

 mind Solent



**Anchoring  
Minds**



# Coping with deployment as a family

**Families of serving personnel face unique challenges that can be difficult to navigate. Whether it's just you and your partner, or you also have kids you're worried about, we're here for you.**

This guide is designed to help partners and families cope with deployment with tips, techniques and information on where to find support.

Registered Charity No. 1081116

# It is normal to feel...

**Angry or resentful**

before a partner deploys

**Apprehensive and anxious**

about a homecoming

**Lonely and overwhelmed**

in the initial period after  
they have deployed

**You're struggling**

to adjust when your partner returns

**Independent and proud**

for managing on your own

Everyone can feel differently about the unique challenges and opportunities a deployment brings...

# Tips for coping with deployment

**Remember, there is no right or wrong way to feel about deployment!**

## Prepare in the build up

Sit down and discuss important things with your partner before they are deployed. Help them understand how they can help you, how you can help them, and ways of staying in contact while they are away.

## Keep busy and stay active

It can be important to stay busy while your partner is away, especially if you don't have the responsibility of kids. Perhaps join a gym or an exercise class. Be careful not to over book though.

## Prioritise and focus

A lot of things will be out of your control, so try to prioritise and focus the things that are in your control. Journaling and the 'circle of control' tool can help you to understand what you can control, or need to prioritise.

## Countdown tools

Countdown tools can be really helpful in supporting children with their understanding through a deployment. For example, the 'sweet a day' tool is where you fill a jar with the amount of days they will be away, and the children eat one a day.

## Connect with loved ones

Alongside keeping busy and active, use any spare time you have to connect with loved ones. Perhaps friends or family who are also going through something similar to you.

## Ask for help

You should never feel guilty about asking for help. Whether it is from a loved one, or professional help with us, other services, or even through family networks within where your partner is serving.



When you become a military partner, you're absorbed into a world that isn't yours - and one there isn't a guidebook for.

**Holly Mainstone**

Senior Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner  
NHS Talking Therapies Hampshire



I learnt not to panic and to take things in my stride, but I would have loved to have had more support to help me manage my mental health at the time.

**Yvette Smith**

Mental Health Navigator  
Anchoring Minds



Anchoring Minds is an emotional wellbeing service within Solent Mind providing support to Royal Navy and Royal Marine serving personnel and their families. Support can be on the phone, face-to-face if you're living in Hampshire, or by accessing our free online resources if you live further away, or are on deployment.  
**Find out more at [solentmind.org.uk/anchoringminds](https://solentmind.org.uk/anchoringminds)**



NHS Talking Therapies Hampshire provides free, tailored support for people with mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing difficulties, using evidence-based therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).  
**Find out more at [solentmind.org.uk/nhstalkingtherapieshampshire](https://solentmind.org.uk/nhstalkingtherapieshampshire)**

# If you start feeling overwhelmed, here are some grounding techniques..

## 54321 Game

Name 5 things  
you can see

Name 4 things  
you can hear

Name 3 things  
you can feel or  
touch

Name 2 things  
you can smell

Name 1 thing  
you can taste

## Muscle relaxation

Scrunch  
your face  
up, then  
relax it.

Tense your  
arms in  
front of you,  
then relax.

Tense your  
shoulders  
and chest,  
then relax.

Tense your  
legs out in  
front of you,  
then relax.

Take one  
deep  
breath.

## For a panic attack

Focus on your  
breathing and take  
long, deep breaths  
from your belly button.

Stamp your feet to  
bring your attention  
from your mind into  
your body.

Use your senses:  
stroke something soft  
or smell perfume or  
minty gum.

Find somewhere quiet  
and safe to recover and  
have something to eat  
and drink.

# More support

If you would like support with anxiety, or are feeling low or overwhelmed, we're here for you.

**Call the Anchoring Minds team:  
0300 303 1725**

**Visit our website:  
[solentmind.org.uk/anchoringminds](https://solentmind.org.uk/anchoringminds)**

