



# **Good Practice and Resource Guide: Support to Parents of Single Regular Force Members**

21 September 2006

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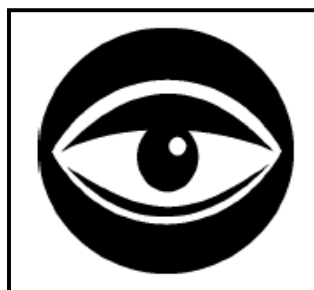
## **Good Practice and Resource Guide: Support to Parents of Single Regular Force Members**

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Produced for the Director Military Family Service (DMFS) Personnel Support Programs Division  
Canadian Forces Personnel Support Agency  
[www.cfpsa.com/dmfs](http://www.cfpsa.com/dmfs)

DMFS acknowledges the extensive work of the Canadian/Military Family Resource Centres and, in particular, the staff and volunteers of the Canadian/Military Family Resource Centres that participated in the Advisory Committee, in the development of this resource.



## **Support to Parents of Single Regular Force Members**

### **Background/Getting Started**

**Funding:** The funds available for 2006/2007 are to facilitate ‘start-up’ initiatives that support the parents of Single Regular Force members. In subsequent years, Canadian/ Military Family Resource Centres (C/MFRCs) will be asked to include the additional resource requirements as part of their MFSP Funding Application.

Many MFRCs already extend support services to this newly mandated population. These MFRCs may wish to use the start-up funds to focus on promotional activities so that they can broaden awareness of the services they provide. For those MFRCs not currently providing services to this group, they may wish to promote the new eligibility criteria. Alternatively, they may wish to use these resources to determine who these community members are and to assess their support needs. Smaller MFRCs may want to determine whether this expansion to a new population will require them to increase the array of services they already provide.

Although CMFRCs (i.e. out of country organizations) are not likely to provide support to this target group, they do have a role to promote it to the single Regular Force members in their catchment area, and to exchange the information furnished by these individuals to the responsible in-country MFRC. CMFRCs are invited to include any costs involved in implementing these tasks in this round of funding requests.

Start-up funding will allow all MFRCs, in concert with Director Military Family Services (DMFS), to ‘kick-start’ this exciting expansion to populations served. DMFS will consider all requests for start-up funds that facilitate this objective. However, please note that funding for this *entire* initiative is \$380,000 per year. Funding applications will be considered within the context of funds available.



**Communication and Awareness:** DMFS is developing a no-cost campaign to create awareness that parents of single Regular Force members are now entitled to the network of support services available through C/MFRCs. With CF members as the primary audience, DMFS intends to release a Canadian Forces General Message (CANFORGEN), backed up by news releases to CF-wide newspapers (the Maple Leaf and the CF Personnel Newsletter) and base newspapers. DMFS will also target currently deployed members through a message to be aired on Canadian Forces Radio and Television (CFRT). In addition, a backgrounder and sample press release will be made available for C/MFRC use locally.

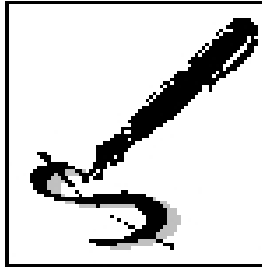
**Services:** This new initiative does *not* change the business of the C/MFRCs; rather, it is solely a change in the populations served. The services, goals and objectives of the MFSP, as published in *MFSP: Parameters for Practice*, stay the same.

The driving force behind the Department of National Defence's (DND) approval of the public funds is to help the MFSP close the gap between what is currently provided to single Reserve Force members, and what has historically been provided to single Regular Force members. As with single Reserve Force members, the parents of single Regular Force members are now eligible for services before, during and after deployment. Similarly, when this new population is entitled to services, it is entitled to *all* the services of the MFSP within the defined time period.

Although the services, goals and objectives of the MFSP have not changed, the unique characteristics of this new population may require a change in how to deliver services. The general considerations and good practice guidelines outlined below are some factors C/MFRCs are encouraged to consider when planning their way forward. The sample activities illustrate how C/MFRCs might incorporate this new population of participants within the existing policy framework (i.e., *MFSP: Parameters for Practice*).



