



When a Loved One is Deployed During the Holidays

Deployment can be rough on families any time of year. But it can be especially hard during the holidays when everyone seems to be spending time with the ones they love.

If you work with families who are struggling with a loved one's deployment, there are ways you can help them bridge the distance and enjoy the holidays.

Share the festivities

Encourage families you work with to celebrate the holidays creatively with their deployed loved one. Here are some suggestions:

- Arrange a video call during the holiday celebrations. Be flexible about it, though. Time differences and work schedules may mean sharing Christmas dinner preparations or even cleanup instead of the meal itself.
- Send a copy of a holiday movie or book to your loved one. If possible, enjoy the movie or book together over video call.
- Send your deployed loved one a favorite home-made holiday treat.
- Send photos and videos of school concerts, holiday pageants, a driving tour of your neighborhood holiday lights, etc.
- Send emails or letters detailing the big and little events of your celebrations. How did the latkes taste? Did the kids help make the cookies? Who had the best reaction when unwrapping a gift?

Practice self-care

The holidays can add stress to already busy lives. You may find that parents you work with try to do too much to make up for their partner's absence. Suggest they slow down by doing the following:

- Don't accept every invitation or request. Choose only what fills you with holiday spirit. Ignore what will drain you.
- Volunteer as a family at a local soup kitchen or other cause that helps others. This will take the focus off what you're missing and put it on what you have to give.
- Spend time with other military families whose loved one is also deployed. Talking with others who are in the same situation can be very comforting.
- Be mindful of what you have to be thankful for. Holding close all that is good in your life will ease the pain of missing your deployed loved one. Create a holiday tradition of listing your blessings and all of the good things that happened in the past year.

With your support, military families can feel closer to their deployed loved ones, enjoy the holiday season, and look forward to the time when they are together again.

If you are interested in providing non-medical counseling to military service members and their families please email us at: mosproviderrelations@militaryonesource.com.