

Five Minutes to Thrive

STRENGTHS OF STRESSED MILITARY FAMILIES

Military families deal with stressors and changes induced by member requirements: PCSs, TDYs, deployments, on-call duty, schools, and job changes. Partners often sacrifice careers, are forcibly disconnected from community support networks, and regularly become temporary single parents. A military retiree's child expects to move 6-8 times, and will say goodbye to more significant people by age 18 than the average person in their lifetime.

It's true, at times military families barely hang on. But it's not all despair. Think about some of these tips for strong military families to push back against the scary negative narrative.



- **Foster humor.** Considered a prerequisite for military families -- "If you don't laugh, you cry," coping mechanism, particularly during deployments/extended separations.
- **Cultivate Passion.** Everything-Volunteering, recreation, kids' schools, or social groups.
- **Promote strength under extraordinary circumstances.** Highly stressed members, may come home injured in mind or body and their families embrace them. That's strength.
- **Willingness to lend a hand.** Need help lifting that? Need a 2nd driver to take your car to the shop? Need to borrow some tools? Military families are good for that.
- **Appreciate military spouses.** Their life of service is as valuable as their spouse's. Some give up jobs or careers, hold the home together during stress & deployments, tolerate milestones/holidays solo, yet offer enduring love and support. It's a lot to ask.
- **Appreciate military kids.** They endure PCSs, parent's long hours, & painful separations. Yet they're strong, brave, & adaptable. A parent missed a senior's graduation. The student knew why-to serve the nation - and that's enough. Many military kids join too.
- **Consider other family members.** A category often overlooked. Ex: a grandparent takes on the grandkids while their parent deploys. They're nervous, but gain a new bond with the grandkids. They'd do it again in a heartbeat.
- **Exercise strong faith.** For those that embrace spirituality/faith, military life stressors create ample opportunity to exercise & lean on that faith. Strong military family faith is a stabilizer that aids personal and professional success.

Sure the military family life is challenging, but reframe the 10 foot negative view for a 10,000 foot view with positive scope.



Questions? Contact the ART,
363ISRW.ART.363ISRW@us.af.mil
757-764-9316