The only change in policy is with respect to the populations served. The goals and objectives of the MFSP remain the same. The business of the C/MFRCs remains the same.



## **Support to Parents of Single Regular Force Members: Issues, Considerations and Recommended Practice**

### **Identifying the Population**

**Issue/ Consideration:** The information collected by the Canadian Forces (CF) on the Personal Emergency Notification (PEN) form cannot be shared with C/MFRCs. The PEN form is the only formal documentation in which the Primary Next of Kin (often the parents) are recorded within the CF. As such, there is no system-wide, formal mechanism for C/MFRCs to know who actually comprises or makes up this new population.

**Recommended Practice:** C/MFRCs will need to use creative approaches to identify these new members of the MFSP community, that is, to determine who (and where) the parents of Single Regular Force members, are. They are encouraged to conduct awareness activities within the broader community to persuade parents to self-identify. Similarly, they can target promotional activities to single Regular Force members to encourage them to make the C/MFRC aware of their parents. As well, processes can be established to request that Single Regular Force members identify their parents during pre-deployment briefings or Departure Assistance Groups.



Sample Activities		
Service Category	Activity	MFSP: Parameters for Practice (2004) Reference
Personal Development and Community Integration	Conduct promotional activities and events.	Information and Referral, p. 29.
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Issue a press release or stage a media event that will make parents aware of their eligibility for service. Invite a parent impacted by the deployment of their son or daughter to act as a volunteer spokesperson.</i></p> <p><i>Brief local units and the Commanding Officer to ensure CF members know of the change in 'populations served.'</i></p>	
Prevention, Support and Intervention	Collaborate with other services on and off base.	Education and Prevention, page 49
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Advise other social service agencies in the community of the broadened eligibility for services of the MFSP, so that they will refer parents of single Regular Force members to the MFRC for support.</i></p>	

## Partnership and Collaboration

**Issue/Consideration:** Parents who are identified are not likely to live in the same geographic area as the single Regular Force member. Often, the parents will live within the catchment area or region of another MFRC.

Although the MFRC physically closest to the identified parents may be in the best position to provide support, it will not likely have had any contact with the single Regular Force member. Similarly, it will not necessarily have ready-access to information as to the nature of the deployment and other details about the CF member's host base/operational realities that would benefit and support this new population.



Partnership and collaboration amongst C/MFRCs will be key to the success of the 'support to parents of single Regular Force members' initiative.


**Recommended Practice:** As the community of the MFSP grows, C/MFRCs will need to establish networks with each other to facilitate referrals, transfer private information and coordinate support to identified individuals.

C/MFRCs need to consider how to share such information to ensure that this new population receives the support to which they are entitled. Any referral process established must adhere to the *Privacy Code for the Military Family Services Program*. (Specifically, the MFRC with the contact information has to have written permission to forward this information to another MFRC.) In addition, C/MFRCs are encouraged to develop processes to determine amongst themselves who will be in contact with the parents, how support will be divided and/or delivered, and how to relay mission-specific information prior to and during deployments.

C/MFRCs are also encouraged to partner and collaborate with the Mission Information Line to augment the levels of support offered. Mission Information Line can also provide mission-specific information to MFRCs that do not otherwise have access to details specific to the operational theatre.



Sample Activities		
Service Category	Activity	MFSP: Parameters for Practice (2004) Reference
<b>Prevention, Support and Intervention</b>	<p>Establish ongoing working relationships with other agencies/organizations.</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Collaborate with other MFRCs to develop a crisis response protocol to ensure a procedure is in place to determine which MFRC reaches out to parents in the event of a critical incident.</i></p>	Assessment and Referral, page 50
<b>Family Separation and Reunion</b>	<p>Liaise with other stakeholders, such as MFRCs, rear parties, COs and families.</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Make contact with the rear party or deployment support group on other bases, and offer to forward their deployment information to the parents in your community impacted by the deployment.</i></p>	Outreach, Information, Support and Assistance to CF Family Members, page 45



Parents of single Regular Force members are now entitled to the same support as parents of single Reserve Force members.



