Deployment anxieties [1]

Alice,

I recently found out that I am being deployed. I am so concerned with it every minute of the day that I find myself becoming depressed and overwhelmed. What are some good ways to manage these anxieties?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Going off to war may stir up a wide range of intense feelings, including anxiety, excitement, depression, pride, and anticipation of what is to come. While a certain amount of anxiety is expected for most people, in some cases, anxiety can become overwhelming and interfere with your ability to function. Fortunately, there are various resources for members of the armed forces and a variety of positive coping mechanisms that you can use to help manage your anxiety.

If you are feeling depressed and overwhelmed, it can be highly beneficial to seek professional help from a mental health professional, such as a counselor or psychiatrist. Professional counselors can help you work through your feelings and teach you how to cope. A health care provider or psychiatrist may also prescribe you medication that can help relieve depression symptoms. Members of the armed forces can also utilize mental health resources offered by United States Veteran Affairs [2].

In addition, various relaxation and support-building strategies may help you manage your anxiety and depression on your own. Here are a few suggestions:

- Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, yoga [3], and meditation [4].
- Talk about your feelings with someone you trust.
- Surround yourself with people you care about.
- Join a social support group in your military community or in your local area.
- Speak with a local clergy member or religious leader.
- Live a healthy lifestyle by penciling in regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, limiting or avoiding alcohol, and getting adequate rest.

Moreover, various online resources and books were created for military members and their families:

- Courage to Talk [5] is an electronic health campaign consisting of fact sheets that deal
with health topics relevant to military life.

- The Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library [8] provides service members, families and healthcare providers a quick and easy way to find deployment health information.

- The Military OneSource [7] program, provided by the United States Department of Defense, is available to all active-duty, Guard, and Reserve members and their families. Military OneSource supports families during deployment and provides free counseling in the family's community, with a focus on stress management.

Remember? you're not alone. While depression and anxiety may seem overwhelming, they can be managed! Plenty of trained health professionals are available to help you along your journey in the armed forces.

Wishing you peace, honor, and support,

Alice!

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