masking tape strips ask each member to write down 2 reasons (one per tape strip) why it would be important to leave your Family for a year.
4. Ask each person to share what they’ve written and then place the tape strips on the tarp.
5. When everyone’s shared what they’ve written have the group flip the tarp over.
6. Now, ask each person to write down 2 reasons (one per tape strip) why it would be hard to leave your Family for a year.
7. Ask each person to share what they’ve written and then place the tape strips on the tarp.
8. After everyone’s shared, ask the group to stand on the tarp with “hard to leave” strips facing up.
9. The group has 15 minutes to turn the tarp over without anyone moving off the tarp.

#### REFLECT

- Was it easy to come up with the four responses?
- Was one easier than the other? Why?
- As you think about the overall activity, what did it mean to you?
- How do you think this activity relates to your everyday life?
- Do you think your Service Member who has been deployed thought about these questions before they deployed?

#### APPLY

- Can you think of other situations in your life when you need to think of positive and negative things in order to make a decision?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Sounds of Silence

### Supplies

- Pencils and paper (optional)

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about non-verbal communication and how it can be misinterpreted.

### DO

1. Ask each participant to list or think of five emotions that they or their Family members have shown in the last week.
2. Ask the group how they were able to identify the emotions they listed. (responses might include: she was crying, she laughed until she cried, he yelled and said he was angry, he looked unhappy)
3. Ask each participant to find a partner.
4. Have each partner act out several emotions they listed.
5. Their partner should guess what emotion is being acted out.
6. Be sure every participant has a chance to act and guess emotions.

### REFLECT

- Did you feel like this activity was really too young for you to be doing – maybe better for your little brother or sister?
- Do you think you ever use non-verbal communications (body language) to express a feeling?
- What are some examples?
- Do you think non-verbal communication is ever misunderstood?

### APPLY

- Do you think non-verbal communication is something that is used when you aren't sure what to say?
- Thinking about the upcoming reunion do you think non-verbal communication is a good thing, bad thing or neutral?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Wrap-Up for Session 2

### Supplies

- Pencils and paper

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### SAY

In this session we didn't spend time telling you how to plan a party or design a welcome home banner – you know how to do those things. Instead the activities really focused on how you might be feeling as you prepare for Pre-entry and Reunion. Before we design the puzzle piece I would like you to write down:

- Three things you learned
- Two things you'll use
- One thing you won't forget.

Ask if anyone would like to share what they wrote. This should be completely voluntary. There's no group debrief but allow the time for everyone to write their answers.

There's no application phase for this activity.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Session 2 Redeployment and Reunion



#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Puzzle piece
- Markers or crayons

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Groups will develop a puzzle piece to be added to the larger puzzle.

#### DO

1. Design a puzzle piece that everyone feels best represents what the group learned or experienced in Session 2. Try to include something that you think makes your group stand out.
2. After you've determined the design and practiced making it on newsprint, transfer that design to the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece will be used on the last day of the workshop.

#### REFLECT

Be prepared to explain the puzzle piece to the rest of the group later on.



# SESSION 3: Reunion and Reintegration

### Catch a Dragon (Ice Breaker)

**Supplies**

- Handkerchief

**Activity Time:**

- 10 minutes

**Outcomes:**

- Participants will explore new ways of communicating.

This activity can be done as one large group or in smaller groups. The group number should not exceed 30.

**DO**

1. Explain to the group that this activity has lots of movement. Because of that it's important that the group really think about each other's safety. Encourage them to "take care of one another."
2. Ask the group to form a dragon by standing in a line and putting hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. The individual at the front of the line is the head of the dragon. The one at the end is the tail.
3. Object of Catch a Dragon: The head tries to pull a handkerchief from the pocket of the tail of the dragon (handkerchief stuck in a back pocket.) The body of the dragon tries to protect the tail from the head.
4. NO RUNNING!

**REFLECT**

- As a group, were you successful?
- Did it matter?
- What communications methods did you use to prevent the dragon from catching its tail?

**APPLY**

- Does Catch a Dragon in any way feel like what you've been doing since your Family member's deployment? How?
- Over the deployment time you and your family have learned many ways to support and protect one another. Did you use any of those tactics in Catch a Dragon?



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Team Meeting

#### Supplies

- None

#### Activity Time:

- 5 minutes

#### Facilitator Note:

- After Catch a Dragon is complete and if you're still in a large group divide back into Teams for the next session.

In this session our activities will focus on the next phase of the Deployment Cycle – **Reintegration**. It's also known as the Stabilization Phase which is the amount of time it takes for families to stabilize with new routines, roles and Family goals. Many experience only minor difficulty in adjusting to new routines. However, readjustment may be a longer process for others.

The activities we did earlier were about communication – Just the Facts talked about providing only the facts and when it's appropriate to add the other details. Sounds of Silence was a way to talk about non-verbal communications. You know, rolling eyes, crossed arms and heavy sighs aren't always the best way to express your feelings.

In this session we'll:

- Share some of the good and not so good feelings we have related to the homecoming;
- Continue talking about communications and develop some techniques that you might find helpful; and
- Consider some ways your Family might work together to get things done.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Inside Out

### Supplies

- Markers and paper

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will identify some of the characteristics they've developed during the deployment process and compare those to what characteristics they think others would identify.

### Facilitator Note:

This activity is designed as a thoughtful process for each participant. Some may find this a difficult activity and may not want to participate. Encourage everyone to participate but allow sharing to be "sharing by choice." Plan to complete this activity as well and be prepared to be the first to share what you've drawn. This will help the group be more at ease as they prepare to share.

### SAY

A lot has happened during the deployment period. Each of those experiences has helped you grow in one way or another. Do you think your friends have noticed all of these landmarks? Have they seen a change in you? Do you think your Family recognizes all that has happened to you and the sacrifices you've made? Have they seen a change in you? Since much of our self-concept is shaped by what we think others believe about us, it is really important to consider some of these questions.

### DO

1. Ask the group to share some of the "landmarks" that have happened during their Family member's deployment. (learned to drive, got a hole in one during a school golf match, started dating, graduated, had a birthday, broke up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, quit an afterschool job or stopped an extracurricular school activity to help out at home)
2. Give each participant two pieces of paper and markers. Ask them to fold the papers in half.
3. On the outside of the first paper, draw pictures or symbols which describe how you think others, such as friends, teachers, and coworkers, see you. On the inside, draw pictures or symbols which describe how you see yourself and your interaction with them.
4. Give the group 10 minutes to complete or sooner if it looks like everyone's finished earlier.
5. On the outside of the second paper, draw pictures or symbols which describe how you think your Family members see you
6. On the inside draw pictures or symbols which describe how you see yourself and your interaction with them.
7. Ask participants to form groups of four and share what they've drawn. Each person may decide how much to share, but encourage everyone to try to share at least one thing from each page.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Inside Out (cont.)

Facilitator Note: To start the group discussions, share your own drawing first.

### REFLECT

- What did you first think when you heard what you were to do with the paper?
- What did it feel like to think about how you think others see you, how you see yourself?
- Did you share everything with the group?
- In what ways were we similar?
- Different?
- How do these perceptions affect the way we interact with others?

### APPLY

- How can you help your friends and Family members understand all the changes you've experienced during your Family members deployment?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Added Responsibilities

### Supplies

- Pencils and paper

### Activity Time:

- 15 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will identify roles and responsibilities they've added during their Family Member's deployment and will determine which they would like to continue and which they'll be happy to discontinue.

### DO

1. List three to five additional tasks or responsibilities you've added to your daily or weekly routine since your Family Member has been deployed.
2. Indicate with a smiley face 😊 the one task or responsibility you would most like to continue when your Service Member returns home.
3. Indicate with a grumpy face 😞 the one task or responsibility you'll be happy to give up.
4. In groups of two or three, share your list and your choices to keep and give away.

### REFLECT

- How did it feel to take on extra responsibilities?
- Do you think your Family recognizes the extra things you've done? Why or why not.

### APPLY

- In a thoughtful yet direct way how can you let your Family know what tasks you would like to give up and which you would like to keep and why.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Reintegration (Part 1)



#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Puzzle piece
- Markers or crayons

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### Outcomes:

- Teams will develop a puzzle piece to be added to the larger puzzle

#### DO

1. Design a puzzle piece that everyone feels best represents what the group learned or experienced in this session. Try to include something that you think makes your group stand out.
2. After you've determined the design and practiced making it on newsprint, transfer that design to the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece will be used on the last day of the workshop.

#### REFLECT

- Be prepared to explain the puzzle piece to the rest of the group later on.

# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## 39 Steps

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 15 minutes

### Outcomes:

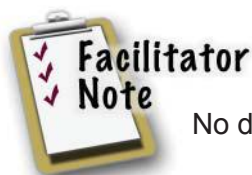
- Participants will release tensions that might have built during the last activity.

### Facilitator Note:

The Inside Out activity can be pretty intense. Follow it up with a few minutes of pure nonsense with the 39 Steps energizer.

### DO

1. Ask everyone to find a partner whose thumb is about the same size as theirs. Sit down facing each other. Gaze deep into each other's eyes, and on the count of "carrot" I want each of you to call out a number between zero and fifteen....ready?...Rutabaga, spinach, lettuce, carrot!
2. Find out what your partner called out and add your numbers together, so you now have a combined number between zero and thirty.
3. Get to your feet and stand back-to-back with your partner, linking arms.
4. When I say "kangaroo" I'd like you to take exactly as many jumps into the air, linked together, as the total of your two numbers combined.
5. Be sure to take care of one another.
6. Kangaroo!



No debrief, this one is just for fun.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Communication Skills: Reflective or Active Listening

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcomes:

- Participants will learn the difference in reflective and active listening.

### Facilitator Note:

In about 30 seconds, stop the pairs and ask the cheeseburgers to paraphrase or put in their own words what they heard from the hamburgers. After the cheese-burgers have paraphrased, have the partners switch roles the hamburgers listening and cheeseburgers talking.

### Facilitator Note:

These guidelines are in Appendix 1 Handouts. Give a copy to each participant to put in their folders. Allow time for participants to add notes to their folders also.

Good communication skills are always important and will be particularly important during the phases of homecoming.

Let's explore how we can improve our listening skills. We're going to learn about a type of listening called 'reflective' or active listening. Before we start, let's try a little exercise.

### DO

1. Have each person find a partner.
2. Each individual should mentally complete this statement: "I really get upset when..."
3. When I say go, talk to each other about the way they finished the statement. Don't bother taking turns, just try to make your point or share your idea forcefully. Don't worry about what the other person is saying; just get your idea across.
4. Go. Allow about 15 seconds.

### REFLECT

- How did it feel to talk at each other?
- Are there times in our daily lives when we do this to each other?

### APPLY

- How can we be better listeners and communicators?

### DO

- Now find a new partner. Designate one person as the hamburger and one as a cheeseburger.
- Hamburgers are to talk while the cheeseburgers actively listen.
- Cheeseburgers should do everything they can to show that they are understanding and listening, without words.

### REFLECT

- What physical things did you find yourself doing as you work at listening? (examples: eye contact, nod, lean forward, move to quiet spot)
- What other non-verbal things did you do?



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Reflective or Active Listening (cont.)

### APPLY

- How can you use reflective or active listening when talking with your parents?

### SAY

Reflective listening is very intense, caring and interested listening in which you look for as many cues to meaning as possible. When you listen reflectively, you hear and see more than just words and you give feedback. For example, when someone says “I’m tired” and his or her body looks totally exhausted, you might reflectively reply, “You really do seem beat”. When you do reflective listening, you may be able to tell feelings by looking at the body language. Often a shrug of the shoulders or hand gestures convey more than the words they accompany. It may be a tone of voice or a change in attitude that is a clue. It’s reflective listening that reads all the signs, reviews and interprets the feelings, and then shows that you’ve heard and listened by describing it back to the speaker.

Here are some guidelines for giving feedback which may be helpful to you as you learn to do reflective listening:

- Say the same thing in a different way, or say how you think the person feels.
- Stick with where the person is coming from right now. Try suggesting things or go back to ideas he or she had before.
- Speak with the same amount of feeling he or she is showing; feel it with him or her.

When you listen, you’re saying to the other person, “You’re important. I want to understand you.”

If time permits, form new pairs and practice reflective listening using incomplete statements such as:

- Yesterday, I felt....
- When I meet a new group of people, I feel....
- I’m always nervous when....



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### “I” Messages

**Supplies**

- None

**Activity Time:**

- 20 minutes

**SAY**

Obviously, listening is only one part of communicating.

We also need to explore how to share our ideas and feelings with others. Let’s look at one more communication technique called an ‘I’ message.

“I” messages are most effective when both people involved are sensitive to each other’s feelings and are able to listen well to each other. “I” messages are not intended to perform communication miracles, but they can lead to more positive and effective communication.

These are the three parts to an “I” message:

1. Tell how you feel.
2. Tell what the unacceptable behavior is.
3. Tell what the effect is on you.

“I feel frustrated when you arrive late for the meeting because we can’t get all the business done until you are here.”

In some situations, a person’s irritation can easily turn to anger, especially if the behavior continues. The main idea of “I” messages is to make the person aware of the behavior without putting the feeling in the wrong place, on him or her.

**DO**

Find someone you have not yet worked with.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## “I” Messages (cont.)

First, practice writing “I” messages and then role-play some situations. Here are some examples

### “I” Message Situations

- You have a new MP3 player that your sister wants to use occasionally. You agree providing she asks you first. You enter the room as she picking up the MP3 player and putting earphones on. Give her an “I” message.
- You are the father of a teenager. You have an agreement with your son that when he uses the car he is to replace the gas he has used. Repeatedly, he returns the car with an empty gas tank. Today, you were late for work, jumped in the car, and found the tank empty. Give your son an I-message.

Have each pair share one of the situations provided or one they developed.

### REFLECT

- What are the positives about using this communication technique?
- How can you better share feelings in this way?

### APPLY

- In what situations are “I” messages most appropriate?



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Reintegration (Part 2)



#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Puzzle piece
- Markers or crayons

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### Outcome:

- Teams will develop a puzzle piece to be added to the larger puzzle.

#### DO

1. Design a puzzle piece that everyone feels best represents what the group learned or experienced in this session. Try to include something that you think makes your group stand out.
2. After you've determined the design and practiced making it on newsprint, transfer that design to the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece will be used on the last day of the workshop.

#### REFLECT

- Be prepared to explain the puzzle piece to the rest of the group later on.



# SESSION 4: Normalcy

### Group Balloon Juggle

**Supplies**

- Balloons
- Markers

**Activity Time:**

- 10 minutes

**Outcome:**

Participants will experience what it will be like to have additional hands at home to help out.

**DO**

1. Give each participant 2 balloons. Ask everyone to blow up their balloons and tie them off. Ask everyone to write one responsibility they've had because of deployment on each balloon.
2. As a group your job is to keep the balloons in the air.
3. While the group is juggling the balloons, the facilitator should begin to remove balloons. Continue juggling until about half of the balloons have been removed.

**REFLECT**

- Was it hard to keep the balloons in the air?
- Did you feel a sense of responsibility to the group to do your part? Why or why not?
- How did it feel to have fewer balloons to juggle?

**APPLY**

- We've talked a lot about adding responsibilities because of deployment. Do you think your added responsibilities will "go away" when your Service Member returns?
- How do you think that will feel?



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Team Meeting

In this session we'll talk about the Normalcy phase. It's also known as the Acceptance Phase. The Family has navigated the Reunion and Reintegration process adjusting to their changes and finding satisfaction in the "new" life post-deployment.

