



# Junior Officer Advisory Group

## Readiness & Deployment Committee

### Behavioral Health Team

# Practicing Wellness

December 2021

## Deployment, Readiness and Resiliency Tips and Strategies

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For our end of calendar year post, the Behavioral Health Team decided to share our personal deployment, readiness and resiliency tips and strategies. We hope you find them helpful.

### Readiness

- Be ready and stay ready. Have your “go” bag ready to go at short notice. Sometimes, when officers are notified for deployment, there is limited time to get ready.
- Before you deploy, if you are able to receive a GSA government credit card, apply for one as soon as possible. The application process is not time consuming. Securing a government credit card pre-deployment helps with deployment logistics.
- If you are getting a rental car during deployment, rental agreements generally last for only 30 days. If deployed >30 days, work with your travel agent and the rental company to extend your rental car agreement.
- If possible, work with your agency’s travel POC in making deployment arrangements. They will help you understand restrictions/requirements to avoid any personal charges.
- Bring your agency laptop on deployment. If there is no need for you to use your laptop while on deployment, secure it at your billeting. Leadership on some deployments expect officers to use their agency laptops to complete tasks and assignments.
- If you take prescription medications, be sure to secure adequate supply and if possible, get an additional month supply in the event that you are extended on deployment.
- Although on deployment, check your readiness status on CCMIS regularly to plan for requirements that may be due while you are deployed or soon after you return home.
- Bring appropriate civilian attire to be worn as appropriate off duty. Always remember that you are a USPHS officer in and out of uniform.

### During Deployment

- Be a team player and offer solutions to problems you identify.
- While deployed, if time permits review your long/short term goals and outline a plan for accomplishing your PHS or deployment goals.
- Embrace constructive criticism while on deployment and maintain a growth mindset.
- Learn from your mistakes and welcome feedback.
- Use active listening skills in your communication with everyone.
- Be confident and willing to share your thoughts and ideas respectfully.
- Always practice time management and do not attend meetings/briefings late.
- Take advantage of your time on deployment to network with other officers.
- When leading meetings on deployment, ensure all required personnel are aware of meeting details (date/time/location). Create and follow an agenda and end with review of actions items for everyone.

- Knowing your demobilization date in advance, begin packing early to avoid stress, rush, and possibly forgetting some items.
- Treat everyone you encounter with utmost professionalism and compassion.
- While on deployment, develop and maintain a daily routine
- Do not hesitate to ask questions when in doubt. Leadership is always available to provide information, education, and clarification when needed.

#### Mental Health & Fitness

- If you are on a long deployment, consider downloading an app to count down the days to the end of your deployment. Counting down the days to the end of your deployment can help with stress and anxiety management – knowing that the end is pending.
- While on deployment, discuss or plan a vacation/staycation for when you return.
- Practice daily gratitude journaling while deployed. Use the Notes App on your phone to journal your daily 1-3 things or aspects of your day for which you are grateful.
- Prior to or post deployment, explore nature by going on hikes or taking long walks with your family/loved ones.
- Remain flexible at all times to manage changes and be willing and able to assist as needed. Consider no job too big or small for you to do.
- Practice mindfulness to manage stress and deployment tempo.
- If possible while deployed, engage in activities you enjoy to maintain your resilience.
- Be positive and optimistic.
- While deployed, give yourself permission to have some time alone when you can.
- Prioritize rest and sleep when you can and take regular breaks.
- Post deployment, plan to take respite leave to rest and recharge before returning to your duty station.
- Answer USPHS Corps-Care calls and text messages during and after deployment. Be respectfully honest while speaking with staff to provide your status and overall deployment feedback.
- Incorporate daily exercise into your routine/schedule. If you are at a billeting with a gym, plan to use it or consider using online workout videos in your room.
- Start a walking/running/workout group if possible to maintain fitness and resiliency.

#### Family

- Prior to deployment, prioritize spending time and connecting with your children/partner.
- Establish a current family care plan to be used as needed. Discuss with your support network in advance details of your family care plan and confirm that details are agreeable by everyone.
- If possible, include your children/spouse/partner in your deployment packing process to help them feel included. They may also suggest items you did not consider.
- Prior to deploying, if possible exchange small meaningful items with your children/loved ones. In times when they miss you and you cannot communicate, encourage them to find comfort in those items.
- Confirm that your plans are solid to have your daily home-based tasks (e.g. pet/plant care/bill payment) completed.
- If there are children in your household, assign chores while you are away and explain that completing chores is a way of supporting the entire family.
- Prepare your children for your deployment in advance to help them manage your absence. For children ages 5 and younger, consider pre-recording a bedtime story or their favorite song, for those anticipated moments when they will be missing you.
- For older children, create an independent communication plan and establish expectations for communicating while you are away.
- Identify important milestones (birthdays or holidays) in advance by letting persons know when you may be home (by their birthday or Christmas), to help them manage their expectations and anticipate your return.
- If possible, send post cards/hand-written letters to love ones while deployed.

On behalf of the Behavioral Health Team, thank you for your service and sacrifices.