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The California National Guard's Operation Ready Families Program offers a variety of programs to assist the guardmember and their family before, during and after deployment:

- Operation "We Care" Meetings
- Special Benevolence Offers
- Volunteer Education Courses
- Marriage Enrichment Seminars
- Youth Camp

We also offer educational articles on:

- Managing Combat Stress
- Understanding Military Benefits
- Coming Home
- ...And Much More!

Visit our website!

[www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies](http://www.calguard.ca.gov/readyfamilies)

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**Mission First! Family Always!**

# Finding Your New Normal



inside...

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## Finding Your New Normal: Transitioning from Active Duty To National Guard Status



Returning From Deployment isn't all smiles, it takes time to adjust.

The reintegration process between a guardmember and their family can be described by one word: Challenging!

The progression will not happen overnight, in fact, the average time frame for successful integration can take months.

The biggest challenge for families is to regain a *shared sense of purpose*. Due to the extremely intense demands of deployment, the guardmember holds a drastically different definition of his or her purpose versus a spouse or parent who has managed to provide for the family and tend to the home front. The importance of both jobs are vital.

The keys to establishing a *shared sense of purpose* are: identify issues brought on by separation, define personal relationship expectations and understand each other's point of view.

**Effort = Success!**

## Your Service Member's Sense of Purpose Has Been Redefined By:

Highly Structured, efficient routines in a stressful environment and a heightened level of self-importance shaped by deployment.

Traumatic, emotionally foreign events that may be difficult to process and talk about.

A bonded allegiance to fellow guardmembers who have shared similar experiences.

The acquired new world view due to exposure of a new culture that can affect the guardmember's traditional customs and beliefs.

## Your Family Member's Sense of Purpose Has Been Redefined By:

An elevated level of responsibility and a new sense of independence.

A heightened need for order and consistent daily routines to off-set the difficult "unknowns" of their guardmember's deployment.

Depression and anxiety due to constant worry over their guardmembers safety as well as stress from the regular MOB date changes.

Lack of belonging: without a base to connect military families, many feel isolated and alone.

## Together, You Can Redefine Your Sense of Purpose:

Communicate - Sharing your thoughts and feelings with each other will reduce stress, validate feelings, and strengthen your emotional bond. The process will feel unusual at first, but will become easier with time.

Seek Help- Your family has endured an extreme amount of stress. Without work, mental health issues can develop such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression and anxiety. There are excellent, confidential treatment options available for you and your family.

**Mental Health Services For the Guardmember and Family**

Military One Source: 1-800-665-4545  
[www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)  
VA's Vet Centers: 1-877-222-VEETS (4382)  
[www.vet.gov](http://www.vet.gov)

## Tips For a Successful Transition

Finding your new "normal" will take time and effort. Be aware that emotional highs and lows are a natural part of the reunion process. Don't expect things to fall back into place overnight. Below are some tips you might find helpful.

### For Guardmembers:

- Go slowly when reestablishing your position in the family. Adapt to rules and routines already in place.
- Take time to listen and talk with your loved ones.
- Realize that your family is not a unit and does not respond well to "military speak/orders".
- Take as much time as you can afford before returning back to your civilian job.
- Stay in touch with your closest military comrades during the "3 months off" period.
- Be supportive of the good things your family has accomplished.
- Expect that your family will not be the same as before you left; everyone has changed on some level.

### For Spouses and Parents:

- It is okay to need time apart; don't rush things.
- Remind the guardmember that they are still needed.
- Don't assume they "know" what the daily household routines are; have a family meeting once a week to go over chores, budget and other responsibilities.
- Be patient with yourself and your guardmember.
- Stay in touch with "military family" contacts. Sharing experiences reaffirms that you are not the only one going through a challenging period.
- Learn new tools to communicate; don't be afraid to ask for help. Counseling is confidential!
- Avoid scheduling too many activities!

### References:

Becoming A Couple Again, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; [www.usuhs.mil](http://www.usuhs.mil)  
Reintegration Roadmap, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences; [www.usuhs.mil](http://www.usuhs.mil)  
Homecoming After Deployment, National Center for PTSD; [www.ncptsd.org](http://www.ncptsd.org)