#### Supplies

- None



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### What's Your Shield?

#### Supplies

- Pens
- Shield handout

#### Activity Time:

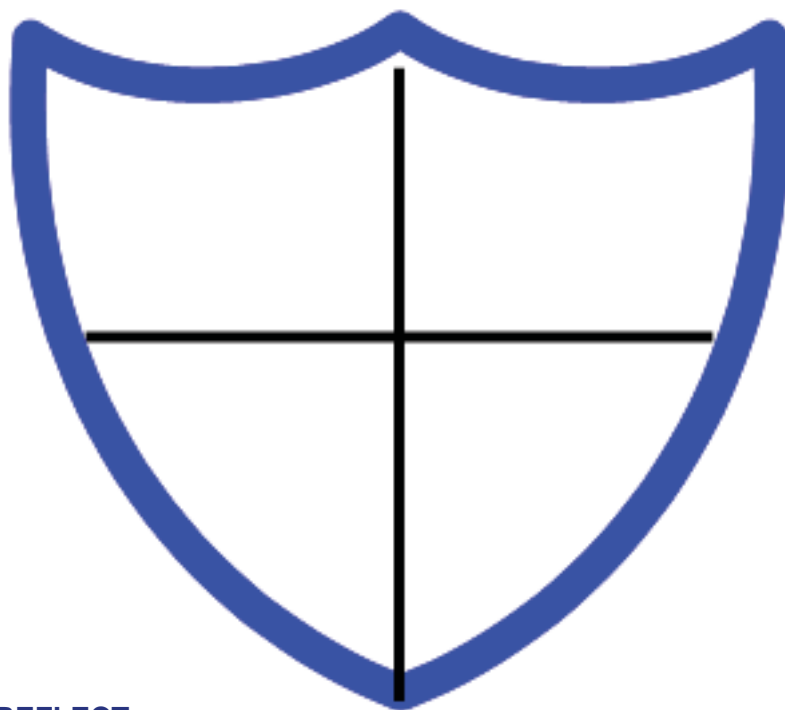
- 20 minutes

#### Outcome:

Participants focus on themselves to prep for their upcoming reunion.

#### DO

1. Each team member is given a handout with a shield divided into four sections.
2. Ask each participant to write or draw one of the following in a quadrant:
  - Strongest team skill
  - One way to make the reunion easier
  - One thing they need from the Service Member to make reunion easier
  - One thing the family could do to make reunion easier.



#### REFLECT

- Have participants share what they developed.



*Available for  
reproduction  
in Appendix 5*



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

# Session 4

### Supplies

- Small cardboard squares with various designs
- One large envelope that contains five smaller envelopes
- Smaller envelopes contain small squares which, when combined, will make 5 puzzles. Squares should be placed in the envelopes in random order so that no one has a complete puzzle at first
- Colored markers or crayons

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcome:

- Participants gain perspective on how the Family will evolve.

### Facilitator Note:

- See suggested small square designs on page 72.

### Piecing It All Together

Sometimes when you're in the middle of a difficult situation it's hard to really get a perspective on those who lend a helping hand and the many ways that you've grown. This activity will help us "look back" and also anticipate what your "new family" will be like soon.

### DO

1. Divide the group into smaller groups of 5.
2. Give each small group a large envelope. Inside are five smaller envelopes which contain small cardboard squares with various designs.
3. Before you begin here are the rules:
  - No talking or gesturing
  - Only give away pieces, don't take pieces from others.
4. Each person should take an envelope but should not open it until instructed.
5. Give the following instructions:
  - Each of these envelopes contains small cardboard squares. Each person should remove the squares from their envelope.
  - Using one color marker, list on one square three people other than family members who have been particularly helpful and supportive to you.
  - On a second square, write one word that best describes your personal deployment experience.
  - On the third square, write a number from 1 to 5 (1 being completely disagree and 5 completely agree) that responds best to the statement "This deployment has been the hardest thing I've ever experienced."
  - Now using another color marker and putting one description or word on each square, write what's made this separation difficult.
6. When everyone's finished writing, each person is to make one large square. The group will then have five large squares with no leftover pieces. Each person must have a large square in front of them.
7. Begin



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Piecing It All Together (cont.)

### REFLECT

- Were group members willing to give away small squares?
- Did they give them away immediately?
- Did sharing (although non-verbal) help the group complete the task more efficiently?
- What was the general mood of the group? Frustrated, isolated, empowered?
- Was there a certain point at which people began to cooperate? How do you explain this change?
- Did you break the rules?

Thinking about what you wrote on the pieces . . .

- Was it hard to think of responses to put on each small square?
- Were you honest with yourself in how you responded?

### APPLY

- Why do you think we selected this activity to do and why was it placed near the end of the workshop?

As you think about the whole deployment experience and what you've learned from it through personal experience and also through what we've talked about . . .

Think of other young people – friends or classmates – that don't have Service Members and have not experienced deployment but have shared many of the emotions and experiences you've had.

- What were their circumstances (divorce, loss of a loved one, moving to a new community, natural disasters, loss of a job, additional family members moving in)?
- Have you thought that they might be having some of the same feelings you've experienced?
- What might you do to make their transition an easier one?
- We've asked you to think about lots of things and some of them are really difficult. We want you to know that there are resources available to you. The handout we're giving you is a good to start for helpful resources.

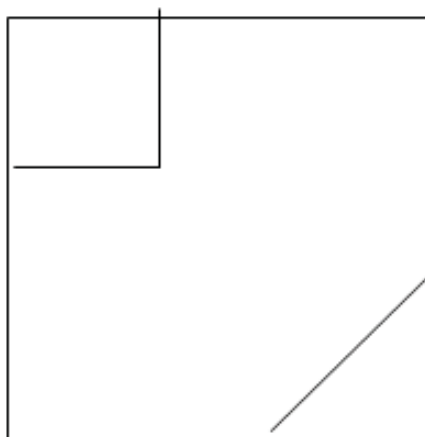
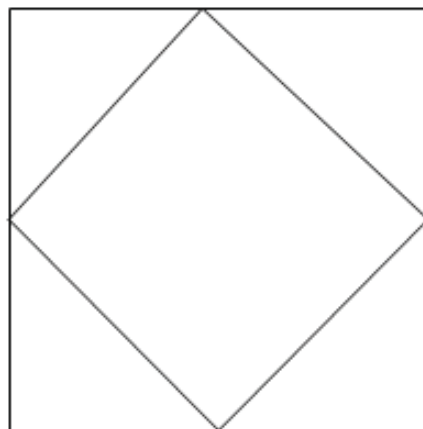
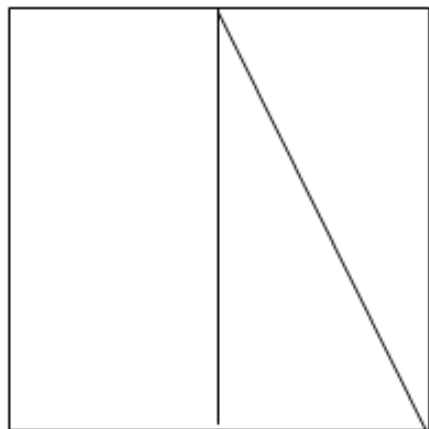
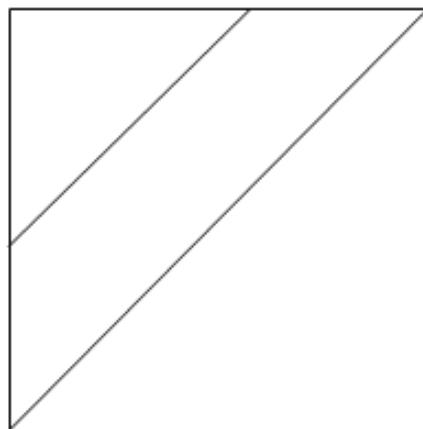
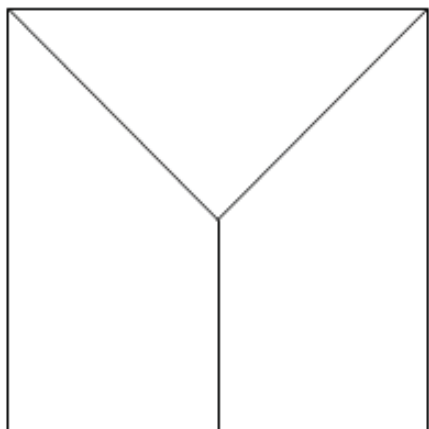




## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Piecing It All Together

Six-inch squares work well for this activity.



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Normalcy



#### Supplies

- Newsprint
- Puzzle piece
- Markers or crayons

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### Outcome:

- Teams will develop a puzzle piece to be added to the larger puzzle.

#### DO

1. Design a puzzle piece that everyone feels best represents what the group learned or experienced in this session. Try to include something that you think makes your group stand out.
2. After you've determined the design and practiced making it on newsprint transfer that design to the puzzle piece. The puzzle piece will be used on the last day of the workshop.

#### REFLECT

- Be prepared to explain the puzzle piece to the rest of the group later on.

# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Group Action Planning for Time Together

### Supplies

- Colored dots or stickers

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcome:

- Reconnect with others in group
- Have fun
- Provide community service/service learning
- Share time with family members
- Have new experiences to share

### Facilitator Note:

Keep in mind that brainstorming means generating lots of ideas without discussion or reaction. All ideas are good ideas at this point. Outings should be things they'll enjoy doing together, things they did in the past and missed doing while the Service Member was deployed, or new outings that they can do together for the first time.

### Facilitator Note:

See Chapter Five, [Time Together](#) Activities, for more about desired outcomes of Group Action Planning.

### SAY

During this workshop, you've met new people who've had many similar experiences to your own. We want to make it possible for you to stay connected with this group, have them meet your Service Member and enjoy [time together](#). And that's why you've been adding ideas to our Master Brainstorm List. You may also have ideas on your individual Charts that haven't been posted.. So let's see what we have now, maybe add some more – and then select four of the best to be completed over the next year.

### DO

1. Review entries on the Master Brainstorm List.
2. Ask for additional ideas from individual Lists that haven't been posted.
3. Have the group brainstorm even more ideas (use the following list as further suggestions, if necessary).

### Short and Close to Home

- Have a picnic
- Take a walk or bike ride
- Go fishing
- Play basketball, tennis, or golf
- Cook a special meal
- Do an art, craft, sewing, woodworking, or gardening project
- Write a Family newsletter describing the reunion and share it with friends and relatives
- Go to a movie

### All-Day

- Visit a zoo, museum, or historical landmark
- Go to a college or professional sporting event
- Attend a play or concert
- Do a community service project
- Take a class or workshop like photography, ceramics, or technology
- Visit an amusement park, water park, ski, skating, or sledding area

### Overnight

- Do a lock-in
- Go camping
- Take a road trip



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

### Group Action Planning for Time Together (cont.)

#### **DO (more)**

4. After the group is satisfied with the list give each participant 4 colored dots or stickers. Have each person put a dot or sticker by the four activities they would most like to see the group do.
5. The top four activities receiving the most dots or stickers will be strongly considered by the planning team.
6. Recruit volunteers to serve on the planning team with workshop planners. Be sure to get contact information and the best time for people to meet – probably by phone or e-mail.

The planning committee will notify everyone about dates and logistics.



# Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities

## Individual Action Planning

### Supplies

- Folders, paper, pens
- Handouts

### Activity Time:

- 10 – 15 minutes

### Outcome:

- Participants will have individual plans and goals for things they want to do before and after their Service Member returns.

### SAY

As large and small groups we've spent a lot of time learning how to prepare for the return of our Service Members and establishing friendships so we can support each other during the redeployment.

### DO

- Now that you have a better understanding of the homecoming process and you've developed some new skills to help you and your family through the coming weeks you should take this time to outline a plan for what you want to do.

### REFLECT

- This would be a good time to review the items and ideas you've put in your folder.

### APPLY

You may want to start by answering these questions:

- What do I need to share with my Service Member?
- How will I share things – with pictures, scrap books, videos, and stories?
- How will the family share time with our Service Member?
- What will be hardest to share and how will I handle that?
- Who will I talk to if I need help?
- What do I want to do when my Service Member comes home?
- What do I want to change when my Service Member comes home?



## Chapter 3 - Coming Home Activities



### Closing Activity – Group Puzzle

Throughout the workshop each group has been designing puzzle pieces that describe something significant about each of their sessions. It's time now to put all the pieces together – a couple of methods are listed here, but feel free to be creative.

#### Supplies

- Sticky wall (plastic table cloth or shower curtain or large paper that has spray adhesive applied)
- Double stick tape
- **Certificates of Completion**
- **Camera**

#### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

#### DO

1. One group puts up all of their puzzle pieces at one time describing what they learned. This will produce a puzzle with more visual organization.
2. Each group puts up their puzzle pieces by session. This will produce a more random puzzle that will show thoughts and lessons learned during each session.
3. Regardless of the puzzle process selected, the last time a team comes before the group and adds its final puzzle piece:
  - The workshop planning team should present each participant with a certificate.
  - Be sure to take a group picture.



*Available for reproduction in Appendix 5*



**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Chapter Four

Reconnecting Activities



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

FULL DAY Allocate six to eight hours, depending on participant travel times.

## SESSION 1 Getting Acquainted

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Registration and	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large open area, gym or field</li><li>• Blindfold for each person</li><li>• Balloon for each person plus 5 extras</li></ul>
Welcome and Set the Stage	10 minutes	
Name and Action	20 minutes	
Shake A Leg	10 minutes	
Hog Call	10 minutes	
Balloon Frantic	10 minutes	
	Total: 1 hour 20 minutes	

\* Debriefing is very limited.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 2 Connecting

Almost Infinite Circle	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yarn in 1 yard pieces, one for each person; tie a loop in each end</li><li>• 4 different items that can be passed around a circle (examples: pencil, ball, small stuffed animal, comb)</li><li>• Bag of structures</li><li>• Newsprint</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Wanted Posters completed by youth in <b>Coming Home</b></li></ul>
Bing and Bong	20 minutes	
Structures	30 minutes	
Wanted Posters	20 minutes	
	Total: 1 hour 20 minutes	

\* Debriefing questions are provided. Allow time for discussion.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 2

### Looking Back – Moving Forward Five Changes

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time*</b>	<b>Supplies</b>
Five Changes	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roll of craft paper</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li><li>• Table diagram handout</li><li>• Pencils</li><li>• Modeling clay or dough</li><li>• Variety of arts and crafts supplies, such as construction paper, glitter, glue, feathers, poster board, beads</li></ul>
Family Time Line	45 minutes	
Who's At Your Table	15 minutes	
It Looks Like This	30 minutes	
	Total: 1 hour 40 minutes	

\* Debriefing questions are provided. Discussion may take their place.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 4 Closing

Activity	Time*	Supplies
Continue to Connect	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>List of activities youth developed during <b>Coming Home</b></li><li>Any items used or found during the workshop</li></ul>
Commercials	10 minutes + 60 seconds per Family	
Baby Steps	10 minutes	
	Total: less than 1 hour	



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 1: Getting Acquainted

### Welcome and Setting the Stage

**Supplies**

- None

**Activity Time:**

- 10 minutes

**Outcome:**

- Designed to set the stage for the day.

**Facilitator Note:**

Remind participants throughout the day that there's a Military Family Life Consultant available for individual or Family discussions.

**SAY**

Today is a time for moms and dads to reconnect with their children and do that by talking about how deployment and redeployment has affected each Family member and the Family as a unit.

Not long ago these young people came together for Operation Boots Off: **Coming Home** to learn more about the redeployment phases and to honestly explore their feelings about their Service Members deployment, to learn new skills (particularly communication skills) and to share their deployment experience with others who really understand.

