Preparing yourself to return

The reunion of your family can be a building block or a stumbling block. What can you do to help you and your children adjust during this time?

**Things to remember.**

- Excitement, as well as worry, about coming home is natural and okay.
- Your children may have the same confusing feelings you do (worry, fear, happiness, excitement, etc.).
- The reunion you have imagined for your family may not happen. Be realistic about what to expect.
- Everyone in the family, including you, has grown and changed while you have been gone. Remember to be flexible.
- Things may never be *exactly* the same as they were before you left.
- A family is very different from a military unit where orders are given or received.
  - Don’t expect a “change of command” at the front door.
  - Don’t expect children to respond like soldiers.
- Change is stressful for children as well as adults.
- The problems you left behind may still be there when you return.
- If you return with a life-altering injury, the family may need to make major role changes.
- Discussing your plans and concerns about returning home with your family, friends, and others can help.