

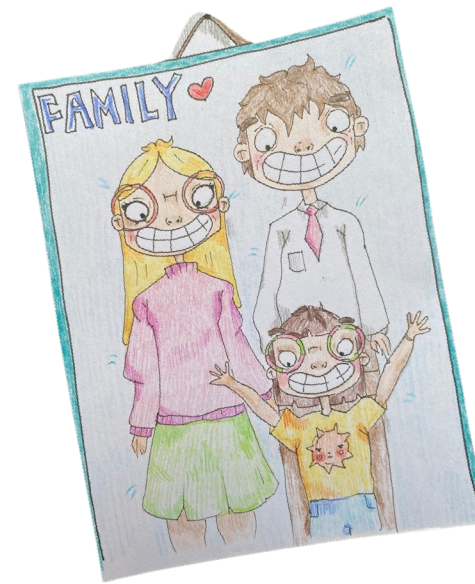
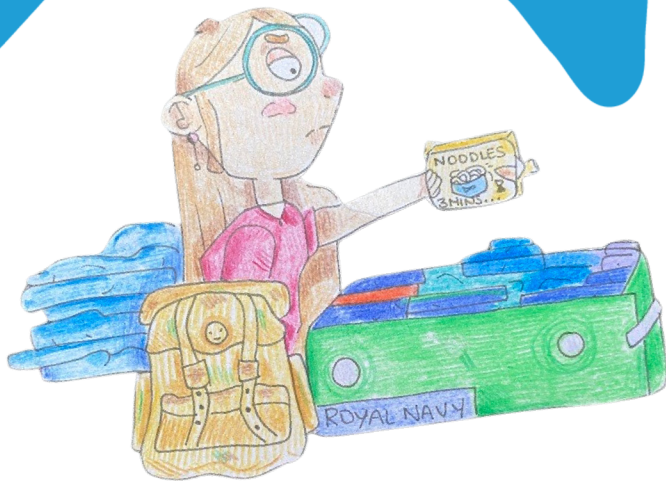
WHAT IS
DEPLOYMENT?



FORCES
CHILDREN
SCOTLAND

WHAT IS DEPLOYMENT?

Deployment means your serving parent or loved one will travel away from home to serve their country and do their job. They can be gone for a long time. Before they go you will feel lots of different feelings and that's ok, it's also completely normal.



WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU DURING DEPLOYMENT?

Whilst your serving parent or loved one is away you will miss them. Friends and trusted adults can support you by learning about how you could be feeling and why you want to do certain things at certain times. This is called the 'Emotional Cycle of Deployment.'

WHAT IS THE EMOTIONAL CYCLE OF DEPLOYMENT?

Try and imagine deployment a little bit like going on a rollercoaster.

Sometimes we are going up and may feel anxious and worried. Some of us might even feel nervous or excited.

Other times we are whizzing down very fast. When we are heading downwards, we may feel we are losing control. We can become overly excited, frustrated, or even sad.

The things keeping you safe on this rollercoaster are **your seatbelt and safety harness**. Like your safety belt and harness, you may need support when your deployed parent or loved one is away. Asking for help and support will help you through this rollercoaster ride.



THE DEPLOYMENT ROLLERCOASTER

Riding a rollercoaster can be an exhilarating ride. First, there's the lining up stage - you know that you will soon be on the rollercoaster but you don't know how long you will have to wait. Once on board, you feel the anticipation of starting; your heart beats faster and you might worry about what's will happen next.

Suddenly, you're plunged into the unknown with your stomach churning as the air rushes to your face. Hurling down the slope you might start to feel joy, exhilaration or possibly fear.

At the end of the ride you try to get off, but your loved one asks you to go round one more time. The journey repeats. This time, you discover that you experience new emotions and notice the skyline a bit more.

Deployment can be a bit like this!



Join Maude and friends as they take you on a journey through the ups and downs of deployment. There are 7 stages of the rollercoaster which help you to navigate your own deployment journey.