Today we're going to have fun. We planned Operation Boots Off: **Reconnecting** specifically with you in mind. There will be one-on-one time and we've planned games and activities that will help you reconnect as a Family.

Parents, you may think that many of the questions that we ask throughout the day are meant only for the young people. That's not the case. The activities may seem juvenile to you but be assured they've been planned as a thoughtful experience for you as well. Please participate fully in the discussions and in responding to questions.

There may be times when you're challenged or feel uncomfortable. There's a Military Family Life Consultant with us. Any time throughout the day your family would like to break from the group and visit this individual please feel free to do so.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Name and Action

### DO

1. Ask everyone to get into a circle.
2. Ask each person to introduce themselves. Make sure first names are clearly understood.
3. After everyone's introduced themselves. Ask them to think of an action that begins with the first letter of their first name. (Jim and jump)
4. Go around the circle again with each person giving their first name and doing the action. (My name is Jim and I jump.)
5. Everyone then repeats Jim's name and jumps with him.
6. This continues until everyone's had a chance to participate.
7. You can try testing the group by doing one of the actions and seeing if others can identify the person.

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

### Outcome:

- Participants will begin to learn each others names.

### Facilitator Note:

This activity can be done as one large group or participants can be broken into small groups – perhaps the same group their child was in during **Coming Home**. If this activity is completed in a large group it will take more time.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Shake A Leg

### DO

1. Instruct everyone to find a partner. Say: "This is your Shake a Leg Partner. With this partner I want you to shake each other's right leg. Be sure to balance yourselves by putting a hand on a shoulder." When I yell, "Shake a Leg" you should find that partner and shake each other's legs 3 times saying each other's names as you do the action. Let's practice. "Shake a Leg"!
2. Instruct everyone to find a new partner. This is their High Five Partner. They should jump in the air with their arms stretched over their heads and slap each other's hands while saying the others name.
3. Instruct everyone to find a new partner. This is their Behind the Back partner. They are to shake each other's hand by reaching behind their backs. Again they say the other's name while shaking hands.
4. Now, mix up the group by randomly calling out either Shake a Leg, High Five or Behind the Back. Have them complete at least two rotations of all actions.

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcome:

- Total foolishness and chaos.

### Facilitator Note:

The group should just have some fun and feel more comfortable making contact with each other and burning some energy.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Hog Call

### Supplies

- Large open area such as a gym or yard
- Blindfolds

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcome:

- Meeting new people

### Facilitator Note:

Debriefing questions are included under **DO** as optional. Using them may help the group move into more thought-provoking questions later.

### DO

1. Ask everyone to find a new partner. Suggest they select someone they have not yet been with.
2. Give everyone a blindfold.
3. Ask them to work as a team to choose two words that are related or one that can be broken down (ice cream, base ball) and determine which person will repeat which word.
4. Divide the group in half so partners are on opposite ends of the gym or yard.
5. Instruct them to put their arms in front of them. This is known as bumpers up. Assure the group you'll be watching out for their safety while they are blindfolded.
6. Ask everyone to put on their blindfold.
7. At your command of "Go" each team should begin shouting their word. They are to move across the open space and find their partner.

### DO questions

- What were the instructions?
- Did you follow them?

### REFLECT

- Did you find your partner?
- Was it scary to move along blindfolded?
- Were you concerned you might not find your partner?

### APPLY

- Can you think of any way that this activity relates to what you've been through with deployment and now redeployment?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Balloon Frantic

### Supplies

- Balloons (one for each person plus five extra)

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcome:

- Keeping all balloons off the floor

### DO

1. Ask the group to get into a large circle. Tell them they may not want to stay in the circle during the activity, but that this is a good starting point.
2. Give each participant a balloon and ask them to blow it up and tie it off. The size of the balloon does not matter.
3. Have five additional balloons blown up and tied off. When the group has the first balloons in the air, toss your extras in without telling them.
4. Instruct the group that, when you say “Go,” their job is to juggle the balloons so none hit the floor. No one may hit the same balloon twice in a row.

### REFLECT

- Was this an easy activity? Why or why not?
- Were there times when you moved away from a balloon because you thought someone else would keep it in the air?

### APPLY

- How does this relate to what you’ve experienced the last year or so?
- Could you write an actual extra responsibility that you’ve gained on each of the balloons?
- How does it feel when you can’t keep all of the balloons in the air?
- What happened when balloons were added or removed?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 2: Connecting

### Almost Infinite Circle

#### Supplies

- Yarn strips cut 36 inches long. Every participant should have a piece of yarn. Loop and tie each end – a slip knot works well.

#### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

#### Outcome:

Participants will discover how to think “outside the box” to accomplish their task.

#### Facilitator Note:

To successfully complete this task one partner must pass their yarn through one of the loops of their partners and then slide it over their partner’s hand. The yarn must not be twisted.

#### DO

1. Ask everyone to find a partner.
2. Each partner puts the yarn on like handcuffs. One partner drops their yarn behind the other and then slips it on their wrist so they are locked together.
3. The task is to become separated following these rules:
4. Can’t untie, break or cut the yarn.
5. Can’t slip the yarn off of their wrists.

#### DO questions

- What were the instructions?
- What happened?
- How did you feel while you were doing this activity?
- Did you look around to see what others were doing?
- How did you feel if you couldn’t see others attempts.
- How did you feel when the first pair completed the task?

#### REFLECT

- Did you ever feel connected, yet disconnected during deployment?
- What did you do that helped you through this time?

#### APPLY

- Are there other times in your life – besides deployment – that you might have this same type of experience?
- What do you think you’ve learned through deployment that will help you with other experiences?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Bing and Bong

### Supplies

- 4 different items that can easily be passed around a circle. (pencil, ball, small stuffed animal, comb)

### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

### Outcome:

- Discover how adding one new responsibility or task can make a usual routine more difficult.
- Understand how the addition of several tasks can totally change an individual's perspective.

### Facilitator Note:

This activity can be done in small groups or in one large group. Adjust the time for the large group activity.

### DO

1. Ask the group to sit in a circle either on the floor or in chairs, if available.
2. Hold up one of the items from the supply list and say you'd like to pass this "Bing" around the circle.
  - Say, "This is a Bing."
  - The person receiving it says, "A what?"
  - The person passing responds, "A Bing."
  - The person receiving says, "Thank you," then turns to the next person and repeats the sequence.
3. When the "Bing" is about one-quarter around the circle, introduce a second item as a "Bong" and pass it in the opposite direction using the same sequence. "This is a 'Bong' . . . ."
4. When the "Bong" is about one-quarter around the circle, introduce a third item as a "Ding" and pass it in the opposite direction using the same sequence. "This is a 'Ding' . . . ."
5. When the "Ding" is about one-quarter around the circle, introduce a fourth item as a "Dong" and pass it in the opposite direction using the same sequence. "This is a 'Dong' . . . ."

### DO questions

- What were you supposed to do?
- What happened?
- How did it feel to do this activity?

### REFLECT

- How does this activity relate to what you've been through since the beginning of mobilization?
- Name some of the added responsibilities you've had. (The Service Member should also name responsibilities that they've added during deployment.)
- Have you always been successful in juggling the added responsibilities?
- What has this experience meant to you personally?
- What effect do you think it had on your Family?

### APPLY

- You've learned many new things during the time of deployment and now redeployment. (You've learned to juggle many new responsibilities.) How do you think this experience will help you face other challenges in your life?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Structures

### Supplies

- Bag of structures (pieces of one-inch diameter PVC pipe)

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcome:

- Team members will think as a Family as they create a closed-ended structure that symbolizes their Families.

### DO

1. Divide the participants into groups of five or six.
2. As a team construct a close-ended structure using all of the pieces in the bag. Only the pieces in the bag may be used.
3. All team members should actively participate in building the structure.

### DO questions

- Did you follow the instructions given?
- Did everyone participate?

### REFLECT

- How did the group decide what the structure should look like?
- Why was it important that everyone take part in this activity?
- Who, if anyone, monitored the progress of the structure to assure it met the directions given?
- How hard was it to build the structure?

### APPLY

- Can you see any relationship between building this structure and how your Family “re-built” while your Family member was deployed?
- Will the addition of your Family member back into your Family unit change how things are currently being done?
- Do you believe you can build a stronger Family than before deployment?



## Structures – A Building Activity

### Bag Inventory (pieces of one-inch diameter PVC pipe)

#### Materials for Structures

Pipe#	Size (inches)	Connectors	Description
1	27	2	Cross with four openings
2	25-1/2	5	Tee with three openings
3	24-3/4	11	90 degree elbow with two openings
4	22-7/8	2	45 degree bend with two openings
5	22-1/2	2	Straight connector with two openings
6	19-1/2	1	Cap with one opening
7	19-1/2		
8	19-1/2		
9	18-3/4	1	Bag
10	15		
11	15		
12	13-1/2		
13	12		
14	12		
15	11-5/8		
16	11-1/4		
17	9-3/4		
18	8-1/4		
19	6-3/4		
20	6-3/4		
21	6		
22	6		
23	6		
24	5-1/4		
25	4-1/2		
26	4-1/2		
27	3-3/4		

# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Wanted Posters

### Supplies

- Newsprint or other type of large pieces of paper
- Markers or crayons
- Wanted Posters completed by youth in [Coming Home](#)

### Activity Time

- 20 minutes

### Outcome:

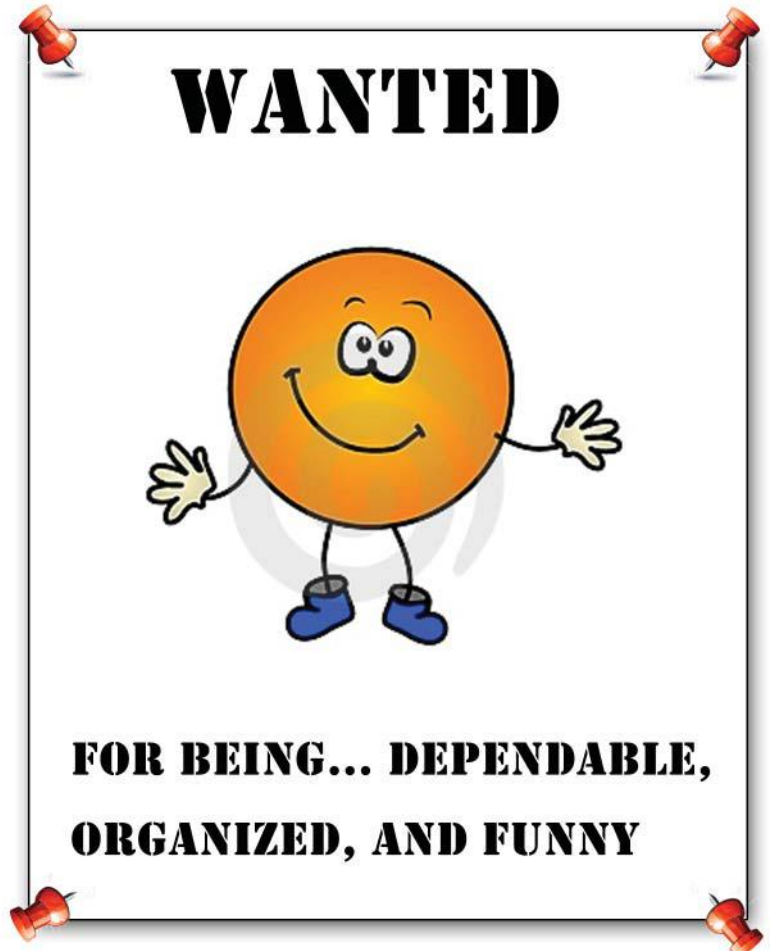
- Participants will identify personal strengths they've gained through their experience as a military child and particularly through their Family member's deployment and impending homecoming that makes them "wanted" – an integral part of their Family unit.

### SAY

We've talked a lot about the added responsibilities that every Family member has had during deployment. The young people here started this next activity when we were together for [Coming Home](#). Now it's time to finish it. We're going to make Wanted Posters.

### DO

1. Ask each adult participant to make a Wanted Poster of themselves including a self-portrait and list the characteristics they have that make them an important part of their Family.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Wanted Posters (cont.)

2. Ask each young person to review the wanted poster made earlier. Suggest that they can make additions but ask that they not remove anything on their poster.
3. Ask each participant to share their Wanted Poster and ask them to share an example of one of their characteristics.

### REFLECT

- Was it difficult to identify traits that described you well?
- Were you honest with what you included? Or did you include it because you thought others would expect a certain response?
- How did you feel when you saw what your Family member listed on their poster? Why?

### APPLY

- As a Family, how can you build upon what you've learned in this activity?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 3: Looking Back – Moving Forward

### Five Changes

**Supplies**

- None

**Activity Time:**

- 10 minutes

**Outcome:**

- Participants will identify physical changes made by their partner.
- Participants will begin thinking about changes that have occurred with their Service Member since deployment.

**DO**

1. Ask everyone to team up with their Family member(s).
2. Ask them to stand back-to-back.
3. Without turning around, take two minutes to change five things about your appearance.
4. Go....Time's up.
5. Turn around, facing your partner, see if you can identify the five changes your partner made. (Allow a couple of minutes for this)
6. Instruct the group not to undo any of the changes they made.
7. Ask everyone to once again stand back-to-back.
8. Without turning around, make an additional 5 changes to your appearance.
9. Turn facing your partner and see if you can identify those five changes your partner made.

**DO questions**

- What did you do?
- Did you find this difficult?

**REFLECT**

- What did you learn about yourself and your partner?

**APPLY**

- Thinking about the time you were apart from your Family member were there changes – obvious and subtle – that were made? (braces put on or removed, hair color changed, broken bones or scars)
- Share one change you've noticed about your Family member and one change you know you've made.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Family Time Line

### Supplies

- Paper (each Family should have at least 2 yards or 72 inches of paper; craft paper is available by the roll)
- Markers or crayons

### Activity Time:

- 45 minutes

### Outcome:

- Family members will identify important landmarks during the deployment time.

### DO

Working in Family units ask each Family to develop a Family Time Line using the following guidelines:

1. Establish a start date. This might be the deployment date or might be the date that word arrived of the deployment.
2. Establish an end date. This will likely be the homecoming date although a Family might decide to leave their time line open so new highlights can be added as they occur.
3. Draw the time line. Be creative. A Family might choose to have each member draw a line and indicate their highlights in a different color and then use one color to represent the family.
4. Be realistic about what you include. There were bad times and good times. Maybe the Service Member lost a good friend on a Family member's birthday.
5. Encourage the Families to really talk about what happened during this time away. It might be really serious stuff, important things or just something silly that happened. These are all important things for Families to share.
6. After Families have had about 30 minutes to work on their time lines ask each Family to share one event that was meaningful to them with the rest of the group.

### DO questions

- How did you determine what your time line would look like?
- Did everyone have ideas to contribute?

### REFLECT

- Was it hard to identify events to include on the time line?
- Did you tend to only include the fun things or are there sad things included too.
- Which landmarks caused the greatest Family discussions?
- Are there events that occurred that you aren't yet ready to share? (Why you really stopped playing basketball or the loss of a fellow military member) Do you think your Family members understand that it's just not time to share some things yet?

### APPLY

- Did you have a special way to share important events with your Family during deployment? (Scrapbooks, memory boxes, pictures, letters, e-mails)
- All Families get really busy with life. How can this activity be used in other ways with your Family?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Supplies

- Table diagram handout
- Pencils

## Activity Time:

- 15 minutes

## Outcome:

- Participants will identify people who have provided support and “have just been there for them” during deployment.
- Each participant will determine a special way to thank those individuals who sit at their table.

