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5 Tips for Military Spouses who May Be Thinking about Divorce

By STEPHANIE BAKER

Deciding whether to stay in a difficult marriage or not is hard enough. When you [add](#) military life to the equation, things can get really confusing. Here are five tips to help you navigate terrain you may not be familiar with:

1. Consider couple's counseling.

No one gets married in the hopes that it will end in divorce. If you feel like there is a chance to salvage the relationship, couple's counseling is an excellent place to begin. Because so many military divorces follow combat deployments, many researchers attribute them to post traumatic stress disorder and other psychological effects of war. Counseling may help you understand each other better and learn to cope with how each of you may have changed in the time spent apart. "I would suggest that the families realize that their loved one will quite possibly come back a very different individual. War changes people in ways that us laypeople cannot understand," says Marilyn Anderson, social worker at North Vista Hospital in Las Vegas, Nev.

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I would recommend that anyone in the service considering divorce discuss their position with both a chaplain and a military lawyer.

Even if your marital strain is unrelated to a deployment, you will be more at peace with your decision to split if you know you have given it your best shot. Therapists make good mediators for discussions about those tough problems that tend to end in screaming matches and those that never seem to come up at all.

2. Get your paper work together.

Do not make the assumption that any document is unimportant in divorce. Make sure you have a copy of everything that could needs to be changed or that could affect the divorce. Your will, power-of-attorney, children's birth certificates, mortgage, insurance policies and paperwork for joint bank accounts and major purchases made as a couple are examples of documents your attorney may need.

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