2. Last few days together

1. Before they go...

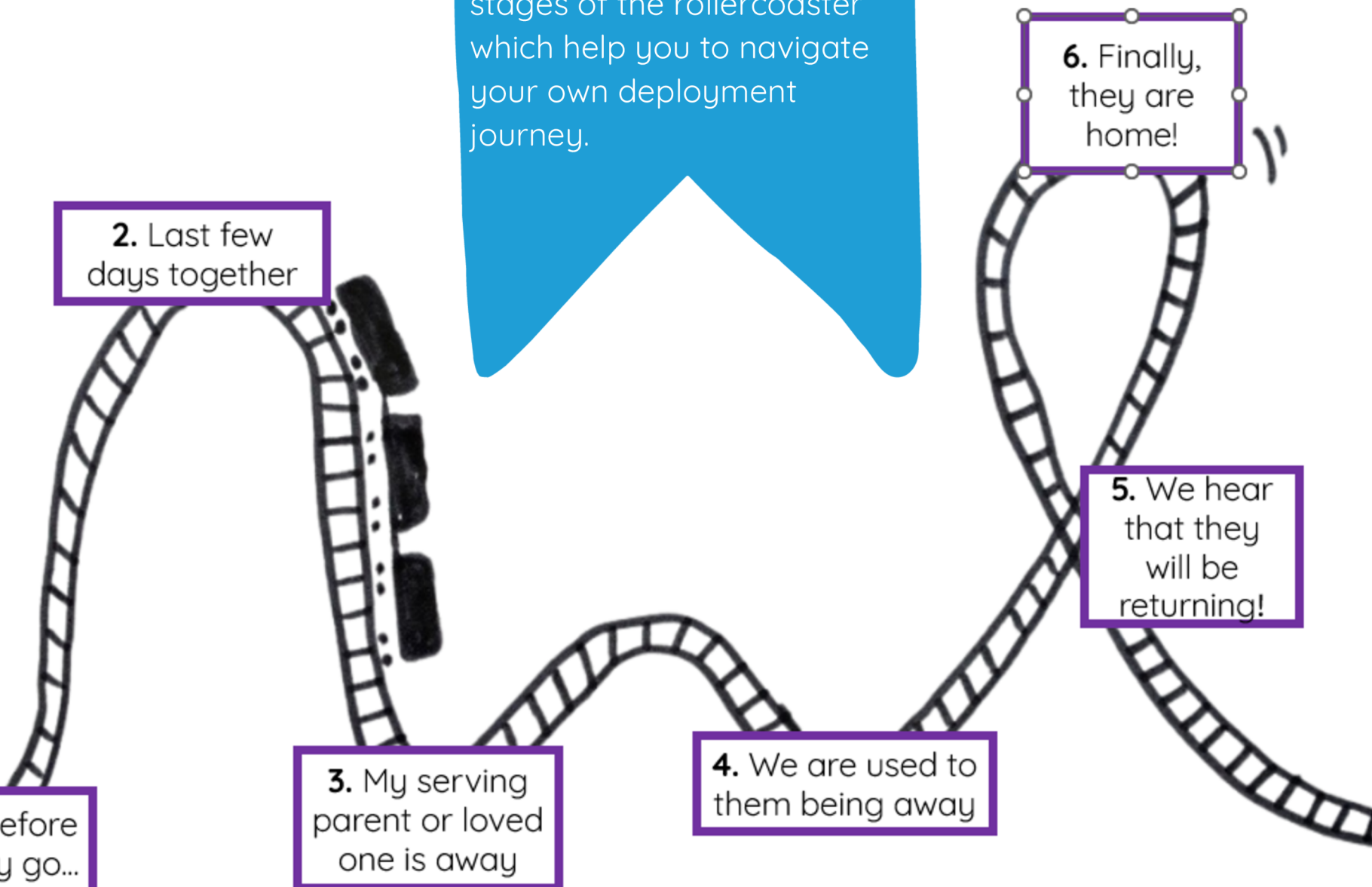
3. My serving parent or loved one is away