## Who’s At Your Table

As you worked through the timeline in the last activity you probably could also identify individuals that have played a significant role in your life. Some may be family members, others friends or colleagues and some may be strangers that have reached out to help. Who’s At Your Table helps to identify those people.

### DO

1. Distribute the table handout and pencils.
2. Explain that tables serve many purposes – they can be for food and fellowship, they can be used for making important decisions and they can be a place for folks to gather, offer support and share conversation. Everyone here has had important people sitting at their table over the past year or two that have provided support, possibly given a helping hand or shared tears and laughter.
3. Ask each participant to identify the people at their table by writing names or descriptions at each chair. Keep in mind there may be people you want to include at the table because of their help but you may not know their name. That’s OK.
4. When everyone’s completed their handout ask the participants to get into groups of 4 or 5 and share.
5. At the bottom of the handout ask each person to list ways to say thank you for the support.

### DO questions

- Was it difficult to come up with people to fill your table?
- Did you know everyone by name?

### REFLECT

- Are you surprised by any of the names or people you decided to list?
- Did you ask for their support or were they “just there”?

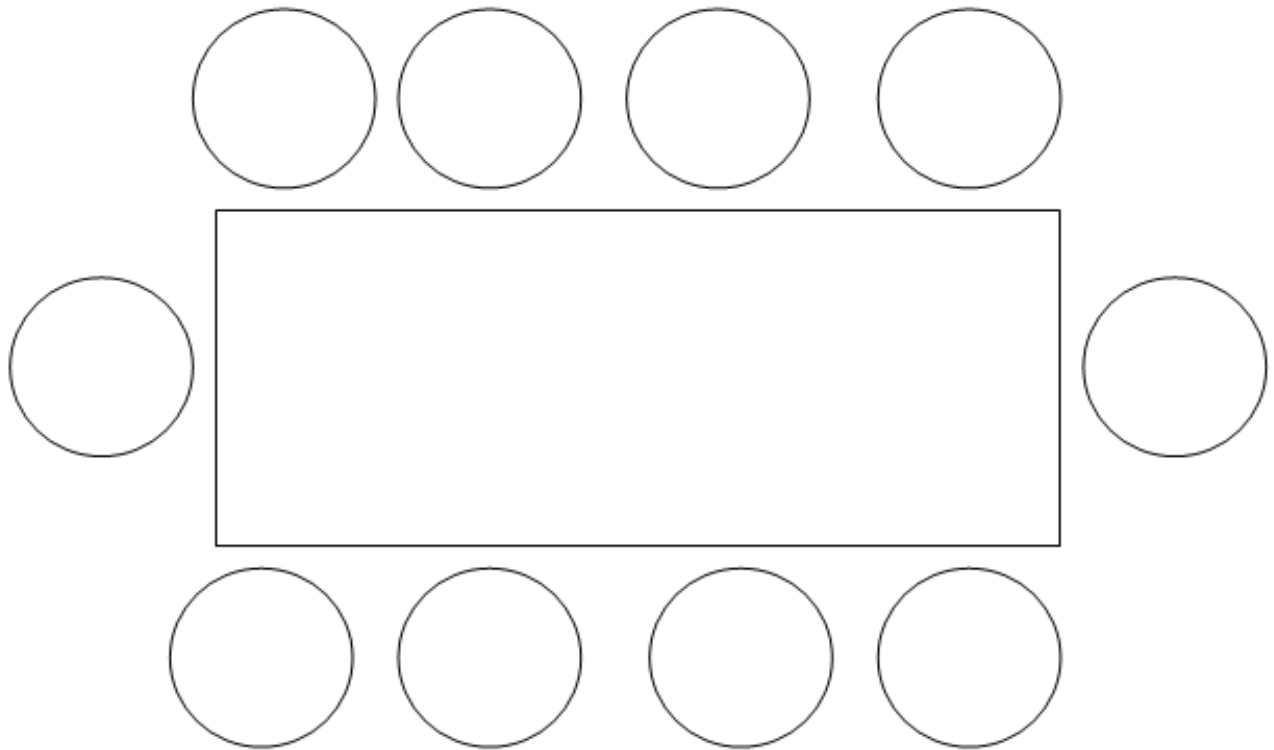
### APPLY

- Are there people at your Family members table you would like to thank for the support they provided?
- Do you think you sit at someone else’s table?
- Thinking of the support that these individuals have given you, what can you learn from them to help someone else?



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Who's at Your Table



List ways to say thank you:



*Available for  
reproduction  
in Appendix 5*



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## It Looks Like This

### DO

1. In Family units and using the materials provided ask participants to create a piece of art that illustrates their Family. Encourage them to be creative. It might be a before and after deployment piece, what they picture as the “ideal” family or a representation of a favorite group activity.
2. Ask everyone to share their art and give a brief description.

### Supplies

- Modeling clay or dough
- Variety of arts and crafts supplies, such as construction paper, glitter, glue, feathers, poster board, beads

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcome:

- Families will create a piece of art that illustrates their family.



**Facilitator  
Note**

No debrief, this one is just for fun.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## SESSION 4: Closing

Continue to Connect

### DO

1. Pass out lists of activities that young people developed during *Coming Home*.
2. Explain that these may be done as Families or as small groups.
3. Suggest that people who live near each other might like to initiate additional meeting times.

### Supplies

- Lists of activities young people developed during *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*

### Activity Time:

- 5 minutes

### Outcome:

- Participants will have additional reconnection options outside the workshop



No debrief, this one is just for fun.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Supplies

- Participants may use any supplies that have been used or can be found at the workshop site.

## Activity Time:

- 10 minutes planning time
- 60 seconds per Family for commercials

## Outcome:

- Participants will share through commercials one thing they've learned during the day.

## Commercials

### SAY

We know that this day has meant different things to each of you. As we near the end of the day we want you to show others in a very creative way what you enjoyed most.

As if by magic, you're all now television producers, directors and actors.

### DO

1. Working in either individual Family units or in small groups – 2 or 3 Family units – you'll have 10 minutes to create a commercial that shows one thing you've learned or gained from today.
2. This is a 60 second commercial.
3. Be creative.

### REFLECT and APPLY

The commercials act as the second and third steps in this activity. You may take time for compliments and questions following each commercial, but no other processing is suggested.



# Chapter 4 - Reconnecting Activities

## Baby Steps

### Supplies

- None

### Activity Time:

- Will vary depending upon participants. Don't let the activity go too long.

### Outcome:

- Participants will share with the group.

### DO

1. Ask all participants get into a circle and link their arms. It should be a fairly tight circle.
2. Caution the group to move carefully so no one gets hurt.
3. Instruct the group that when you say "GO" the group will take baby steps to the right (these are little shuffling steps).
4. When someone has something to say about the day they should shout "STOP".
5. The group then stops and the person briefly says something. When they are finished they yell "GO". (You may want to start the activity and show how it works by being the first to say "STOP" and thanking everyone for coming.)
6. The group then begins baby steps to the left until someone else yells "STOP".
7. This continues until everyone's said what they want or until you determine it's time to stop the activity.
8. When it seems time to stop you should yell "Are we finished?" If no one has anything more to say begin the count down 5-4-3-2-1. When you reach 1 everyone rushes to the center of the circle and yells.

This whole activity is an opportunity to reflect on the group and individual experience, so there's no additional debriefing.



This whole activity to reflect on the group and individual experience, so there's no additional debriefing.







**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Chapter Five

Time Together Activities



# Chapter 5 - Time Together Activities

## Planning and Doing

During **Coming Home** Group Action Planning, youth brainstormed activities they could enjoy with their Family Service Members and other workshop participants. The idea was to:

- Share time with Family members.
- Reconnect with others in the *Operation: Boots Off* group.
- Do new things and create happy memories.
- Offer community service and gain service learning experience.

After at least four activities were chosen, volunteers were recruited to serve on the planning team.

- Perhaps Service Members were also asked to volunteer during the **Reconnecting** workshop.
- It's critical that one member of the planning team be designated as Point of Contact (POC) for communication.

The four activities (you may have decided to do more) should be scheduled over twelve months, approximately ninety days apart, on dates that work for most members of the group.

- ✓ **First Activity:** Helps everybody stay connected and eager to participate. Start with something short and fairly simple that's close to most people's homes. How about joining a service learning event that another organization has planned? Participating in an organized run or festival might be fun. Everyone is notified by email or snail mail at least sixty days in advance.
- ✓ **Second Activity:** May be longer and require more planning. An additional ninety days allows plenty of time to handle logistics and perhaps enlist sponsors of the activity involves extra expense.
- ✓ **Third and Fourth Activities:** Can be ambitious events like camping when planned three to six months out. You might even help host an *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home* event for a new group of youth and Service Members. Each activity is a celebration of your progress to strengthen your Family and honor your Service Member.

## Scheduling

Baseball games or overnight camping trips happen in spring, summer, or fall. Community service projects attract more participation during school vacations. Try to schedule all the year's activities up front, and have the POC communicate dates well in advance. The planning team may eventually need more help to make sure everyone knows they're welcome to get involved.

## Communication

Timely communication is critical. Email, phone calls, snail mail, texting, newsletters and flyers are all good methods. Because youth and Service Members were involved in selecting activities, they'll be likely to attend.



# Chapter 5 - Time Together Activities

## Transportation

Planners should make sure that every participant has a ride. Consider:

- Car pools
- Military transit
- Public transit or school bus
- University, state, or county vehicles (if you're working with 4-H programs)
- Parent or Family member volunteers

## Outside Support

Continue to work with partners, especially Operation Military Kids and Family Readiness Groups, who have access to volunteer support and event facilities. They can also reach out to sponsors for donations of tickets, food, and supplies.

## Evaluations

Written or verbal evaluations will provide useful information for improving the future activities. The sample two-page Evaluation Form that follows may be modified to suit your specific situations.



# Chapter 5 - Time Together Activities

## Event Evaluation Form *Operation: Boots Off – Time Together*

Your feedback is important in helping us to increase the quality of our *Operation: Boots Off* outings. Please enter your name and other information below . . .  
complete the brief evaluation on the next page, and . . .  
return both pages to your team facilitator or POC.  
Thank you!

*The Planning Team*



Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outing Location: \_\_\_\_\_



# Chapter 5 - Time Together Activities

	Not Sure	No	Maybe	Somewhat Agree	Agree
<b>Outing Quality</b>					
Overall quality of the event was high.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The event will help relationships in my Family.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

<b>Outing Planning</b>					
Planning team sent out information well in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Information was easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
It was easy to contact the POC.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Directions to the event were clear and easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

<b>Outing Objectives</b>					
I reconnected with others from the Boots Off group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I was able to spend time with my family.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I'm looking forward to the next outing.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**What I liked most about the outing was:**

**The outing could have been improved by:**





**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Appendix 1

Handouts



## Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home

### Next Steps

Congratulations! You have successfully completed *Operation: Boots Off*. Here are some ways you can continue to support military Families.

**Operation: Military Kids**-Supported Opportunities (Please note these resources may be obtained through your State 4-H Military Liaison):

- ▶ **Ready, Set, Go! - The Operation: Military Kids—Ready, Set, Go!** Training Manual was developed for distribution to state, regional, and local teams as well as key military, school, and community stakeholders. Coordinated regional and local training efforts are needed to increase understanding of the unique issues facing military youth who are dealing with the deployment or Reintegration of a parent or loved one. These workshops offer an insight into military culture and the deployment cycle; and suggest ways to best provide for, understand the needs of, and support military kids and their Families through community resources.
- ▶ **Speak Out for Military Kids (SOMK) - Speak Out for Military Kids** is a youth-led, adult-supported project that generates community awareness of issues faced by youth in military Families. Through simulations, interviews, and research, participants learn what military Families go through during deployment. They form speakers' bureaus which develop presentations, public service announcements, videos, and other materials; then they actively seek to share their experiences with others in the community through school assemblies, civic clubs, city councils, and teacher in services.
- ▶ **Mobile Technology Lab** Events - The Mobile Technology Lab is designed to facilitate the connection between deployed Service Members and the children & youth left behind utilizing mobile technology. Available for use are laptop computers, a digital camera, a video recorder, a printer, a scanner and the necessary software and materials for children and youth to send a personal message to their deployed loved one.
- ▶ **Hero Packs** Project - *Hero Packs* are a hands-on way for youth to hand-deliver a salute to military children & youth for their strength and sacrifice while parents are deployed. Hero Packs serve as an expression of support for military Families from their communities and Operation: Military Kids Partners. The Hero Pack project is community service work that builds awareness and fosters community support for geographically dispersed military Families.

### Individual Military Service Resources:

- ▶ Although *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home* was created by the 4-H/Army partnership, every branch of military Service has resources tailored to its own needs.
- ▶ For Army-specific ideas, visit [www.army.mil](http://www.army.mil) and check the Support Troops page.
- ▶ Other Services may connect with individual state partners about how to access their specific services.



## *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*

### Reunion Tip Sheet

Reunions are exciting, but they can also be as hard as separations – maybe harder! When we expect perfection, we're often disappointed. But, if our expectations are realistic, we have a better chance of having things go the way we think they will. We've all had realistic and unrealistic expectations. Realistic expectations will keep everyone from being disappointed, and it will allow Mom or Dad to adjust to family life slowly. Mom or Dad has been away a long time and will need time to remember how to be part of a family again. We also have to acknowledge that we may have some worries like: You didn't do well in school and now your Service Member is going to be angry? You're concerned that since your Service Member has been in combat, they might have changed?

#### **Helpful Tips:**

- Talk with your Service Member before arrival. Talk about your expectations, and listen to theirs.
- Talk to the parent who remained at home about plans for your Service Member's arrival.
- Put together a pack of pictures, videos, awards, papers and report cards to share with your Service Member when they return.
- Plan to do some special things together, but remember to give your Service Member time to readjust and take it slow.
- Being a family is hard work. Spend time alone with each parent. Mom and Dad will need alone time, as well as spending time with you. Don't feel left out. Just remember that they need to readjust to being married again.
- Write down some things you'd like to talk about with your Service Member, in case things feel "funny" and you have difficulty figuring out what to talk about.
- Talk to your friends, your family, and your teachers if you need help dealing with the changes of reunion.
- Go to the Welcome Home Ceremony! Wave a flag or banner, scream and yell to welcome your Service Member home.
- Remember that you're a hero, too. You've survived a very long and difficult time. Give yourself credit, and be easy on yourself over the next few weeks.
- Be patient with yourself, your parents, and your siblings.
- Go slow.
- Expect the unexpected
- Be realistic
- Talk!
- Be flexible.



## *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*

### Overview

**Coming Home** simulates a Military Reunion and Reintegration Process for Families.

**Coming Home** is divided into four phases: Re-Deployment, Reunion, Reintegration, and Normalcy. Each participant is assigned to a group and his or her group rotates through timed sessions that follow the phases of the Reunion and Reintegration Process.

### **Phase 1 – Re-Deployment**

Redeployment is the Anticipation Phase; the Service Member is still deployed. The weeks and days before Reunion are filled with mounting excitement, tension, and nervousness. Days may be spent in busy preparation for a Service Member's return. Fantasies of an even better relationship may surface and take the place of reality as the day of homecoming draws closer. As the experience of homecoming fades, it's often followed by a phase of renewal and the possible renegotiations of roles and responsibilities. (see the Guide Appendix 3, 4 and 5 for more helpful tips on planning for the Service Member's homecoming).

