

Terms of Reference
Canadian Forces (CF) Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee
Director Military Family Services (DMFS)

Overview of the Project

Background

1. The CF Family Services Summit held May 2008 marked the beginning of working together with military and community leaders, service providers and CF family members to enhance the Military Family Services Program (MFSP).
2. Participants at the CF Family Services Summit tabled a series of recommendations to Chief Military Personnel to evolve the MFSP. CF Family Mental Health and Social Support constituted one of the key areas in which recommendations were provided.
3. The current preventative social support mandate of C/MFRCs is not sufficient to meet the mental health demands of military families within some CF communities.
4. Notwithstanding the provincial responsibility for mental health treatment, the CF does place continuous demands for adaptation and adjustment on families that can contribute to significant stress and lead to mental health concerns. By extension, an obligation can be said to exist for the CF to fund and make available professional mental health services for CF families to address the impact of the CF lifestyle.
5. Preliminary assessment suggests that providing mental health services to families up to but precluding psychiatric treatment/medical intervention will in no way impinge on provincial responsibility as outlined in the Canada Health Act. Provision of these services by MFRCs, or commissioned by MFRCs with other community partners, is appropriate as it augments the continuum of services already within their mandate and has proven effective at pilot sites. In addition, the expanded role would bolster the current peer support available to families of OSI sufferers.

CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee

6. This CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee will be made up of a diverse group of individuals, including CF military or family members that understand the impact of the military lifestyle on the mental health and social support of military family members. The committee will provide guidance and strategic recommendations to DMFS for the purpose of conducting purposeful policy and program development in the area of mental health and social support of military family members. This shall be accomplished through committee members sharing their expertise, knowledge and experience.

Mandate

7. The Committee is established to determine appropriate policy and program development in the area of CF Family Mental Health and Social Support.

Objective

8. The objective of the CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee is to:
- a. review and validate existing CF family mental health and social support research and recommendations, using historical literature and activities to scope the formulation of way-ahead policy and program recommendations;
 - b. review recommendations provided to CMP on the 26 May 08 at the CF Family Services Summit pertaining to CF family mental health and social support;
 - c. formulate and prioritize recommendations in terms of policy and program development for the remainder of FY 08/09 and roll out in FY 09/10; and
 - d. identify appropriate partners and recommend DND / CF / Government of Canada / civilian alliances to advance / implement the policy and program recommendations.

Length of Term/Frequency of Advisory Committee Meetings

9. The CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee will remain in effect from 1 Sep 08 to 30 Sept 09, unless otherwise approved by DMFS.

10. The Advisory Committee will participate in one face-to-face meeting at outset of this initiative with potential for additional similar meetings as resources permit. Optimal use of teleconferencing and email will be employed whenever necessary. Due to timelines, some source materials may be provided in the language of original publication.

Advisory Committee Composition

11. The Advisory Committee will be composed of:
- a. Chairperson: DMFS Senior Manager;
 - b. Committee Project Manager (ex-officio): DMFS Project Manager Mental Health and Social Support; and

- c. Membership: a maximum of 12 additional members (with a representative mix of land, air and sea environments, as well as, an urban/rural/size distribution) from the following groups:
 - i. C/MFRC Executive Directors/Directors;
 - ii. Board/Advisory Committee members from C/MFRCs;
 - iii. L1 representatives;
 - iv. CF family members;
 - v. CF community leaders;
 - vi. CF SW;
 - vii. DGHS; and
 - viii. DMFS staff.

12. Application for Committee membership will be accepted as per the submission guidelines / requirements outlined on the DMFS website at www.cfpsa.com.

Role of Advisory Committee Membership

13. The Advisory Committee Chairperson will:

- a. serve as Chair during Advisory Committee meetings;
- b. provide advice and guidance regarding existing Parameters for Practice policy;
- c. arrange for Subject Matter Experts to advise Committee members;
- d. keep DMFS apprised of Advisory Committee progress.

14. The Committee Project Manager will:

- a. coordinate meetings and prepare agenda;
- b. coordinate meeting logistics;
- c. monitor Advisory Committee progress and brief Chairperson;
- d. provide and distribute background documentation on subject matter; and
- e. communicate with the Working Group results of the Advisory Committee, and vice versa.

15. The Advisory Committee members will:

- a. provide advice to the Chairperson based on each individual Advisory Committee member's knowledge, background and expertise;

- b. provide recommendations to the Chairperson regarding the development of policy and programs;
- c. guide and inform the Working Group through the Chairperson;
- d. share expertise, knowledge and pertinent resources with other Advisory Committee members in order achieve optimal results; and
- e. review and comment on all drafts or work in progress as requested by the Chairperson or, when so approved by the Chairperson, as requested by the Advisory Committee.