

SECTION 5b



*Please remember...
'It's good to talk'*

Hearing and valuing children's perspectives...

All feelings are okay! Alongside feeling immensely proud, naval children can also experience a mix of more difficult emotions when their parent is away from home, often at sea or on operations. Some children describe feeling confused, worried, irritable, or even angry during periods of separation. These feelings can arise whether the parent is away for a few months or for longer.

Separation is hard for everyone in the family, and it's completely normal for children to show a range of emotions as they adjust.

Friends and the adults you trust can support you during this time. You can help them learn about how you are feeling and what helps you at different times whilst your parent or caregiver is away. You could show them the Deployment Rollercoaster which follows the McLennan family on their journey through the ups and downs of deployment. There are 7 stages to the rollercoaster and these can help you work through your own deployment journey with some great practical resources you can use. Take a look at **The Deployment Rollercoaster** at:

<http://shorturl.at/91WDB>

Deployment can feel really hard, but as you go through it you'll discover your own ways of coping. These are skills that will help you as you grow, so it isn't all bad.

What doesn't help is keeping all your feelings locked inside. Talking to someone you trust really does make a difference. Letting someone know how you're feeling, and what's making you feel that way, can help you feel calmer and more supported.

We asked some primary-aged children from naval families, "Is there one thing that helps you through a long deployment or weekending?"

Here's what they said:

I use an app on my iPad to keep in touch when he's away.

Playing with my dog helps me.

I like to FaceTime my mum when she's deployed.

We have Time Rabbits. One for me and one for my dad when he's away. I keep mine in my pocket all the time, even at school.

I have my cuddly toy from my dad who helps me.

I try to ignore that dad is away by doing fun activities.

Whenever I get sad, I remind myself of how proud I am of what my dad does to help the country.

I try to be brave – it will eventually be over and then he'll be back.

I keep busy with clubs and seeing my friends so that I don't have to think about it so much.

I like to watch a good TV show in the fort that I make – it makes me feel cosy and takes my mind off my dad being away.

Some of these Top Tips might work for you, but some might not. After all, we all have different ways of coping, especially when we let others help us. So, don't bottle things up! There are always people who will listen, try to understand how you are feeling and have some ideas about what could help you.

The Naval Families Federation team can provide specialist guidance and connect you with a range of charities and organisations. Learn more about who we are and what we do at our short video [nff.org.uk](https://www.nff.org.uk)

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