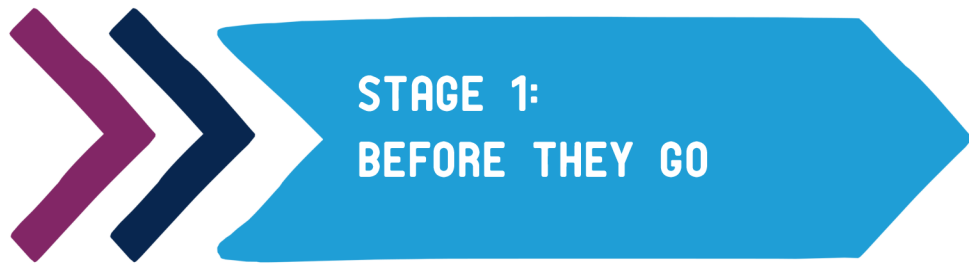
4. We are used to them being away

5. We hear that they will be returning!

6. Finally, they are home!

7. Things are getting back to normal.





STAGE 1: BEFORE THEY GO

As you wait for your parent or loved one to be deployed, you may be feeling all sorts of emotions.

At this stage of the rollercoaster, you might feel angry that your parent or loved one is leaving. Remember there is no right or wrong way to feel, all feelings are normal. During this time, you may feel the need to be alone for a while or you may want to spend more time away from home.

Knowing when your parent or loved one is leaving and where they are going is something you will want to know, although this isn't always possible. Maybe you could find out what your serving parent or loved one will be doing whilst they are away or mark on a world map where they are being deployed to.



Being active is a great focus to have before your serving parent or loved one goes. Exercise can help you to manage those big difficult emotions. Have a look at our recommendations for some activities to do from our Well-being Journal. Once you've been for a walk or tried something new, spend some time with your serving parent or loved one or have a chat with a trusted adult. It's important to let adults around you know what is going on.