### **Phase 2 – Reunion**

Reunion is the Welcome Home/Honeymoon and Disruption Phase. The honeymoon usually lasts until the first serious disagreement. There are feelings of euphoria and excitement and relief. Families catch up and share experiences and begin to reestablish intimacy. Disruption takes place in approximately six to eight weeks. Pressure is intensified, expectations are unmet and Families are sensitive to each other's presence. Reality hits.

### **Phase 3 – Reintegration**

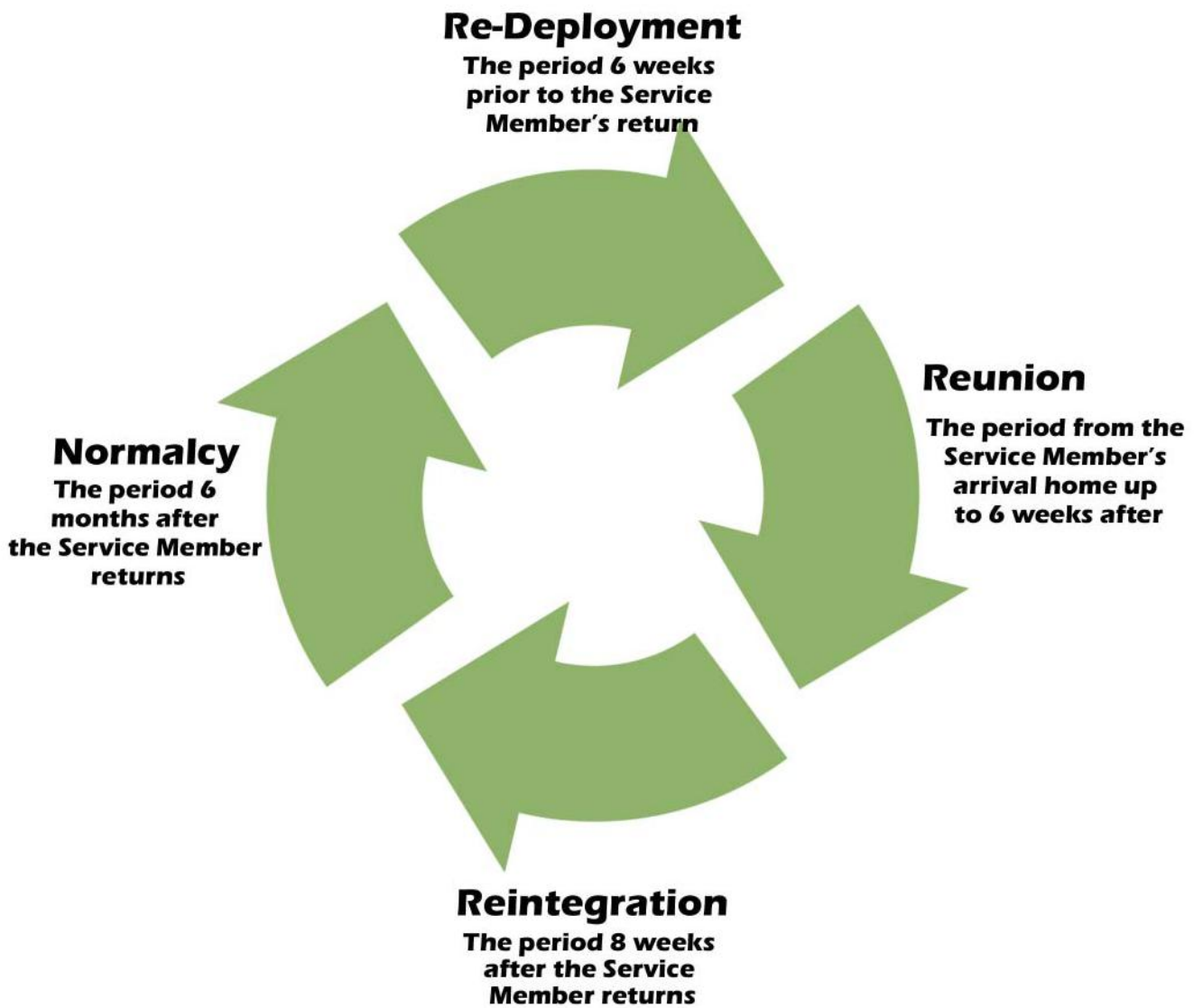
Reintegration is the Stabilization Phase. The amount of time it takes for Families to stabilize with new routines, roles and Family goals. Many experience only minor difficulty in adjusting to new routines. However, readjustment may be a longer process for others.

### **Phase 4 –Normalcy**

Normalcy is the Acceptance Phase. The Family has navigated the Reunion and Reintegration Process adjusting to their changes and finding satisfaction in the "new" life post-deployment.



*Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*  
Phases



## *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home* Implementation

### **Purpose**

By conducting *Coming Home*, military kids are better able to plan for and navigate the Reunion and Reintegration Process. The Reunion and Reintegration Process although joyful can be challenging for the youth. It's important for the youth to map out a plan that will help them navigate the four phases of Reunion and Reintegration.

### **The Goal**

*Coming Home* helps a young person map out and implement a plan that will assist them in navigating the Reunion and Reintegration Process.

### **Planning Group**

*Coming Home* is a complex project to implement. The key to a successful experience is to create a planning group well in advance of the event date. Key planning group members can be State 4-H Military Liaisons, State Operation: Military Kids Leadership Team members, and Child & Youth program staff.

### **Target Audience**

*Coming Home* is designed for use with groups of military school age, middle school and teen youth during lock-ins, Family Readiness Group events, special military days, to reinforce Speak Out for Military Kids or in other situations where youth may benefit from learning about the Reunion and Reintegration Process. Please note: in the Implementation Alternative Section a *Coming Home* variation includes grades 1st – 12th.

### **Facilitators**

*Coming Home* can be used by Operation: Military Kids volunteers, military Child & Youth staff, National Guard or Reserve Family Coordinators, and others with the background and interest in supporting youth whose Service Members are returning from deployment. This also includes Military Family Life Coordinators (MFLC) who work with installation staff.

### **Format**

The curriculum is written so the experience can be implemented in 15 hours with a group as small as 10 or as large as 60. Alternative agendas are also provided.



## Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home

### Character Education

Character is who you are – who you really are. A person of good character acts ethically, doing the right thing and avoiding the wrong. Character shows through actions, in good and in difficult times. It takes courage to be ethical, just like it takes courage to have a parent deployed. Young people should understand the Six Pillars of Character and what they mean. (They're detailed on the following two pages.)

#### Six Pillars of Character

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

The Six Pillars of Character are echoed in Core Values of each Military Service.

#### Air Force Core Values

- Integrity
- Service before self
- Excellence in all we do

#### Coast Guard Core Values

- Honor
- Respect
- Devotion to duty

#### Army Core Values

- Loyalty
- Duty
- Respect
- Selfless service
- Honor
- Integrity
- Personal courage

#### Navy & Marine Corps Core Values

- Honor
- Courage
- Commitment



# A PERSON OF CHARACTER . . .

→ Is a good person, someone to look up to and admire. → Knows the difference between right and wrong and always tries to do what is right. → Sets a good example for everyone. → Makes the world a better place. → Lives according to the “Six Pillars of Character”:  
TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, CARING and CITIZENSHIP

## TRUSTWORTHINESS

- Integrity** ————— **DO:** Stand up for your beliefs • Follow your conscience • Be honorable and upright • Live by your principles no matter what others say • Have the courage to do what is right and to try new things even when it is hard, costly • Build and guard your reputation  
**DON'T:** Do anything wrong • Lose heart if you fail or don't get what you want
- Honesty** ————— **DO:** Tell the truth and nothing but the truth • Be sincere • Be forthright and candid  
**DON'T:** Lie • Cheat • Steal • Be sneaky, tricky, or deceptive
- Reliability** ————— **DO:** Keep your promises • Honor your word and commitments • Be dependable • Do what you are supposed to do • Return what you borrow • Pay your debts • Be on time
- Loyalty** ————— **DO:** Stand by and protect your family, friends, school and country • Be a good friend • Look out for those who care about you • Keep secrets of those who trust you  
**DON'T:** Betray a trust • Let your friends hurt themselves • Do anything just so others will like you • Ask a friend to do anything wrong or spread gossip that could hurt others

## RESPECT

- Golden Rule** ————— **DO:** Treat others the way you want to be treated • Respect the dignity, privacy and freedom of all individuals • Value and honor all people, no matter what they can do for you or to you • Respect others' property — take good care of property you are allowed to use and don't take or use property without permission • Respect the autonomy of others — tell them what they should know to make good choices about their own lives  
**DON'T:** Use or manipulate others • Abuse, demean or mistreat anyone
- Tolerance and Acceptance** ————— **DO:** Judge others on their character, abilities, and conduct without regard to race, religion, gender, where they live, how they dress or the amount of money they have • Be tolerant, respectful and accepting of those who are different from you • Listen to others and try to understand their points of view
- Nonviolence** ————— **DO:** Resolve disagreements, respond to insults and deal with anger peacefully and without violence  
**DON'T:** Use threats or physical force to get what you want or to express anger
- Courtesy** ————— **DO:** Use good manners • Be courteous, polite and civil to everyone  
**DON'T:** Use put-downs, insults or ridicule to embarrass or hurt others

**CHARACTER COUNTS!**

[www.CharacterCounts.org](http://www.CharacterCounts.org)



## RESPONSIBILITY

**Duty** ————— **DO:** Know and do your duty • Acknowledge and meet your legal and moral obligations

**Accountability** — **DO:** Accept responsibility for the consequences of your choices, not only for what you do but what you don't do • Think about consequences on yourself and others before you act • Think long-term • Do what you can do to make things better • Set a good example  
**DON'T:** Look the other way when you can make a difference • Make excuses or blame others

**Pursue Excellence** ————— **DO:** Your best • Persevere • Don't quit • Be prepared • Be diligent • Work hard  
• Make all you do worthy of pride

**Self-Control** ————— **DO:** Take charge of your own life • Set realistic goals • Keep a positive outlook • Be prudent and self-disciplined with your health, emotions, time and money • Be rational — act out of reason not anger, revenge or fear • Know the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do • Be self-reliant — manage your life so you are not dependent on others; pay your own way whenever you can

## FAIRNESS

**Justice** ————— **DO:** Be fair and just • Treat people equally • Make decisions without favoritism or prejudice • In imposing punishment be sure the consequences for wrongdoing are consistent, certain and proportional (not too harsh or lenient)  
**DON'T:** Take more than your fair share • Take advantage of or blame others unfairly

**Openness** ————— **DO:** Be open-minded and impartial — consider what people have to say before you decide • Be careful — get the facts, including opposing viewpoints, before making decisions (especially blaming or accusing another)

## CARING

**Concern for Others** ————— **DO:** Be compassionate and empathetic • Be kind, loving, and considerate • Be thankful and express gratitude for what people do for you • Forgive others for their shortcomings  
**DON'T:** Be mean, cruel or insensitive

**Charity** ————— **DO:** Be charitable and altruistic — give money, time, support, comfort without strings for the sake of making someone else's life better, not for praise or gratitude • Help people in need

## CITIZENSHIP

**Do Your Share** — **DO:** Be a good citizen and a good neighbor • Care about and pursue the common good  
• Be a volunteer — help your school and community be better, cleaner and safer  
• Protect the environment by conserving resources, reducing pollution, and cleaning up after yourself • Participate in making things better by voicing your opinion, voting, serving on committees, reporting wrongdoing and paying taxes

**Respect Authority and the Law** **DO:** Play by the rules • Obey parents, teachers, coaches and others who have been given authority • Observe just laws • Honor and respect principles of democracy

UNDERLINED words are vocabulary words to be learned at the appropriate developmental level.





## Tough Topics Series Learning and Teaching Support

# WELCOME HOME

## Military Kids, Homecoming & Reunion

Homecomings and reunions are the last stage in the deployment process and is a time of celebration as well as change. Military family members, particularly kids, experience a wide variety of feelings before, during, and after being reunited. All of these feelings are perfectly healthy and normal given the fact they have been separated for several months and have adapted to life without one another. In fact, there are three stages military families experience as a result of the reunion experience and these are as follows: anticipation, readjustment, and stabilization.

### Anticipation:

The weeks and days before homecoming and reunion are filled with excitement, nervousness, tension, and relief. During deployment family members have learned to adjust to the absence of the service member one in day-to-day activities. Reuniting again simultaneously brings both joy and anxiety because daily life as a military family is about to change again.

### Readjustment:

As anticipation of the homecoming and reunion fades, and the family is reunited once again, daily roles, responsibilities, and rules are renegotiated. Experts have identified two time periods specific to this sometimes challenging stage:

#### Honeymoon (Usually until the first serious disagreement)

- ◆ Feelings of euphoria, relief
- ◆ Blur of excitement
- ◆ Catching up and sharing experiences
- ◆ Beginning to readjust to intimacy

#### Readjustment (Approximately 6-8 weeks)

- ◆ Pressures of daily life intensify
- ◆ Sensitivity to service member ones presence
- ◆ Increased tension as daily relationships confront reality

### Stabilization:

The amount of time it takes families to stabilize during homecoming and reunion varies. Many of them encounter only minor difficulties in adjusting to new routines. For others, however, readjustment may be a longer process that requires additional support. Seeking assistance, if needed, is critical to helping all families navigate homecoming and reunion in a healthy and positive manner.



## Kids Reactions to Service Member's Return

Ages	Reactions	Techniques to reconnect
<b>Birth to 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cries</li> <li>• Fusses</li> <li>• Pulls away</li> <li>• Clings to other spouse/caregiver</li> <li>• Has problems with elimination</li> <li>• Changes sleeping and eating habits</li> <li>• Does not recognize service member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the baby; hug him/her a lot</li> <li>• Bathe and change baby</li> <li>• Feed and play with him/her</li> <li>• Relax and be patient</li> <li>• He/she will warm up in a while</li> </ul>
<b>1 to 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shyness</li> <li>• Clinging</li> <li>• Does not recognize service member</li> <li>• Cries</li> <li>• Has temper tantrums</li> <li>• Regresses – no longer toilet trained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't force holding, hugging, kissing</li> <li>• Give them space</li> <li>• Give them time to warm up</li> <li>• Be gentle and fun</li> <li>• Sit, play, and interact at their level</li> </ul>
<b>4 to 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates anger</li> <li>• Acts out to get attention; needs proof you're real</li> <li>• Is demanding</li> <li>• Feels guilty for making service member go away</li> <li>• Talks a lot to bring service member up to date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to them</li> <li>• Accept their feelings</li> <li>• Play with them</li> <li>• Reinforce that they are loved</li> <li>• Find out the new things in their lives (books, TV, preschool)</li> <li>• He/she will warm up in a while</li> </ul>
<b>6 to 12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feels he/she isn't good enough</li> <li>• Dreads return because of discipline</li> <li>• Boasts about military parent/loved one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review pictures, schoolwork activities, scrap books</li> <li>• Praise what they have accomplished during absence</li> <li>• Try not to criticize</li> <li>• Get involved in their education</li> </ul>
<b>13 to 18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is excited</li> <li>• Feels guilty because they don't live up to standards</li> <li>• Is concerned about rules and responsibilities</li> <li>• Feels too old or is unwilling to change plans to accommodate parent</li> <li>• Is rebellious</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share what has happened during absence</li> <li>• Listen with undivided attention</li> <li>• Don't be judgmental</li> <li>• Respect privacy and friends</li> <li>• Don't tease about their interests including fashion, music, etc.</li> <li>• Get involved in their education</li> </ul>

### Tips for Educators

**Focus on students and the classroom learning environment** – Retain routines and emphasis on the importance of learning while always leaving room to tend to individual student needs.

