

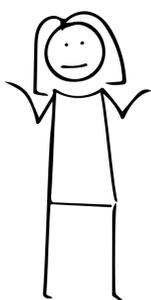
The Journey of a Military Spouse

Meet Jane!

At the beginning of her journey, Jane is a new military spouse with little knowledge of what to expect. She is marrying a man who is already in the military. She has not graduated from college. Her relationships with family and friends are strong but they don't live nearby.

New to Life in the Military

0-3 years



Strengths

- desire to contribute and be involved
- energy and willingness to adapt

Issues

- anxiety of the unknown
- isolation / fluctuation of life
- giving up prior life (friends, education, family, stability of location)
- employment (based upon rank, the need for it vs. the desire to have purpose)
- deployment and the impact before, during, and after

Opportunities

- social connection
- emotional support
- education
- mentorship / guidance
- employment
- preparation for deployments

Entry into the military family

Concerned about losing out on career opportunities.

Adjustment period (social & emotional)

Attends an FRG meeting and struggles to connect with other spouses.

Struggles to find a job outside of fast food and temp work.

Feels isolated from family and friends back home.

Has trouble navigating requirements for accessing health care services.

First deployment (before, during, and after)

Concerned about what could happen to her husband while he's deployed.

Husband becomes emotionally distant in anticipation of leaving.

The shifting deployment schedule causes emotional turmoil.

Jane keeps troublesome information to herself to keep her husband from worrying about it.

Reaches out to friends. They can't relate and distance themselves.

Worries during periods where communications are down.

Finds it challenging to manage the household on her own.

Expects husband to return but the date keeps changing.

After such a long time apart, Jane and her husband have to get to know each other again.

Jane did things differently while her husband was away. His return disrupts those behaviors.

Jane's husband is emotionally distant for some time after returning.

Spouses with Children

0-5 years



Strengths

- excitement around meeting new parents
- after first child, experience raising a baby and infant
- able to provide insight and support

Issues

- what to do with children
- new parent: unsure of how to raise a child
- family members / support system may not be close
- meeting other mothers
- balancing children, house, and personal life

Opportunities

- offer guidance on adjusting
- education
- employment (while having children and managing the home)
- share clothes / toys etc. for reuse
- host child care / babysitting for families who need a night off
- be an aide for new mothers and fathers on how to raise a child in a military family

Birth of first child

Can't plan on the service member being home for the birth or to help care for the child.

Uncertainty about how to take care of child.

Faces long periods of time caring for the child alone.

Lacks family support because they live far away.

Doesn't access available resources because she doesn't know they are available.

Lack of childcare and well-paying jobs forces Jane to stay home to take care of the child.

Moving every 2 to 3 years makes it difficult to develop and maintain a network of people to help with the challenges of raising children.

Navigating military health and social services

Can't get into the doctor when her child is sick.

Is unhappy with the quality and consistency of care available.

Household management

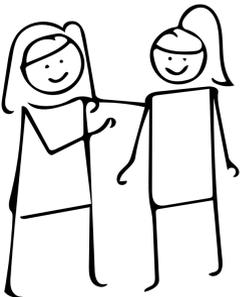
Finds it challenging to manage the household on her own.

Faces logistical and legal issues managing accounts.

Develops DIY spirit by learning to do things on her through crisis moments.

Veteran Spouses

5+ years



Strengths

- knows what to expect when adjusting to duty station
- knows how to manage leading up to / during / after deployment
- knows system hacks

Issues

- adjust to new town
- figure out services / who to rely upon
- manage new and old relationships
- managing life during and after deployment

Opportunities

- employment opportunities
- mentorship of younger spouses
- manage spousal networks
- contribute content / insights / resources to a network for spouses
- spouses of veterans: detachment support

here is what you should know...

Subsequent deployments and moves

Moves to a new town and has to get acquainted again with where to access all the services she needs for her and her family.

Wants to go back to work but struggles to find a job that pays enough to make it worth it.

Goes out of her way to get to know the neighbors so they can call on each other if needed.

Gets sick and has to call the neighbor to watch the kids while she's throwing up in the bathroom.

Knowing the importance of maintaining her network, she makes time to call friends from previous duty stations.

Detachment

After struggling to get a job, Jane's husband finds work, allowing her to go back to school to continue her own career development.

Without having to worry about the next deployment cycle, Jane's family is able to establish a stable routine.

Ongoing support of military families

Between her job, taking care of the kids in the early evening, and classes at night, Jane struggles to keep up with who in the community needs help.

Jane tries to stay on top of available resources and how they work.