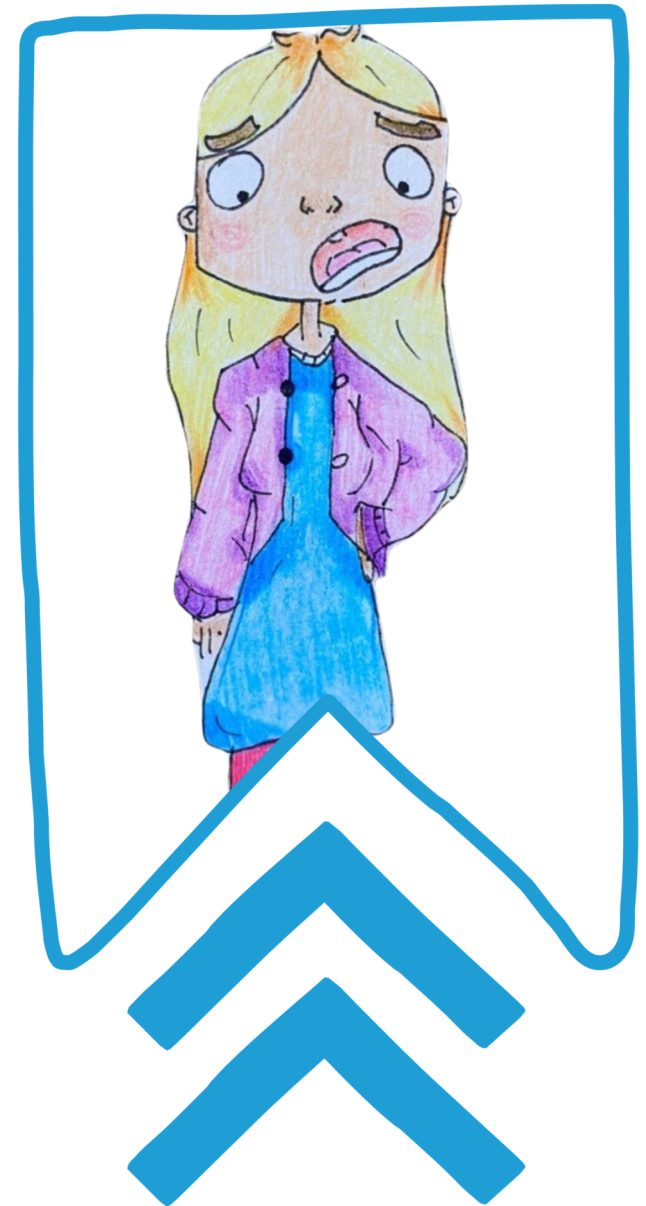


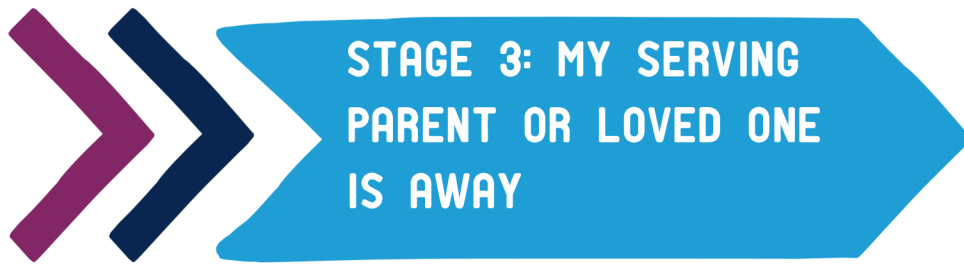
STAGE 2: LAST FEW DAYS TOGETHER

During the last few days together, you might be feeling sad and a bit distant – you may not want to accept that your parent or loved one will be leaving, and you put the thought to the back of your mind. Talking to your parent or loved one is hard because you know they will be going soon. It might be difficult to focus and concentrate at this stage.

Of course you could not be feeling this way at all. Remember experiencing different emotions is ok. At this stage of the rollercoaster, you might want to give your serving parent or loved one something to take away with them. This could include a photograph or a letter for them to read when they are away.

Another idea could be to plan a special meal that you can have together before your serving parent or loved one deploys. Young people also suggest going for a walk and taking time to do something you enjoy together such as watching a movie or baking a cake!





STAGE 3: MY SERVING PARENT OR LOVED ONE IS AWAY

Now your serving parent or loved one is away you might be experiencing a range of emotions. It's possible that you may be experiencing a sense of shock, or you may not feel anything at all (also known as numbness). You may feel overwhelmed by what's happening at home, or a sense of confusion. Struggling to concentrate or finding it hard to focus might be some of the things you are experiencing. You may be sleeping less or more and noticing differences in your appetite. You may feel a bit uncertain about what is going to happen next.

Extra responsibilities at home such as caring for family members and younger siblings could leave you feeling a bit tired and run down. You might enjoy the extra responsibility, but you could also feel frustration and anger from them. It's important to take care of yourself at this stage.

Try and maintain healthy habits by making sure you eat a balanced diet and keep active. Sleep is also really important at this stage!





STAGE 4: WE ARE USED TO THEM BEING AWAY


At this stage of the rollercoaster, you may begin to feel that things are returning to normal. Your serving parent or loved one has been away for a while now. The routines of going to school, having dinner and spending time with your family may feel ordinary. You may notice that you have an increased confidence - you are starting to feel more like yourself. Through learning new skills, talking about how you are feeling and taking on different responsibilities your confidence has increased.

You might also be feeling a bit worried. Feelings of anxiety about what your serving parent or loved one might be doing can return at this stage. Be mindful of social media and any reports you may hear about areas of conflict or countries where you know your serving parent or loved one is on operation. Remember that you can always talk to a trusted adult if you are thinking or worrying about your serving parent or loved one's safety.



If you find talking difficult, try and write down how you are feeling or record a voice note. Whatever works best for you! One way to help manage your emotions is to keep a record of the things you are doing at home to share with your serving parent or loved one when they return. You could create a memory box by placing special items, pieces of work that you are proud of and photographs of what you have been doing whilst they have been away. This will allow you to share memories with your serving parent or loved one when they get home.