**Provide structure** – Maintain predictable schedule with clear behavioral guidelines and consequences to maintain safe and caring classroom. If student is distressed about the family homecoming, find appropriate time for them to share feelings, needs, fears, hopes, and wishes.

**Maintain objectivity** – Respond in a calm and caring manner to student inquiries and answer questions in simple, direct terms. Regardless of political beliefs, refrain from expressing personal opinions.

**Be patient and reduce student workload as needed** – Expect temporary slow downs or disruptions in learning when a homecoming and reunion occurs.

**Listen** – Be approachable, attentive, and sensitive to the unique needs of students coping with homecoming and reunion. Let kids know they can speak individually with you or a school counselor, nurse, psychologist or social worker about their questions and concerns. Take time to acknowledge the circumstances and answer student questions as needed in a factual manner.

**Be sensitive to language and cultural needs** – Be aware of, knowledgeable about, and sensitive to the language, values, and beliefs of other cultures in order to assist students and their families appropriately. Inquire about school, community, and military resources available to assist kids and their families in coping in healthy ways.

**Acknowledge and validate feelings** – Help students develop a realistic understanding of homecoming and reunion. Provide reassurance that their feelings of excitement, joy, nervousness, tension, and relief are normal responses and all individuals and their families adjust to the changes involved with reunion at a different pace.

For more information: <http://www.k12.wa.us/OperationMilitaryKids/>

Written by Mona Johnson, MA, CPP, CDP, - OSPI, Program Supervisor  
Information for this article adapted from Deployment and Reunion Guides for Ages 3-6, 7 to 12,  
and "Army Brat Pack" for Teens by USARPAC Child and Youth Services and Working with Military Children, A Primer for School Personnel by Virginia Joint Military Family Services Board



## *Operation: Boots Off* – Coming Home

### Tips for Service Members

On longer deployments, your spouse may have changed. While you've been deployed, your spouse has learned to cope with new and different situations. Don't be threatened by this independence. The fact that your spouse can cope alone doesn't necessarily mean he or she wants to.

- ✓ Ease yourself back into your Family gradually. See yourself as a “special guest” for awhile. Don't criticize how your spouse has handled the children, finances, or the household—that can cause resentment. If changes need to be made, they can wait a few weeks. Some things will change naturally as a result of you being home.
- ✓ Be positive about the decisions your spouse has made, even if you would have handled them differently.
- ✓ Don't try and take over the finances immediately. Don't interrogate your spouse over every penny he or she may have spent in your absence. You may find sharing financial responsibilities a welcome addition to your household management.
- ✓ Don't be surprised if your spouse is a little bit envious of your travels. Your life may have appeared to be very exciting compared to his or her job at home.
- ✓ When it comes to discipline, take it easy on the children for awhile. Stick to the rules your spouse has established during your absence. Changing the rules suddenly may not only be difficult on the children but your spouse may also resent it. On the other hand, it may be very tempting to spoil the children. Don't put your spouse in the position where he or she must constantly play the “heavy” while you have all the fun with the children.
- ✓ Take time to listen and talk to your loved ones. Communication is the basis of a healthy, growing relationship.
- ✓ Make separate time for each child and for your spouse. Have a true “Family reunion” before taking time alone with your spouse.
- ✓ Support the good things your Family has done. Show pleasure and interest in how your Family has grown.
- ✓ Don't change systems that have been working well. If your spouse has been doing the checkbook, or a teen doing some of the cooking, don't demand an immediate return to the way things were before.
- ✓ Go easy on discipline. Don't try to “whip things into shape.” Take some time to understand how your Family has changed during separation.
- ✓ Remember that romantic conversation can make re-entering intimacy easier.



## *Operation: Boots Off* – Coming Home

### Tips for Spouses

On longer deployments, expect your spouse to have changed. Pressures of the job, exposure to the suffering of disaster victims, and separation from the Family may cause attitude changes.

- ✓ Be patient. Your spouse's routine may have become regimented. It will take some time to readjust to Family life. He or she may try to run the Family like a government unit or they may rebel against any type of schedule at all.
- ✓ You may have altered your schedule to compensate for your spouse's absence. For instance, you may have enrolled in a class or have made new friends. Give your spouse time to adjust to these new commitments.
- ✓ You may find your spouse is either surprised or hurt that you've managed so well by yourself. Try not to get defensive. Reassure him/her you very much need his/her companionship and emotional support.
- ✓ Many spouses have been devastated because their partner arrives home exhausted. Working long hours and jet lag contribute to fatigue as well as the excitement of returning home. Allow your spouse to adjust to time changes. Expect he/she will want plenty of rest the first few days home.
- ✓ Many spouses have also been hurt because their partner isn't interested in the reunion celebration they planned. Allow room for flexibility and spontaneity the first few days home. Plan only homecoming activities that can be easily changed.



## *Operation: Boots Off* – Coming Home

### Tips for Couples

On longer deployments, expect your spouse to have changed. Pressures of the job, exposure to the suffering of disaster victims, and separation from the Family may cause attitude changes.

- ✓ Avoid the “I’ve Had It Worse” game. Both partners have faced difficult challenges during the past few days/weeks/months.
- ✓ Agree on Family plans for the first few days/weeks. Let everyone contribute.
- ✓ Give each other space as it’s needed. People become accustomed to living without their partner and may not always consider another’s opinion before making decisions.
- ✓ If there were problems or unfinished business before the deployment, chances are they did not go away. The same financial problems or disagreements regarding children and discipline will probably reappear after the homecoming party is over.
- ✓ If you have children, that “second honeymoon” you’ve talked about may have to wait for a while. Children don’t always understand being pushed aside at a time when they need attention.
- ✓ Your relationship may be awkward at first. This isn’t unusual. Don’t feel you have to reestablish intimacy immediately. You may feel more comfortable getting to know one another again first. This may take a few hours or a few days. The “right” answer is the one that works best for you. Communicate about feelings.
- ✓ Intimacy reducers: Alcohol, children awake and scurrying around the house, unresolved hurt and anger, distrust, and experimentation without negotiation.
- ✓ Many couples have gotten into a real bind because they feel the need to celebrate their reunion with a spending spree or vacation. Remember—if you can’t afford it, don’t do it.
- ✓ Communicate events that occurred during the deployment. Reread letters or discuss questions about the deployment and home life.

(Source: Army Community Service, Deployment Handbook [www.wood.army.mil/mwr/deploymenthndbook.htm](http://www.wood.army.mil/mwr/deploymenthndbook.htm))



## *Operation: Boots Off – Coming Home*

### Tips for Parents

#### **Before Departure**

- ✓ Children may not fully understand why one of their parents must leave. Confronted with an extended absence, they sense a loss of continuity and security.
- ✓ Young children may become confused and fearful that Mommy or Daddy will disappear. Children aren't very good at expressing fears and feelings in words. Anger and a desire for revenge, as well as guilt for feeling that way, are often demonstrated in the children's behavior.
- ✓ Change is puzzling to children. They want everything to remain the same. When changes occur, children usually have no other way to release anxieties, and nowhere to go for help.
- ✓ At a time when the Service Member's duties becomes more demanding of their time and energy, the spouse who stays at home may feel overwhelmed as they prepare to solely support the children, home, and car.
- ✓ Parents can help children understand and accept the separation and their feelings about it by planning ahead. Anticipate the problems and discuss them with the entire Family.

#### **After Return**

- ✓ Don't pack the kids off to Grandma's house so you can be alone.
- ✓ Your children may choose to keep their distance from the returning parent because they may have unresolved feelings of anger toward the parent who left them. They may not trust the parent not to leave them again. These children want to be "courted" back into the relationship.
- ✓ Other children may attempt to cling to the returning parent for dear life. If the parent leaves the room, the children fear they may be abandoned. This "clinging" stage will pass when they become sure the parent will return home at the end of the day.
- ✓ Jealousy is a common reaction for children during a reunion. They were the center of attention of the parent that remained behind. Be careful not to abruptly demote the child to the number-two spot.
- ✓ On longer deployments, expect your child to have changed emotionally and physically. Six months can mean a different stage of development, especially with children. Crawling babies may be walking or a teenager may be dating.
- ✓ Don't alter discipline procedures the Family has established while the Service Member was away. Discipline methods should be changed only after the parents have had a chance to discuss options privately.
- ✓ Above all, make sure your children feel loved and needed. Children need to celebrate your return, too!



## Guidelines for Good Communication

Listening and talking – which comes first? When communication is good, who does what isn't really important. The key is how you do it. That's where "reflective listening" comes in. If each person truly listens to another, the message is, "You're important. I want to understand you." Here are some guidelines:

- ✓ Say the same thing in a different way, or say how you think the person feels.
- ✓ Stick with where the person is coming from right now. Try suggesting things or go back to ideas he or she had before.
- ✓ Speak with the same amount of feeling he or she is showing; feel it with him or her.

### **"I" Messages**

Obviously, listening is only one part of communicating. We also need to explore how to share our ideas and feelings with others. Let's look at one more communication technique called an 'I' message. "I" messages are most effective when both people involved are sensitive to each other's feelings and are able to listen well to each other. "I" messages aren't intended to perform communication miracles, but they can lead to more positive and effective communication.

1. These are the three parts to an "I" message:
2. Tell how you feel.
3. Tell what the unacceptable behavior is.
4. Tell what the effect is on you.

For example, "I feel frustrated when you arrive late for the meeting because we can't get all the business done until you're here." In some situations, a person's irritation can easily turn to anger, especially if the behavior continues.

The main idea of "I" messages is to make the person aware of the behavior without putting the feeling in the wrong place, on him or her.







**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Appendix 2

Registration Materials



**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Registration

# Registration Packet

Forms are samples that may be modified for your particular needs and branch of Service

Army CYS Services  
Boots Off Workshop



**Medical Power of Attorney**

Know all men present on this date \_\_\_\_\_ that I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_, do make, constitute, and appoint Operation: Military Kids (OMK) staff at the BOOTS OFF workshop scheduled for (date) \_\_\_\_\_ my true and lawful attorney in fact from \_\_\_\_\_ (list date) to \_\_\_\_\_ act for me and in my name, place and stead for the following purposes only:

To authorize and consent to any and all medical or dental treatment necessary in an emergency situation where the condition of the youth represents a serious or imminent threat to her/his life, health or well being.

Youth's full name \_\_\_\_\_ Youth's age on date of Boots Off workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment at any Army medical facility may be provided without consent under the provision of AR 40-3, paragraph 2-19B. I understand that conscientious effort will be made to notify me prior to such action, and that the expense, if any, will be borne by me. Any additional insurance is as listed below.

Giving and granting unto my said attorney full power and authority to do and perform every act, deed, matter and thing necessary, desirable or expedient to accomplish the foregoing specified purposes, and ratifying and confirming all acts necessary, desirable or expedient to accomplish any of the specifically enumerated purposes, lawfully done pursuant to the authority here in above conferred.

In witness where of, I have hereunto set my hand and seal on the day and date first above written.

Signature of Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Second Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_, COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ SS \_\_\_\_\_.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a notary public (or person authorized to administer oaths under the Title 10 U.S.C. 1044a) for the County/City and State aforesaid, certify that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, whose names are signed to the foregoing power of attorney, dated \_\_\_\_\_, 2009, acknowledged the same before me in the County/City aforesaid.

Give under my hand and official seal this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Commission Expires

Insurance Information:  
(For military list tri-care and military ID, for non-military attach a copy of insurance card)

Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_ Group Number \_\_\_\_\_

Claims Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal / Medical / Dental Information  
DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974  
AUTHORITY: Title 10, United States Code, Section 3013



PRINCIPAL PURPOSES(S): To obtain youth and family program eligibility and background information for proper assignment of the individual into activities and workshops; to contact participant's home and parents/guardians in the event of an accident or illness; to obtain sponsor consent for access to emergency medical care (power of Attorney separate page).

ROUTINE USES: To provide information to medical personnel in the absence of a parent; to notify the parents in case of emergency, to mail information of interest to the participants, to contact the youth's parents/guardian relative to the youth's participation in programs.

DISCLOSURE: Disclosure of requested information is voluntary.

Installation \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Specify Staff or Teen: Staff \_\_\_\_\_ Teen \_\_\_\_\_ Specify Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Age at time of *Operation: Boots Off* Workshop: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Date of last physical exam: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Medication allergies: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Food allergies/food/Religious requirements: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Other allergies (such as bee stings): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Reactions to listed allergies: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Last Tetanus Immunization Date: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please mark any of the following the participant has a history of:  
Asthma \_\_\_\_\_ Diabetes \_\_\_\_\_ Epilepsy \_\_\_\_\_ Rheumatic Fever \_\_\_\_\_ Heart Disease \_\_\_\_\_
8. Please specify any other medical conditions: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are there any physical restrictions? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_
11. TEENS ONLY – Are you currently taking any prescription medications? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list: \_\_\_\_\_  
Note: Prescription medication must be in properly labeled prescription packaging.
12. TEENS ONLY – My child has permission to self-administer medications such as inhaler, epi pen, Tylenol or aspirin. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Points of Contact for Parents



**Operation: Boots Off site contact information:**

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Site phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Site email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Operation: Military Kids office contact information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Other contact information:



## Code of Conduct

To ensure that the *Operation: Boots Off* workshop is a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants, it's necessary to establish and encourage high standards of behavior. Please read the following information and sign below.

As a youth participant in the *Operation: Boots Off* workshop, I will uphold the following conduct and behavior standards:

- I will be courteous and respectful towards others.
- I agree to value and respect others ideas regardless of whether they are the same as my own.
- I will attend, and actively participate in all sessions and activities during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*.
- I will conduct myself in a positive and appropriate manner at all times as defined by the *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* Coordinator.
- I will dress appropriately at all times. I understand that revealing clothing or apparel featuring violence, alcohol, tobacco and other drug messages is prohibited.
- I will wear my nametag at all times.
- I will be in my room at the prescribed curfew time each night unless scheduled activities extend beyond this time.
- I understand that I will forfeit my attendance at *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* for any misconduct or repeated misbehavior and be required to leave.
- I understand that use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* program time will be restricted.
- I will refrain from using or possessing alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, or weapons.
- I will refrain from violence, sexual activity and damage to property/equipment at any time during *Operation: Boots Off*.

As a teen participant at ***OPERATION: BOOTS OFF***, I represent not only myself, but the United States Army teens throughout the world and I pledge to uphold this commitment. I understand that if I am not able to remain in good standing at *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* and uphold the commitments set forth above, I will be asked to leave:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have witnessed the pledge made by my son/daughter and will support him/her in carrying out the *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* requirements. I understand that if my son/daughter breaks any of the commitments stated in this code of conduct, I will be notified and that my son/daughter will be sent home. In this case, I understand that I will incur the cost to pick up my child or arrange to get him/her home upon notification.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s) / Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

CC: Parent/Guardian and Youth

## Operation: Boots Off Workshop Youth Registration Information



Name you want to be called (Nickname):	Date of Birth: _____	SS#:
Address:	Male ___ Female ___	Passport # / Exp. Date (overseas only):
Phone:	Age: _____ Grade: _____	Region:

To ensure that the *Operation: Boots Off* workshop is a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants, it's necessary to establish and encourage high standards of behavior. Please read the following information and sign below.

