



Preparing for a reunion as a couple



As you get ready to reconnect after a work-related absence there are steps you can take to help prepare for and ease the transition. Based on experiences from couples who have been there, here are some tips to support you whether you are the one who was away, or the partner that stayed at home.

Prepare to reconnect:

Reunions are exciting but can also cause stress. Throughout the absence, discuss the reunion together as a couple and consider what each of you can do to make it a smoother transition. While you should be excited about the reunion, try not to get too attached to a specific date as plans may need to shift.

Things may have changed:

Take some time to acknowledge the roles that you both had during the absence. Understand that roles at home may have shifted, and that's okay. You may want your roles to return to how they were before, but your partner may want to keep some of the changes. The same is true for the opposite so do your best to be open to renegotiating household roles and responsibilities. For the CAF member or Deployment Support Staff, be mindful that the partner who stayed behind may have experienced caregiver burnout.

It may be awkward at first:

There may be some difficulty re-establishing intimacy, and that's okay. During this time, focus on being patient with one another and don't put too much pressure on yourselves. You may both be happy to reconnect yet also feel a loss of freedom and independence.

Looking forward to the reunion:

Discuss the reunion together and try to plan a post-absence celebration or treat. It could be a weekend getaway, an evening out, or even a special meal at home. This can be something to look forward to and talk about with family.

Debrief together:

Share your individual experiences without comparing who had it worse. Acknowledge the efforts from both ends for communicating during the absence. Talk about the successes and difficulties of the separation, so that you can reflect on any lessons learned for next time and share those lessons with other families.

If there are children:

Reunions can be particularly challenging for children, and their reactions can vary depending on their age. CAF children can reach out to Kids Help Phone by texting CAFKIDS to 686868 and similarly, children of Deployment Support staff can text 686868 for support.