## Service at a Distance

**Issue/Consideration:** The parents of single Regular Force members may not live near *any* military base, wing or unit. As a result, physical access to support services will be limited for many of this newer population served by the MFSP.

**Recommended Practice:** Physical distance means that C/MFRCs will have to focus on outreach services. They need to consider how to reach out to such ‘at a distance’ members of the community, and ensure that their support requirements can be met, particularly in times of high need.

Mail-outs and e-mails to parents of single Regular Force members will help to keep them informed, and can form the basis of meaningful contact. Telephone outreach, or warm lines, will help MFRCs to develop a professional rapport. Also, ensure that parents of single Regular Force members are aware of established ‘long-distance’ CF support services (e.g., Mission Information Line or Centrepointe).

### Sample Activities

Service Category	Activity	<u>MFSP: Parameters for Practice</u> (2004) Reference
Prevention, Support and Intervention	Collect and make available web-based and print resources  <i>For example:</i>  <i>Gather accessible, web-based preventative health material for furtherance to parents.</i>	Education and Prevention, page 49.
Prevention, Support and Intervention	Facilitate self-help groups:  <i>For example:</i>  <i>Support the establishment of a peer support network of parents of single Regular Force members within communities at a distance from the MFRC.</i>	Self-Help Groups, page 49.
Prevention, Support and Intervention	Organize warm lines:  <i>Ensure parents are included on the ‘warm line’ network; establish a 1-800 line to facilitate parent’s access to the MFRC.</i>	Outreach, Information, Support and Assistance to CF Family Members, page 45.



Remember to incorporate the MFSP principle of promoting leadership, volunteerism and participation. Parents of single Regular Force members can be supported by volunteers, and should be encouraged to participate as volunteers.

## The Nature of the New Population Served

**Issue/Consideration:** Spouses and children of CF members have often had time to acclimatize to the CF culture and become embedded within the military community. However, this may not be the case with the parents of the single Regular Force member. In essence, this expansion of ‘populations served’ extends the military community to a host of newcomers.

This new population may be unfamiliar with the language and acronyms of the CF, the nature of the deployment, the unit their son, daughter or significant other is with, etc. They are also less likely to have peers within their current community who can provide them with the companionship and support that is available to the original populations served by the MFSP.

**Recommended Practice:** The MFRC plays an important role in interpreting the military community to those unfamiliar with it, and extending community outreach to facilitate feelings of belonging. Actively include parents of single Regular Force members in all networking, support, and social activities, where practicable. Reduce the isolation of these newcomers by introducing them to more established members of the CF community, and establishing linkages with rear parties or deployment support groups.

The Mission Information Line can also support the learning of the new target group. The Mission Information Line provides mission-specific information in ‘layman’s’ terms. A decade of providing information to parents and loved ones of deployed CF members has given the Mission Information Line considerable experience in supporting the transition of these new members to the CF community.



Sample Activities		
Service Category	Activity	MFSP: Parameters for Practice (2004) Reference
Personal Development and Community Integration	Offer welcome services such as welcome packages, home visits, and phone calls	Welcome and Community Orientation, page 29
	<p><i>For example:</i></p> <p><i>Compile a welcome package that ‘demystifies’ the CF lifestyle, aimed specifically at parents and the learning needs of older adults.</i></p>	



The total funds available for support to parents of single Regular Force members is \$380,000 per year.



### Sample Activities (Cont'd)

Service Category	Activity	MFSP: Parameters for Practice (2004) Reference
<b>Family Separation and Reunion</b>	Plan social events  For example:  <i>Invite parents of single Regular Force members to community events for families separated due to deployment.</i>  <i>Invite parents of single Regular Force members to volunteer and organize a yellow ribbon or invisible ribbon campaign in their community.</i>	Outreach, Information, Support and Assistance to CF Family Members, page 45

### Limits on Populations Served

**Issue/Consideration:** The implied limits to the new population served (i.e. specifically and only the *parents* of single Regular Force members) does not represent all of the loved ones and/or extended family members that many MFRCs currently serve or wish to serve. Informant interviews and formal site visits suggest that some MFRCs support a broader population. Certainly, in the event of a casualty or fatality, C/MFRCs have distinguished themselves by ensuring an inclusive model of support services are offered to all that may be affected by the event.