- I will be courteous and respectful towards others.
- I will attend, and actively participate in all sessions and activities during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*.
- I will conduct myself in a positive and appropriate manner at all times as defined by the *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* Coordinator.
- I will dress appropriately at all times. I understand that revealing clothing or apparel featuring violence, alcohol, tobacco and other drug messages is prohibited.
- I will wear my nametag at all times.
- I will be in my room at the prescribed curfew time each night unless scheduled activities extend beyond this time.
- I understand that I will forfeit my attendance at *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* for any misconduct or repeated misbehavior and be required to leave.
- I understand that use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* program time will be restricted.
- I will refrain from using or possessing alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, or weapons.
- I will refrain from violence, sexual activity and damage to property/equipment at any time during *Operation: Boots Off*.
- OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*, I represent not only myself, but the United States Army teens throughout the world and I pledge to uphold this commitment. I understand that if I am not able to remain in good standing at *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* and uphold the commitments set forth above, I will be asked to leave:

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Mail This Form To:

OR Send by Fax to:

## Adult Code of Conduct



Please read the following carefully:

Your participation as an Operation: Military Kids staff member or volunteer is a critical element of the Army's commitment to improve the deployment experience, particularly when Service Members return home. This may involve working extended evening hours including supervising evening leisure activities.

This Code of Conduct is a set of behavioral expectations to be followed by all staff. It provides the guidelines for your work. Your immediate supervisor will be notified if these guidelines are not followed.

I agree as a STAFF PARTICIPANT/Volunteer at the *Operation: Boots Off* workshop to observe the following. I will:

1. Attend and actively participate in all sessions and activities including leisure/recreation activities during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*. Assist OMK staff to organize and supervise activities.
2. Conduct myself in a professional manner. Be courteous, positive, enthusiastic, cooperative and respectful toward others. Serve as a role model and maintain positive, enthusiastic, and cooperative behavior.
3. Encourage and allow teens to participate. Listen respectfully when children and youth are expressing their ideas.
4. Dress appropriately. Casual dress will be the standard dress. There will be many outdoor activities that will require comfortable clothing. Open-toed shoes or sandals are not recommended. No revealing clothing such as short –shorts, midriff tops, or halter tops will be permitted. No t-shirts with inappropriate wording or logos will be permitted. Swimwear will be conservative.
5. Only use tobacco products in designated areas. Smoking in front of the children/teens is prohibited. (Please let us know and we will try to assign you to a smoking room.) Do not consume alcohol at any time during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*.
6. Remain at the site of the event for the duration of the program except in an emergency.
7. Conduct nightly room checks to ensure curfew is followed by all teens. Ensure teens stay in the rooms to which they have been assigned by *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* staff. Perform daily morning room checks to assess the condition of the rooms and to guard against vandalism.
8. Supervise youth and provide guidance as necessary to ensure appropriate behavior as outlined in the Teen Code of Conduct.
9. Assist youth with follow-up requirements at if appropriate after *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*.
10. Report any safety or other concerns to the OMK staff for immediate resolution.
11. Review and adhere to guidance, discipline, and touch policies outlined in AR608-10 and Arm CYSS policy.
12. Limit use of cell phone, email and other personal electronic devices to official business.

Staff/Volunteer participant name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Staff/Volunteer participant signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Army CYS Services  
After Action Report Criteria



Garrison:  
Dates and location of *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*: \_\_\_\_\_

Report Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART I: PROGRAMMING AND ATTENDANCE**

What was the theme/title of your *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF* this year?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many Garrisons participated in *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*? \_\_\_\_\_

How many youth attended *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*?

Junior Advisors \_\_\_\_\_ Teen Participants \_\_\_\_\_

How many adults attended *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*?

Installation staff \_\_\_\_\_

Others adults, specify how many and what organizations they came from \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Please indicate if they were facilitators and which sessions they facilitated)

Describe below how the following program elements were incorporated into your :

Character Counts!

Open Recreation

Opportunity for youth to share experiences/establish support systems related to deployment

Teambuilding/challenge course

Service-Learning

Technology

Youth issue identification and prioritization

Workforce Preparation

*Please submit up to six photos or video clips that support this description. Photos should be high resolution and capture the essence of the youth experience showing 2-3 youth at a time. Photos of large groups of youth posed with the OPERATION: BOOTS OFF banner are not desirable.*

## **PART II: LOGISTICS**

How were the following issues addressed during your *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*: (explain all that apply)

Youth screening process

Transportation

VAT tax forms

Training for junior advisors

Night-time security watch

Meals

Special recreation (examples: boating supervision, Medical needs

Foreign language translation

Money exchange

Travel orders and vouchers

Room assignments

Special Needs life guards for swimming)

Describe below any unusual circumstances and how you handled them: (examples: bus broke down, bad weather, scheduled presenter couldn't make it)

List up to five issues identified by youth during *OPERATION: BOOTS OFF*

Operation: Boots Off  
Adult Registration

The logo for "Operation: Boots Off" features the text "OPERATION:" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font above the words "BOOTS OFF" in a larger, bold, blue, sans-serif font. The text is set against a bright yellow, multi-pointed starburst background.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Civ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency POC Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

List special skills you possess (examples: EMT, AFAP facilitator, lifeguard):

# Participant List



NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL	TEAM



**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Photo Release

I give to the Army Operation Military Kids Initiative and its partners (Army CYSS, CSREES/4-H, Boys & Girls Club of America, Military Child Education Coalition and the American Legion), its nominees, agents, and assigns, unlimited permissions to copyright and use, publish, and republish for purposes of advertising, public relations, trade, or any other lawful use, information about me and/or my child(ren) and reproductions of my/our likeness (photographic or otherwise) and my/our voice, whether or not related to any affiliation with 4-H, with or without my/our name. I hereby waive any right that I (and Minor) may have to inspect or approve the copy and/or finished product or products that may be used in connection therewith or the use to which it may be applied.

Participant Status:  Youth  Adult

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Consent of parent or legal guardian if above individual is a minor.**

I consent and agree, individually and, as parent or legal guardian of the minor named above, to the foregoing terms and provisions. I hereby warrant that I am of full age and have every right to contract for the minor in the above regard. I state further that I have read the above information release and that I am fully familiar with the contents.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Appendix 3

Additional Activities



## Balloon Frantic

### Supplies

- Balloons (one for each person plus five extra)

### Activity Time:

- 10 minutes

### Outcome:

- Keep all the balloons off the floor.

### DO

1. Ask the group to get into a large circle. Tell them they may not want to stay in the circle during the activity but this is a good starting point.
2. Give each participant a balloon and ask them to blow it up and tie it off. The size of the balloon doesn't matter.
3. Have 5 additional balloons blown up and tied off. Toss them in when the group has the first balloons in the air but don't tell them.
4. Instruct the group when you say "Go" their job is to juggle the balloons so none hit the floor. You can't hit the same balloon twice in a row.

### DO questions

- Did you follow the instructions?

### REFLECT

- Was this an easy activity? Why or why not?
- Were there times when you moved away from a balloon because you thought someone else would keep it in the air?

### APPLY

- How does this relate to what you've experienced the last year or so?
- Could you write an actual extra responsibility that you've gained on each of the balloons?
- How does it feel when you can't keep all of the balloons in the air?
- What happened when balloons were added or removed?



## Believe it or Knot

### Supplies

- 15' webbing or rope with a knot tied in it

### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

### Outcome:

- Energizer

### DO

1. Lay the knotted webbing/rope on the ground in a circle.
2. Have the group stand in a circle around the webbing and pick up the circle.
3. Have the group begin to rotate the circle around in clockwise direction.
4. The facilitator will yell stop. Whoever has the knot must share an interesting fact about them.
5. The group must then decide if it's true or knot.
6. The group will discuss for a moment and give their opinion.
7. The person will confirm or deny the statement. (true or false)
8. The person will then start the knot going again and they are the one to say stop for the next round. Work with groups of 15 or less so that everyone has a chance to share a fact.

### REFLECT

- Was it hard to decide what fact to share?
- Did it take the group a long time to decide if the facts were true or false?
- Did everyone follow the directions?

### APPLY

- Would you play this game with people you're just getting to know?
- Do you think this game makes some people feel embarrassed?



## Video Clips

### Supplies

- Video clips from The Cosby Show and The Simpsons
- Computer
- LCD Projector
- Screen

### Activity Time:

- 20 minutes

### Outcome:

- Have participants start thinking about where they want to be with their family after their Service Member returns

### DO

1. Show a Cosby clip.
2. Show a clip of the Simpsons having conflict.

### REFLECT

- What was similar about the videos?
- What was different?
- Did anything from the videos remind you of things you've really seen?
- What pillars of character were shown in the videos?

### APPLY

- What did you see that would work well in your family?
- What wouldn't work and why?



## Newly Home Game

### Supplies

- Easel pad
- Markers
- Chairs
- Podium
- Small poster board 7 per “couple” to write answers on
- Winning prize for the couple

### Activity Time:

- Someone to be game show host

### Activity Time:

- 1 hour

### Outcome:

- Highlight issues that may arise now that the Service Member has returned

### DO setup

1. Set up the main hall with chairs for an audience. You’ll need a podium for the game show host and eight chairs along the front. (This is fashioned after the old Newlywed Game).
2. While the room is being set up, have each squad generate a list of concerns or worries about changes that may occur when their Service Member returns. Everyone must contribute two ideas, more is great.
3. Each group selects two volunteers to represent them at the game. Have the group take a break.
4. The planning group needs to create two rounds of questions (three for each round) based on the responses, and a bonus question.
5. The show host starts the game. Couples sit together while introductions are made.

### DO Round One

1. One person from each couple leaves the room. The game show host reads the question to the remaining contestants, who write their responses.
2. Once contestants answer all three questions, cards remain face down in their laps. People who left the room are invited to return.
3. The host reads the questions, and the returning people try to answer them “correctly”. Ten points for every correct answer.

### REFLECT

- This allows discussion of issues.



## Newly Home Game (cont.)

### **DO Round Two**

1. The other person from each couple leaves the room. The host reads the questions to the remaining contestants, who write their responses.
2. Once contestants answer all three questions, cards remain face down in their laps. People who left the room are invited to return.
3. The host reads the questions, and the returning people try to answer them “correctly”. Twenty points for every correct answer.

### **REFLECT**

- This allows for discussion of issues.

### **DO Round Bonus Round**

1. The couple decides who will leave the room. The host reads the bonus question to the remaining contestant, who write their responses.
2. Once contestants answer the question, cards remain face down in their laps. People who left the room are invited to return.
3. The host reads the bonus question, and the returning people try to answer it “correctly”. Thirty points for every correct answer

### **REFLECT**

- This allows for discussion of issues.



## Not Knots

### Supplies

- Webbing or rope

### Activity Time:

20 minutes

### Outcome:

- How to help the group achieve consensus.

### DO

1. Take a piece of webbing or rope and lay it in a squiggle or doodle on the ground – Group is not present for this.
2. Bring in the group and ask them if they think the doodle will create a KNOT or NOT A KNOT, when the webbing/rope is pulled.
3. Have the group form an agree (KNOT) side and a disagree (NOT A KNOT) side. (note how many for each viewpoint)
4. Have the participants pair up with a person who doesn't agree with them and see if they can sway one another to their viewpoint.
5. Participants can mingle with one another to hear the different view points (Five minutes)
6. Gather the group back in and once again have them choose the KNOT or NOT A KNOT side – see if there were any changes.
7. At this point the facilitator will start to slowly pull the doodle. As the doodle is pulled, participants can change their mind.

### REFLECT

- How did you feel when you were trying to change someone's viewpoint?
- Did you change your viewpoint?

### APPLY

- Can you name some situations when you wanted others to see something from your point of view?
- Is it hard for people to change their minds?



# Family Feud

## DO

1. Set up the main hall with chairs for an audience and a podium for the game show host.
2. Place Bonus Question, then Reunion issues, then Deployment issues on the sticky wall. Cover answers, but leave the numbers exposed.
3. On either side of the podium, place seven chairs and a bell for contestants to ring.
4. Have two Families select seven members each to represent them in the game.

## DO Round One

1. The show host says that a person from each Family who thinks they can identify a top ten Deployment issue should ring their bell.
2. The host decides which contestant most nearly states one of the issues and removes the cover from that answer. This Family may then continue to play.
3. The host asks that a different person from the Family ring the bell if they can name another issue. With each correct answer, the Family retains control of the board.
4. If an answer is incorrect, the opposing Family takes over.
5. If one Family identifies all issues correctly, they are the Round One winner.
6. If each family gets three incorrect answers, Round One ends, and the Deployment issues poster is removed, revealing the Reunion issues poster.

## DO Round Two

1. The show host says that a person from each Family who thinks they can identify a top ten Reunion issue should ring their bell.
2. The host decides which contestant most nearly states one of the issues and removes the cover from that answer. This Family may then continue to play.

### Supplies

- Easel pad
- Markers
- Chairs
- Podium
- Two bells for contestants to ring
- Sticky wall

### Also:

- Someone to be game show host

### Activity Time:

- 1 hour

### Outcome:

- Highlight issues that may arise now that the Service Member has returned.



## Family Feud (cont.)

3. The host asks that a different person from the Family ring the bell if they can name another issue. With each correct answer, the Family retains control of the board.
4. If an answer is incorrect, the opposing Family takes over
5. If one Family identifies all issues correctly, they are the Round Two winner.
6. If one Family wins both Round One and Round Two, they are the overall winner.
7. If each family gets three incorrect answers, Round Two ends, and the Reunion issues poster is removed, revealing the Bonus Question.

### **DO Round Three**

1. The show host says that a person from each Family who thinks they can answer the Bonus Question should ring their bell.
2. The first ringer also gets to answer first.
3. If the answer is correct, that Family wins the game.
4. If the answer is incorrect, the opposing Family gets an opportunity to answer and win.



## Coins of Strength

### Supplies

- Easel pad
- Markers
- Sticky wall
- Top ten strengths during deployment
- Top ten challenges during deployment
- Coins made for the activity

### Activity Time:

- 40 minutes

### Outcome:

- Help youth identify their strengths and recognize their challenges.

### DO

1. Ask the group to identify a list of strengths mastered during deployment.
2. Ask the group to identify a list of challenges encountered during deployment.
3. Have the group take a break

From responses, create two or three Coins of Strength and Coins of Challenge for each participant.

### DO Strengths

4. Reconvene the group and give each person two or three Coins of Strength.
5. In order around the room, have participants introduce themselves using words they've selected.
6. Break the ice by using yourself as an example. "Hi, my name is Janice and I'm Enthusiastic, a Good Leader, and a Skilled Negotiator."

### DO Challenges

7. When Strength introductions are complete, say, "This is how we see ourselves in navigating the deployment cycle, but there are two sides to every coin. Others may see us differently."
8. Give each person two or three Coins of Challenge.
9. In order around the room, have participants introduce themselves again using words they've selected.
10. Again, use yourself as an example. "Hi, my name is Janice and I'm Loud, Bossy, and Manipulative."

### REFLECT

- How did it feel to introduce yourself the first time?
- What was different about the second introduction?
- As you look forward to your reunion, try to remember that we don't always come across as we think we do.

### APPLY

- How will you use information learned in this activity?



## Virtual Slideshow

### Supplies

- Small clicker

### Activity Time:

- 30 minutes

### Outcome:

- Participants will be able to regroup and reflect on the **Coming Home Experience**.

### DO

1. Participants sit in a circle.
2. Pick a person to start with – birthday closest to the day.
3. Hand the selected person the clicker.
4. Instruct that person to click on their imaginary PowerPoint slide and highlight an “aha” moment or a take-home point.
5. Go around the group, having each person share things they experienced or learned that will help them navigate the reunion/reintegration process.

