Behind the Curtain

*Specific Purpose Statement*: To inform my audience about the lifestyle challenges associated with dependents of military service members.

*Central Idea*: Dependents of active-duty service members often experience challenges such as moving frequently, having no culture to call their own, and a lack of connection to their parents.

Introduction

1. **Gain the attention and interest of the audience:** Who here likes to travel? Travelling’s great, you get to see so much of the world. Who here likes to be the new kid in school? Not as many. Its tough, you have to make new friends, adjust to new situations, figure out which bus to get on.
2. **Reveal the topic of the speech:** I myself am a military child, which means I’ve gotten to do both of those things (usually at the same time) more times than I’m able to remember! Military children face a unique combination of challenges not experienced by many other groups, and I hope to offer a new perspective that you may not have considered before.
3. **Establish credibility and goodwill:** I was born into an army family 18 years ago, and alongside my birth certificate I was also assigned my “military brat orders”, outlining my responsibilities as a member of my family in the detached, sentimental way that only doctors you’ll never see again can provide. I’ve lived through 9 moves across the world, 3 of my dad’s deployments, and some of the slowest-working government employees you’ll ever meet.
4. **Preview the body of the speech:** Today I am going to focus on three aspects of the military lifestyle that you may not have considered before. The military lifestyle is ridden with frequent, often surprising moves, a lack of a culture to call one’s own, and some of the strangest relationship dynamics with caretakers you’ve ever seen.

*Connective*: I will begin by discussing the impact that my 9 moves have had on me, and how moving frequently can affect anyone.

Body

1. Adapting to moving around constantly can be a nightmare.
   1. You’re the new kid again.
      1. You lose most of, if not all, of your old friends and relationships
      2. You need to find new friends.
      3. You need to build relationships with new teachers.
      4. You have to learn a new culture.
   2. You have to adapt to a new curriculum.
      1. What if there’s gaps in what you’ve learned?
      2. What if you’re relearning old content?
   3. The average military brat changes schools 6-9 times (www.militarychild.org, pg1)

1. the challenges outlined above happen so frequently that they become the norm

*Connective*: as touched on earlier, a part of moving internationally or even domestically means adapting to and fitting in with a new culture.

1. Repeatedly adapting to new cultures can be taxing.
   1. In my own life I’m not sure which group I belong to.
      1. My friends from Oklahoma largely forgot about me.
      2. A “military culture” is strange because you barely know the people you share it with.
      3. Anywhere I go, I don’t feel like I’ll be around long enough to truly consider myself as part of the culture there.
   2. 2 types of culture shock!
      1. There’s the culture shock you get when moving to a new place for the first time.
      2. There’s a type of “reverse culture shock” experienced when returning to a new place.

Oklahoma to South Korea for the first time

South Korea back to Oklahoma

*Connective*: After addressing culture adaptation, I’d like to switch gears and discuss dependent’s relationships with their service member.

1. Relationships with parents can often be quite rocky.
   1. Wartime deployments can be scary.
      1. Seeing news about a war your parent is in can be a significant stressor.
      2. Depression is found in ¼ of kids with a deployed parent. (nccp.org, para. 10)
      3. Academic problems are found in 1/5 of kids. (nccp.org, para. 10)
   2. Sometimes they get hurt.
      1. Sometimes they get PTSD, have to be amputated, or any number of other injuries.
      2. My dad had 6 knee surgeries in one summer.
      3. Sometimes they die in service.
   3. Having a parent leave for 2+ years with next to no communication is difficult on anyone.

*Connective*: Now that I have discussed three aspects of the military lifestyle, I would like to close out my thoughts.

Conclusion

1. **Let the audience know you are ending the speech:** After addressing these three points, I’d like to quickly summarize before closing:
2. **Reinforce the audience’s understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea. Make your final concluding statement memorable to your audience:** Being a military kid at times can be challenging. You have to deal with uprooting and moving somewhere else on an unprecedented level, a lack of a culture to call your own, and sometimes strained relationships with your parents. However, the positive experiences this lifestyle has given me have largely outweighed any negatives, and I wouldn’t be the person I am today without them. Thank you.

**References**

MCEC. “The Benefits and Challenges of Being a Military Child.” *Military Child Education Coalition - MCEC*, MCEC, 1 Apr. 2022, <https://www.militarychild.org/upload/images/MGS%202022/WellbeingToolkit/PDFs/2_EI_Benefits-and-Challenges-of-Being-a-Mil-Child-2022.pdf>.

Sogomonyan, Fianna, and Janice L. Cooper. “Trauma Faced by Children of Military Families: What Every Policymaker Should Know.” *NCCP*, NCCP, May 2010, <https://www.nccp.org/publication/trauma-faced-by-children-of-military-families/#:~:text=Children%20in%20military%20families%20experience,many%20children%20in%20military%20families>.