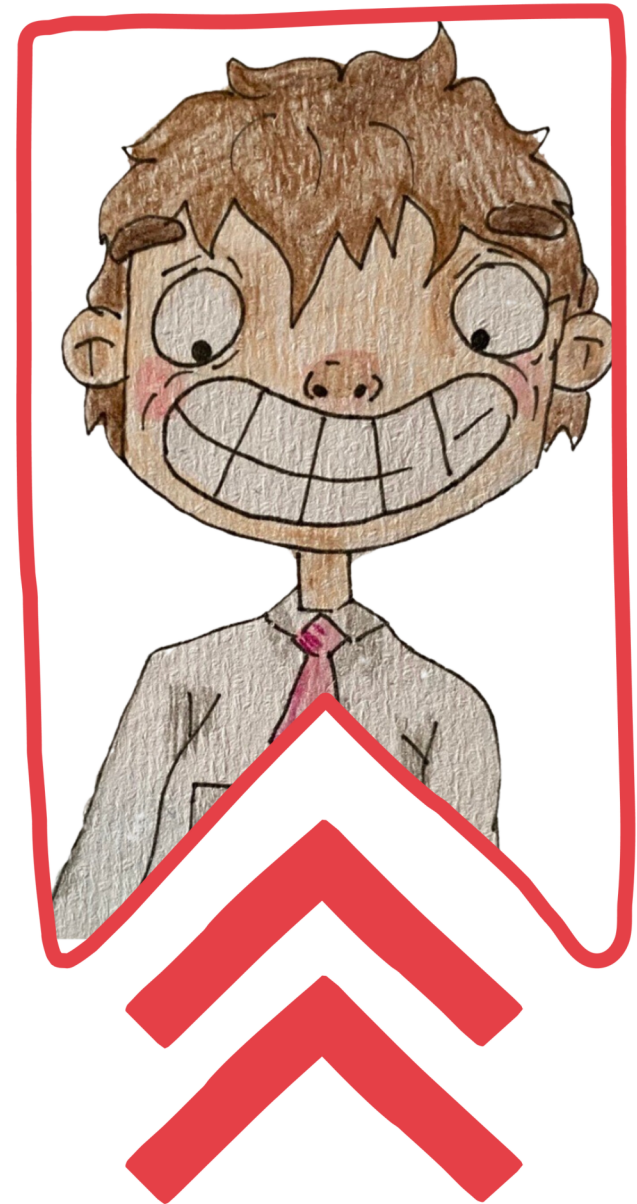
STAGE 5: WE HEAR THAT THEY WILL BE RETURNING

At this stage of the deployment rollercoaster, you find out that your serving parent or loved one will be returning home.

You may feel excited at the thought of seeing your parent or loved one but also a bit nervous as you haven't seen them for a long time. Thinking about upcoming changes can also be a worry. What kind of questions will they ask? Will they have to go straight back to work? Will it be awkward? There can be a lot of uncertainty at this stage.

You may also feel guilty about things that have happened whilst they have been away. This might be because you have been involved in things that your parent or loved one has missed out on, or you might not have missed your serving parent or loved one as much as everyone expects you to.

It's normal to react to these feelings by not wanting to get involved with homecoming preparations.






STAGE 6: FINALLY, THEY ARE HOME!

Your serving parent or loved one is now home. You think the rollercoaster is starting to come to an end only to find that you are presented with new emotions and feelings.

First, you will probably enjoy spending time with each other and being close as a family, this makes it a very exciting time to be together. Things can also be tricky at this stage. There may be some resentment and anger and a general feeling of being unsettled. Small things like watching the T.V or using the iPad when you usually use it can be annoying!



Try to share some of the things that you have been doing whilst your serving parent or loved one has been away.

You might want to suggest doing something together like going to the cinema or even to the park for a kick about; whatever works best for you. It might help to spend time with your serving parent or loved one to build on your relationship and learn more about what has happened while they have been away. You might also need some space or want them to make the first move, that is okay. Sometimes it can help to have your non-serving parent make the plans for both of you or come along so it doesn't feel so intense.



