



Surviving the Aftershock: Post Disaster Blues and Beyond

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Course Objectives

-  Deployment - The Main event
-  Post deployment reactions
-  Surviving the Aftershock –
and thriving

Where angels fear to tread



Disaster deployment can be a
bittersweet journey into the
unknown



- Deployment

The noble mission

The not so great mission

The elevator speech - Glory Story

- Reentry

Disillusionment

Integration

The Waiting Game







Demobilization: Going Home



Mixed feelings

Tired

Good Memories

Regrets

Anger

Who will continue the work?

Shame

Why were we sent *there*?

Glad I could help

I should have...

The Blame Game

Meanwhile back at the Ranch



- Things seem meaningless and mundane
 - Try to make sense of it
- They didn't all live happily-ever after

Telling your story

- ▶ The glamorous mission
- ▶ The not so glamorous mission
- ▶ The Glory Story



Darkened World View

- ❖ Unsafe world
- ❖ People are mean

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing”

A. Einstein

A common post deployment
reaction is
“Never enough” or “If only”



Typical, normal reactions after returning home

- ⊗ Being tired and a little edgy
- ⊗ Some responders have a disturbing dream or two and some feel a bit distracted
- ⊗ Some want to tell their stories and some do not
- ⊗ Most reactions to returning home are normal and temporary
- ⊗ But, sometimes the distress renders us unable to function at a pre-disaster level

Post deployment issues

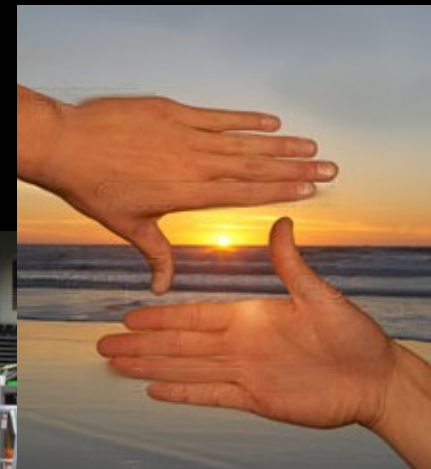
- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- ◆ Ability to concentrate
- ◆ Insomnia or sleeping too much
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Hopeless/ helpless
- ◆ Anger or arguing
- ◆ Recklessness or endangering others
- ◆ Rapid emotional shifts
- ◆ Zoned out 1000 mile stare

MY LIFE BROKEN DOWN INTO SEGMENTS



Degree and Duration

You may have exceeded your current storage capacity for stress (traumatic and mission related) and need to sort, repack and reframe it



Resilience

Resilience is the ability to bounce back, and to continually move forward



Resilience

Attitude and Outlook



Support

- Hot wash/ Debrief/ Demobilization
- Connecting
- Return to routines
- Change is inevitable



- Continuing to have contact with team members who were also deployed allows for telling the stories that you carry in your head. They have similar experiences even though your perceptions of the events vary. The shared event gives a common ground to mentally process the unusual circumstances, bringing an even stronger cohesiveness to the team

- The aftermath of a deployment brings both sadness and joy. The skills you have for the post-deployment phase can improve the quality of your daily life and your value as a team member who is resilient and ready to deliver quality emergency care.

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- Participants will learn to recognize stressors in the field and what they bring home with them in terms of emotional baggage
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- Participants will be given steps to take to minimize post deployment blues
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- Participants will be able to identify normal reactions to post deployment and recognize when the reactions are overcoming their coping skills