

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

Overview of the Project

Background

1. The Canadian Forces (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.

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 Working Group

5. The CF Family Working Group will be made up of a group of individuals who are stakeholders in the policy, programs and/or services in place for military families. Members will understand the impact of the mental health of military family members. The Working Group will provide “hands on” contributions to the development of policy and programs to enhance support to military families in the area of mental health and social support. This shall be accomplished through committee members sharing their expertise, knowledge and experience.

Mandate

6. The Working Group is established to develop appropriate CF Family Mental Health and Social Support policy and programs.

Objectives

7. The objectives of the CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Working Group are to:
- a. assess the recommendations provided by the CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Advisory Committee in order to determine effective development of CF family employment policy and/or programs;
 - b. develop policy and program scope, as applicable;
 - c. formulate fundamental components of policy and programs; and
 - d. prepare draft policy and program documentation.

Length of Term/Frequency of Working Group Meetings

8. The CF Family Mental Health and Social Support Working Group will remain in effect from 1 Nov 08 to 31 Mar 09, unless otherwise approved by DMFS.

9. The Working Group 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.

Working Group Composition

10. The Working Group will be composed of:
- a. Chairperson: DMFS Project Manager Mental Health and Social Support;
 - b. Membership: a maximum of 8 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 staff;
 - ii. L1 representatives;
 - iii. CF family members;
 - iv. CF community leaders; and
 - v. DMFS staff.

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

Role of Working Group Membership

12. The Working Group Chairperson will:

- a. serve as Chair during Working Group meetings;
- b. provide advice and guidance regarding existing MFSP Parameters for Practice policy;
- c. arrange for Subject Matter Experts to advise Working Group members;
- d. keep CF Employment Advisory Committee Chairperson apprised of Working Group progress.
- e. ensure the coordination of meetings and agenda preparation;
- f. ensure the coordination meeting logistics; and
- g. ensure the provision and distribution of background subject matter documentation.

13. The Working Group members will:

- a. contribute to the Working Group mandate and objective based on each individual Working Group member's knowledge, background and expertise;
- b. share expertise, knowledge and pertinent resources with other Working Group members in order to achieve optimal results;
- c. draft material pertaining to policy and program scope, key components and documentation; and
- d. contribute to the development of materials, initiatives, programs and policies as determined by the Working Group Chair.