**Recommended Practice:** The mandated populations served by the MFSP (as identified by DMFS) are solely those that DMFS has a commitment to fund. A C/MFRC can and indeed is encouraged to extend its services to a broader community of participants (or continue to provide services to a broader community), as long as it has the agreement of the local Commanding Officer and the Board of Directors, and the resources to do so. (See *MFSP: Parameters for Practice*, page 27).

In the event of a casualty or fatality, C/MFRCs are expected to offer appropriate levels of care and intervention to those members of the community, broadly defined, that require support. In this circumstance, C/MFRCs are encouraged to request contingency funding from DMFS should they incur additional costs for providing this level and range of service.



The definitions of 'populations served' within MFSP policy are those that DMFS has a commitment to fund. The C/MFRC can extend its services to a broader community if it has the approval of the Commanding Officer, its Board of Directors and the resources to do so.

## Extent/Impact of Services Provided

**Issue/Consideration:** The primary reason for expanding the ‘populations served’ was to support the parents of single Regular Force members before, during and after deployment (and, by extension, enhance operational effectiveness by supporting the Single Regular Force member). Deployment support, however, is not restricted solely to the ‘Family Separation and Reunion’ category; it often draws upon all services of the MFSP. As a result, in addition to aligning the service to what has historically been available to the Primary Next of Kin (i.e. parents) of Reserve Force members, it makes all of the services of the MFSP available to the parents of single Regular Force members.

The specific characteristics of this new population served, as well as the sheer number of potential participants may cause MFRCs some concern about their capacity to provide the full array of MFSP mandated services. This is particularly true for services that can result in a ‘per person’ cost, such as Second Language Services (in particular Second Language Training), Emergency Child Care and Emergency Respite Care.

**Recommended Practice:** Many MFSP services are established to provide CF families with access to services that are otherwise available in civilian communities throughout the country. The parents of single Regular Force members often live in these neighbourhoods, and will already have access to these types of services. In keeping with the MFSP standard to not duplicate services otherwise provided (*MFSP: Parameters for Practice*, page 18), the MFRC is obligated only to provide a layer of more specialized services – related specifically to the exigencies of the CF lifestyle – not otherwise available to this population in their resident communities.

In many respects, the nature and intent of the services of the MFSP are self-limiting. C/MFRCs are encouraged to focus on the goals and objectives of the services, as well as the intended recipients as currently stated within *MFSP: Parameters for Practice*, more than service delivery per se. For example, Second Language Training was established primarily to meet the objective of giving CF families the opportunity to learn the predominant language of their community of residence. Thus, Second Language Training would not normally be offered to parents residing apart from the single Regular Force member, because, presumably, they would be well-versed in the predominant language of the province and community in which they live. However, the new policy *would* support the Second Language Training requirements of a parent who lived with, and accompanied a single Regular Force member on a posting to a new community where they were not able to converse in the language spoken there.



Support to Parents of single Regular Force members is limited to before, during and after deployment.



Similarly, Emergency Child Care and Emergency Respite Care services have, at their core, the goal of supporting the CF member to be available for duty –to meet the unexpected child care needs that are a direct result of CF duty requirements, and to provide the spouse of a CF member with emergency respite child care when the CF member is away. By implication, these services are available to the children or stepchildren of a CF member – a target group already covered under the existing policy. As such, the change in ‘populations served’ will not affect this service.



**Director Military Family Services**

**PSP Division**

**CANADIAN FORCES PERSONNEL SUPPORT AGENCY**

**4210 Labelle St., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0K2**

**[www.cfpsa.com](http://www.cfpsa.com)**

**Canada** 

