

Welcome to the Meaford Military Family Resource Centre's (MMFRC) **Family Separation and Reunion Services**. These services are provided to military families before, during and after a 'deployment'. Participation of families in any of the 'deployment' services or activities is strictly voluntary. You are not obligated to receive services. If you do NOT wish to access any services, please let us know and we will remove you from our outreach list.

The Definition of 'deployment'

The MMFRC recognizes a 'deployment' as "any separation faced by a military family due to operations and exercises both domestic and abroad, and for periods of temporary duty associated with military courses." This currently includes IR's (Imposed Restriction).

With this broad definition, we realize that the length of separation varies with each situation. Our activities and services are offered year-round, and try to provide something for all families regardless of their stage of deployment. Information sessions that are geared to specific topics may not be applicable to all 'deployment' families at the time, however we try to provide these sessions frequently enough to cover the material at least 3 times a year.

Information

To assess your current requirements & give you an opportunity to provide input & ideas you are invited to fill out a Service Requirement Assessment. You are not required to fill out and return the form, however it helps to give us a better idea of the areas of the program that of interest to people, and which require further development. As well, it identifies the specific areas in which your family may require resources.

If it's something you are interested in receiving, the Information Package for Family Separation & Reunion includes:

- ❖ Preparing for Deployment Checklist
- ❖ "The Emotional Cycle of Deployment" handout
- ❖ A letter documenting the services offered by the Family Separation & Reunion Program
- ❖ The current schedule of activities
- ❖ Various brochures detailing many of the programs available through the Canadian Forces (e.g. Mission Information Line, SISIP, etc.)

For those with children:

- ❖ "Children and Deployment" handout
- ❖ "Ideas for Helping Children Cope with Deployment" handout
- ❖ Deployment Journal
- ❖ Children's book (if age appropriate) relating to mothers or fathers' deployment

For those caring for young or special needs children:

- ❖ Information about respite care available in our community

These packages are available by mail or at any of our deployment functions.

Ask the Coordinator...

Once you have had a chance to read the information in the package, I encourage you to call or e-mail with any questions, concerns or ideas that you may have. Monthly activities and other pertinent 'deployment' information are e-mailed out if requested. If it's more convenient for you, you can also use e-mail to make inquiries. As I work Mon-Fri, I check my e-mails frequently, and will respond as quickly as possible.

Other MMFRC Services & Information

The MMFRC newsletter comes out monthly, and provides you with an overview of all planned activities and services for that time period. It is hand-delivered to single's quarters at the Training Centre and is mailed out to all other military families. If you have not been receiving it, please contact the reception desk at 519-538-1371 ext. 6509 to be added, or to make sure we have your correct mailing information in our client database. You may also check out our website at: <http://www.mfrcmeaford.com> to access information regarding our programs and services.

The MMFRC has a number of other services available, including a daycare, personal development workshops, and community coffee events.

Contact to Families (if you wish)

Telephone Contact

A monthly phone call to you at home or work (if it's okay) is an excellent way for me to see how things are going. I ask questions in order to find out how your whole family is managing. Our phone conversations are confidential, but please share only what you are comfortable with. If you need other resources, I would be happy to refer you. I also give you an opportunity to ask any questions or offer any suggestions to improve our program. If you do not want a monthly call, please advise me. I will make a note on your file. If you need anything, however, you can still phone me.

Keeping Busy

Activities

Keeping busy can be a really good way to make the time of a deployment go quickly. There are many different activities scheduled throughout the month to provide an opportunity to network with others in a similar situation, as well as just to have fun. I try to offer these activities at a variety of times, to meet different family's schedules. Family members are welcome to attend any 'deployment' activity the month prior to departure, during the absence and for several months after their return. Please refer to our "Current Schedule of Activities" for a full list of activities.

Volunteer Opportunities

I also welcome deployment families to volunteer with my activities and any projects that I have on the go. If you are interested, please let me know. If you would rather do general volunteering with the MMFRC, you can speak with Valerie Deacon, our Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Post Deployment

This stage seems to take many people by surprise! Communication and understanding are the most important tools to have. If we've been contacting you, we'll remind you to read your Reunion Information prior to the return. We also have extra literature and films that may be helpful. Questions, comments, or concerns are welcome. We can even provide an e-mail document on Reunion that could be e-mailed directly to your partner.

Once the military member has arrived home, we give you about a week before we will call. However, please don't hesitate to call us during that time if you have any questions or concerns. You will be getting used to being a couple/family again, and will just be starting some new routines. Over the next few months we will call several more times, if you wish. We have support and information available to your family, should you require it. You are all welcome to the 'deployment' activities we provide during your reunion phase.

You may be asked to fill in a survey to assess these services, which provides you with a formal avenue to provide input and ideas, as well as us an opportunity to improve or change services as required.

Conclusion

I hope that this outline has been helpful in making you aware of the role of the MMFRC's Family Separation & Reunion Services (Deployment Support Program). Again, please don't hesitate to call or e-mail if you have any comments, questions, concerns or input.

Take care,

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