The changing nature and complexity of the Iraq war has contributed to reintegration stresses experienced by service members, their spouses and families.

**REFRAMING THE CHALLENGE: SHARED-SENSE-OF-PURPOSE PARADIGM**

The challenge of reintegration can be summed up in three words: sense of purpose. The biggest task for the returning service member is to transform a sense of purpose created by the intensity of war into the routines and safety of everyday life. Similarly, the service member’s family has established a sense of purpose sustaining the home and its routines in the absence of the spouse. Helping couples respect each other’s perspective and reestablish a shared sense of purpose is a constructive paradigm that addresses standard concepts such as emotional changes, expectations and adjustments, and reframes them into an action-oriented, positive approach for moving couples forward.

**ROADMAP FOR REINTEGRATION**

The attached fact sheet presents a four-step guide on how couples can reestablish a shared sense of purpose. It can be distributed as a takeaway after educational debriefings, or used with existing programs. The four steps to achieving a shared sense of purpose are:

1. Understand common factors that have shaped the service member’s and spouse’s sense of purpose during separation;
2. Recognize common concerns shared by service member and spouse resulting from the separation;
3. Be aware of relationship breakers: common, sensitive