

The Country's at War and I'm in School- What can I do?

The United States, United Kingdom, and allies are engaged in military action in Iraq. Many citizens hold varying points of view about armed aggression and political conflict, but all people experience emotional reactions to the consequences of war.

The deployment of family, friends, fellow students, and neighbors to far away places can increase stress reactions such as fear, anxiety, sadness, frustration, helplessness, and anger. Many people also feel apprehensive because of the uncertainty caused by war and terror.

These reactions are completely normal reactions to acutely disturbing and unusual events. However, it is important to remember how to cope with the events we are experiencing. The following are some tips that may be useful as we all continue to maintain our daily lives while others we know and love are fighting this mission.

Things you can do for yourself:

1. Focus on things under your immediate control.
2. Take care of your personal needs (intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional).
3. Structure your daily life. There is comfort in routine.
4. Exercise regularly to reduce stress symptoms.
5. Avoid excessive use of alcohol or other drugs.
6. Eat and rest well.
7. Avoid lengthy exposure to television war coverage.
8. Spend time with family and friends and talk about your concerns.
9. Engage in enjoyable activities.
10. Avoid sad painful movies and music.
11. Seek support and comfort from spiritual leaders and those in your community of faith.
12. Talk to a hotline counselor.
13. Do not scapegoat other people to make yourself feel better.
14. If you are struggling, come to drop-in hours at Psychological Counseling Services to talk about your feelings.

Things you can do for others:

1. Communicate with friends and family who are deployed military personnel (Send, email, cards and brief letters with a message of hope and appreciation).
2. When mailing packages, check postal regulations to determine what can and cannot be shipped to various locations.
3. Send your family member or friend a phone card.
4. Remember that military personnel cannot reveal anything about their mission.
5. Even if you disagree with the war, do not share your feelings with your family and friends who are or will be deployed.
6. Keep your communications to military personnel upbeat, positive, and supportive.

7. There is always someone in the military who does not receive any correspondence. The National Military Family Association (www.nmfa.org) can provide additional information about more general efforts to support our service men and women.
8. Think about how you will prepare for the return home of your family member or friend. Remember to slowly allow the person to reestablish the relationship, given their experience of deployment and or combat may be life altering.