### DO Question

- Was it hard to create your imaginary slide?

### REFLECT

- Did you have a lot of “aha” moments to choose from?
- Do you have much in common with the rest of the group?

### APPLY

- Will you talk about your experience with others?







**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Appendix 4

Resources and References



## Books

Gregson, Bob. *The Incredible Outdoor Games Book*. Torrance, CA: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1982.  
Gregson, Bob. *The Outrageous Indoor Games Book*. Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids, 1984.  
Kreidler, William and Lisa Furlong. *Adventures in Peacemaking*. Project Adventure, 1995.  
Orlick, Terry. *The Cooperative Sports & Games Book*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.  
Rhonke, Carl. *Silver Bullets*. Project Adventure, 1984.  
Rhonke, Carl. *The Bottomless Bag, Again*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1994.

## Online

### 4-H Curriculum

[www.4-hcurriculum.org](http://www.4-hcurriculum.org)

Offerings reviewed and recommended by the National 4-H Curriculum jury process; each topic has a set of guides and/or a CD which adult volunteers can use to create day-long interactive events for children and youth ages 6-18 and their Families; order online, by phone or mail

- Aerospace Adventures
- Computer Power Unlimited
- Consumer Savvy
- Exploring Spaces, Going Places – Geospatial Science
- Keeping Fit and Healthy
- Service Learning

## Connecting Families around the World

[www.connectandjoin.com](http://www.connectandjoin.com)

Hands-on, high-tech activities for Families to build and maintain digital scrapbooks of “life at home” for deployed loved ones; team works with corporate partners to make service free; password-protected

## Challenge Masters Inc.

[www.challengemasters.com](http://www.challengemasters.com)

Adventure Education! site for developing and strengthening self-confidence, effective teamwork, problem-solving and communication skills; has provided training and equipment to Army CYSS for over ten years

## Channing Bete Company

[www.channing-bete.com](http://www.channing-bete.com)

[www.deploymentkids.com](http://www.deploymentkids.com)

Educational materials to strengthen individuals, families, and communities by reinforcing healthy behaviors and commitment to positive social values; age-appropriate workbooks with interactive answers for handling reunion issues



## **CHARACTER COUNTS! – Josephson Institute of Youth Ethics**

[www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)

Nonprofit CHARACTER COUNTS! is the most widely-implemented approach to character education, reaching millions of youth

## **Experiential Learning Project Group**

[www.experientiallearning.ucdavis.edu/default.shtml](http://www.experientiallearning.ucdavis.edu/default.shtml)

Wide range of assistance for those exploring experiential learning for the first time, all the way to those with years of experience; valuable professional aid; includes experiential learning model graphics for duplication

## **Operation: Military Kids**

[www.operationmilitarykids.com](http://www.operationmilitarykids.com)

Fun and exciting youth programs and other resources available wherever military Families live; points of contact in every state, along with event calendars, photos, and deployment support news

## **Surviving Deployment.com**

[www.survivingdeployment.com](http://www.survivingdeployment.com)

Broad range of support for military families; information and contributors focus on children, youth and adults from all branches of service



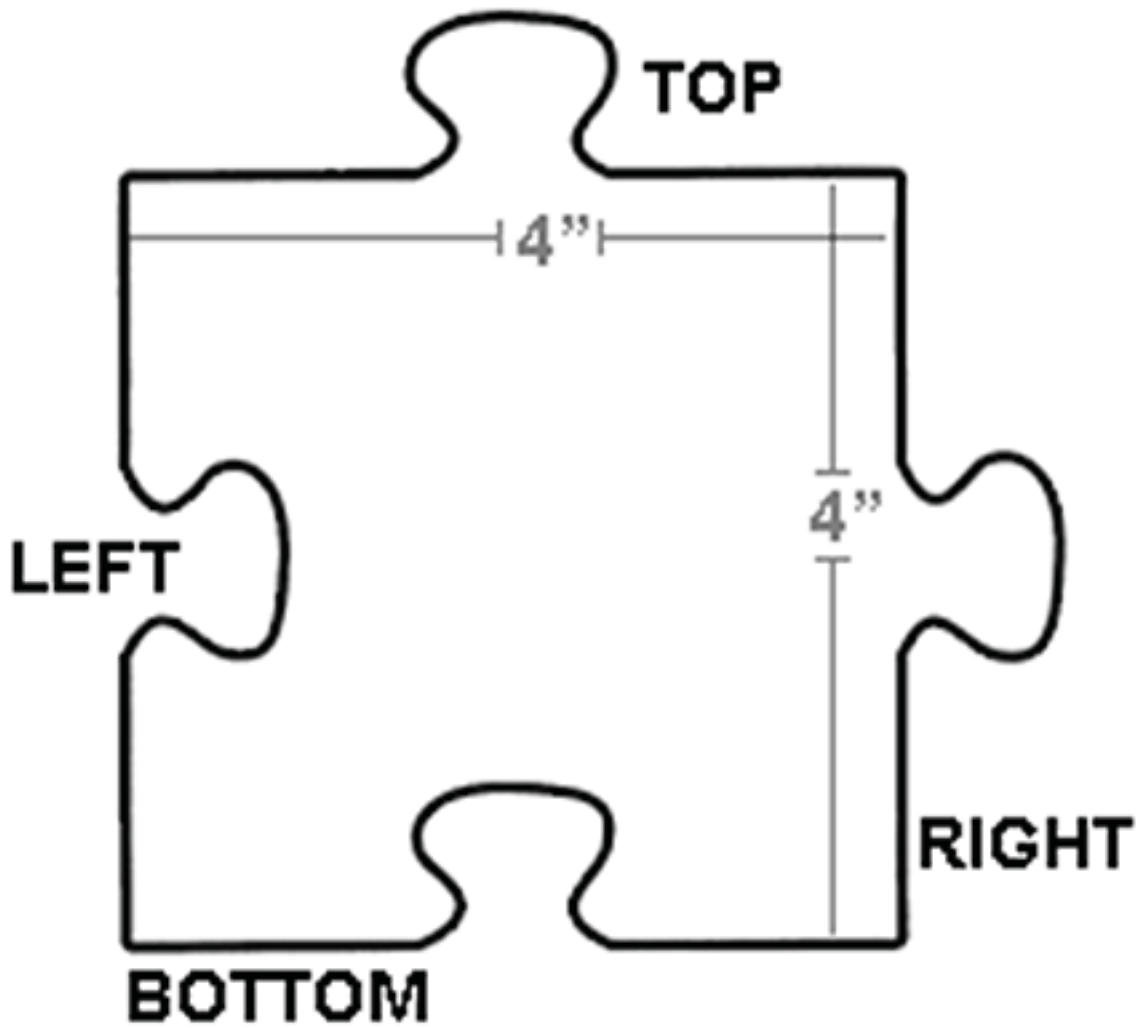


**OPERATION:  
BOOTS OFF**

Appendix 5

Items for Local  
Reproduction





For more information about Community Puzzle, visit <http://www.communitypuzzle.com>



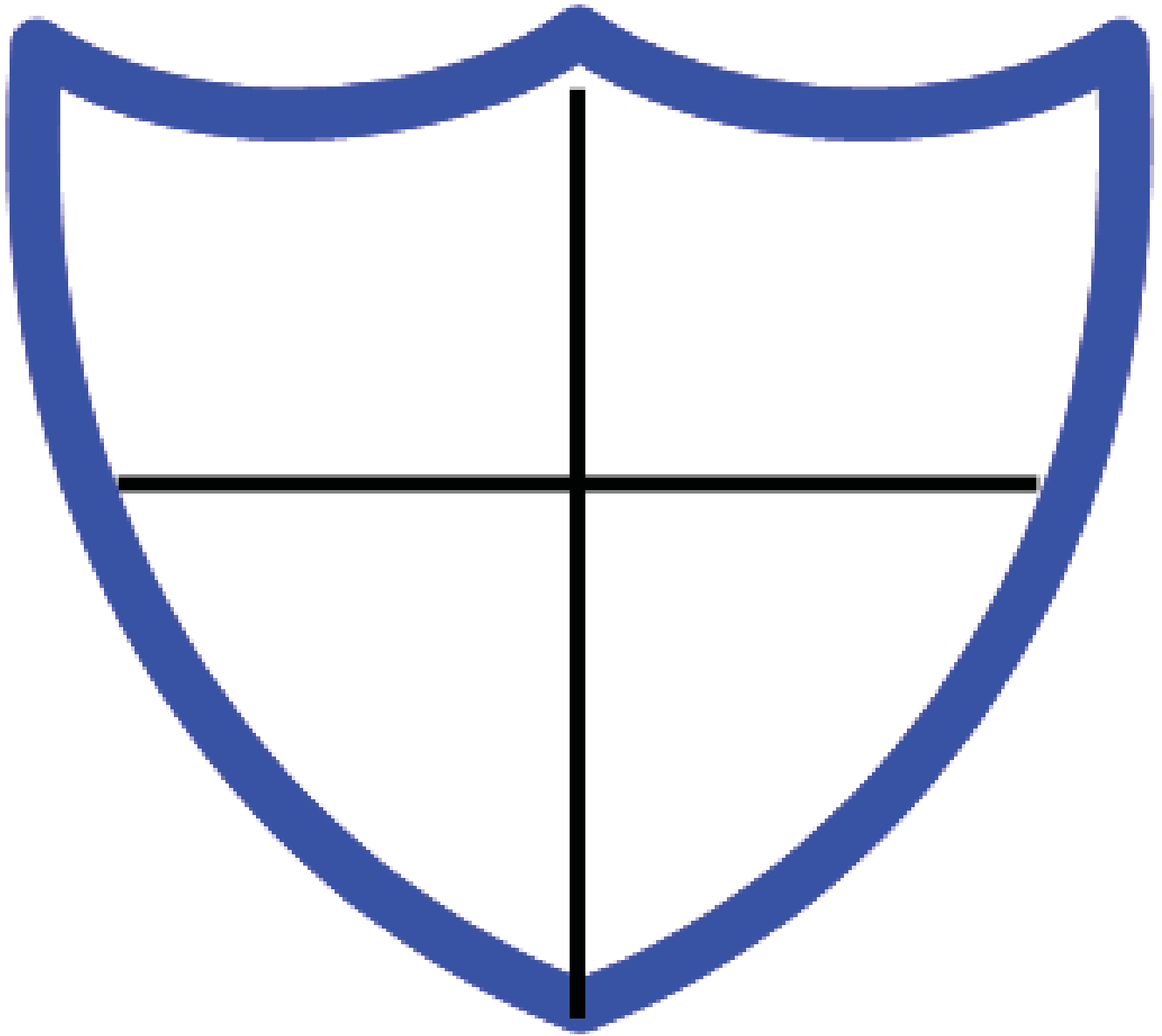


Brainstorm List  
Group Outings and Activities for Families

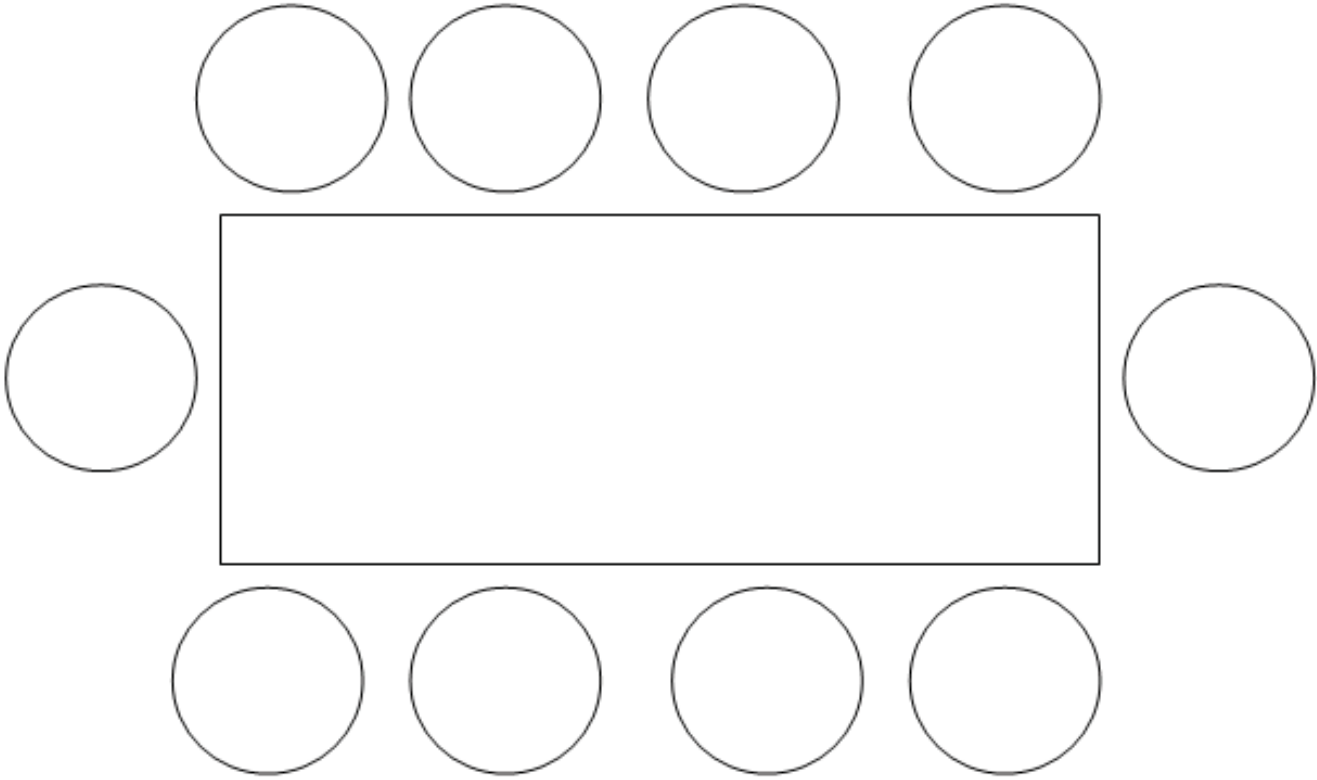
Short (2-4-Hours; near home)	All-Day	Overnight

Just The Facts, Please





## Who's at Your Table



**List ways to say thank you:**

Event Evaluation Form  
*Operation: Boots Off – Time Together*

Your feedback is important in helping us to increase the quality of our *Operation: Boots Off* outings. Please enter your name and other information below . . .  
complete the brief evaluation on the next page, and . . .  
return both pages to your team facilitator or POC.  
Thank you!

*The Planning Team*



Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outing Location: \_\_\_\_\_

	Not Sure	No	Maybe	Somewhat Agree	Agree
<b>Outing Quality</b>					
Overall quality of the event was high.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The event will help relationships in my Family.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Outing Planning**

Planning team sent out information well in advance.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Information was easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
It was easy to contact the POC.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Directions to the event were clear and easy to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Outing Objectives**

I reconnected with others from the Boots Off group.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I was able to spend time with my family.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I'm looking forward to the next outing.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**What I liked most about the outing was:**

**The outing could have been improved by:**



# **OPERATION: BOOTS OFF**

**This certificate indicates that**

**Has successfully completed the Operation: Boots Off  
workshop and has gained a better understanding of the challenges  
military families face during deployment.**

**Given this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_**

---

---







*Operation: Boots Off* has been developed in support of the Army Family Covenant, Army OneSource (AOS) and 4-H/Army Child, Youth & School Services outreach efforts. The material is based on work supported by the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, a partnership of the U.S. Army Child, Youth & School Services and National 4-H Headquarters, Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Washington State University, under special project number 2008-48661-04797.