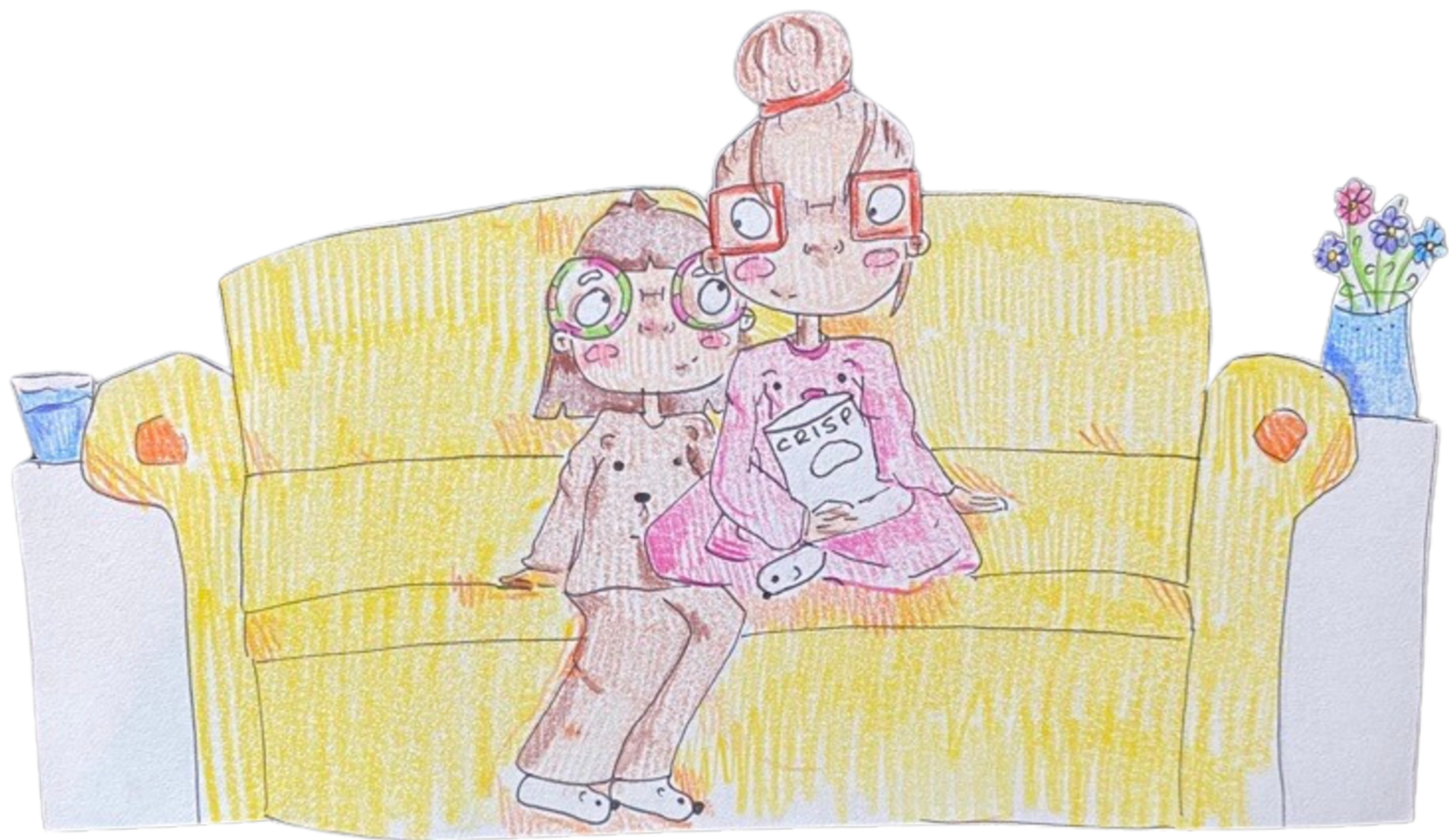


STAGE 7: THINGS ARE GETTING BACK TO NORMAL

The final stage of the rollercoaster is 'Things are getting back to normal'. This usually occurs between 4-6 weeks after your serving parent or loved one has returned home, although it can take longer depending on what type of deployment has occurred. During this stage, normality seems to be resumed, and your relationship with your family may feel more relaxed and comfortable.

At this final stage, it's important to think about your daily routine and what helps your mental wellbeing so that you can sustain positive wellbeing in the coming months.

It might be that you are already thinking about the next time they are going away. That's okay and that's why it is important to keep using the strategies and skills you have learnt during deployment.





www.forceschildrenscotland.org.uk

Forces Children Scotland (formerly known as Royal Caledonian Education Trust)

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