

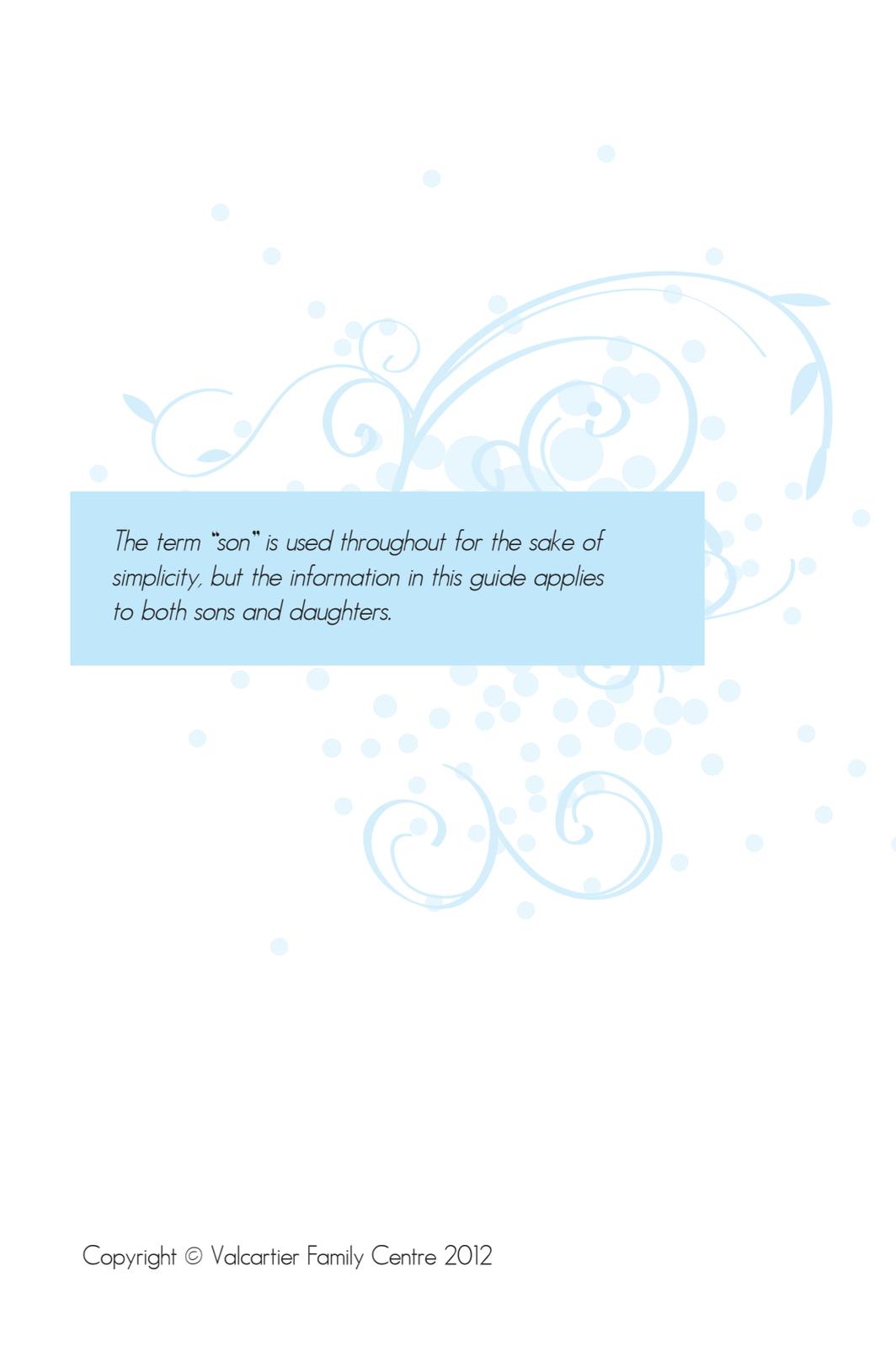
VALCARTIER FAMILY CENTRE

Deployment guide for PARENTS OF CF MEMBERS



Military Families, Strength Behind the Uniform



The background of the page is decorated with light blue swirls and dots. The swirls are elegant and flowing, with some having small leaves at their ends. The dots are of various sizes and are scattered throughout the page, creating a soft, decorative pattern.

The term "son" is used throughout for the sake of simplicity, but the information in this guide applies to both sons and daughters.

Message from the Executive Director

The Valcartier Family Centre (VFC) has been working with military families since the early 1990s. Part of its mandate is to help families separated by deployment and affected by the hardships this may entail.

During deployments since 1993, including domestic operations such as the response to the ice storm, the Family Centre has accompanied families through the various stages of absence, throughout this life experience. It is an experience that affects all family members in terms of emotions, relationships, and even how family routines are organized. The sheer number of missions in which Valcartier troops have taken part in recent years has had a considerable impact on the development of family services. The Valcartier Family Centre has seen its services grow with every military operation in order to meet the needs of the entire family, members' parents included.

This guide is one of the many tools in the VFC's Support Program for Extended Absences. This guide, designed to be simple and easy to use, provides information and concrete ideas to help families cope with extended absences.

We hope that you will find this guide useful in preparing for an extended absence, for dealing with the absence itself, and for preparing for the equally important homecoming.

Military Families: Strength Behind the Uniform

Executive Director



Marie-Claude Michaud

Emotions that Deployment may Cause

Your son's deployment may evoke conflicting emotions. You may be proud but worried for his safety. Even though your son is an adult, it is normal to be concerned for his safety and well-being, especially during a time when you don't know what he is doing, what his routine is, etc. It is important to remember that your son is trained (psychologically, physically and operationally) and equipped to carry out his mission in the best way possible. Also remember that the best thing you can do for your son is to give him your support and encouragement, and to take care of yourself.

You may:

- Feel worried
- Feel afraid
- Feel angry
- Feel proud
- Look for meaning in his departure

These emotions:

- Vary over time
- Vary from person to person
- Are normal

If you experience stress or emotional upheaval that persists or worsens, we encourage you to make use of the available resources.

In order to facilitate the deployment, it is important to:

Discuss the progression of the deployment, holidays, and homecoming. Be open to the possibility of change in schedule and have realistic expectations.

Discuss the risks and dangers of the mission and its various tasks without panicking (as with firefighting and policing careers, there are risks, but they are sporadic).

Understand that he may be excited about leaving and putting what he has learned into practice.

Take this opportunity to create warm and happy memories that will be a source of courage.

Understand that he may wish to spend time with other people too before he leaves, during the holidays, and when he returns. He is leaving his whole environment.

Try to look at deployment as an enriching challenge that will give you an opportunity to grow and develop new strengths.

Take care of yourself and go on with everyday life and set new goals.

Surround yourself with friends, family members and neighbours who will be understanding without judging you.

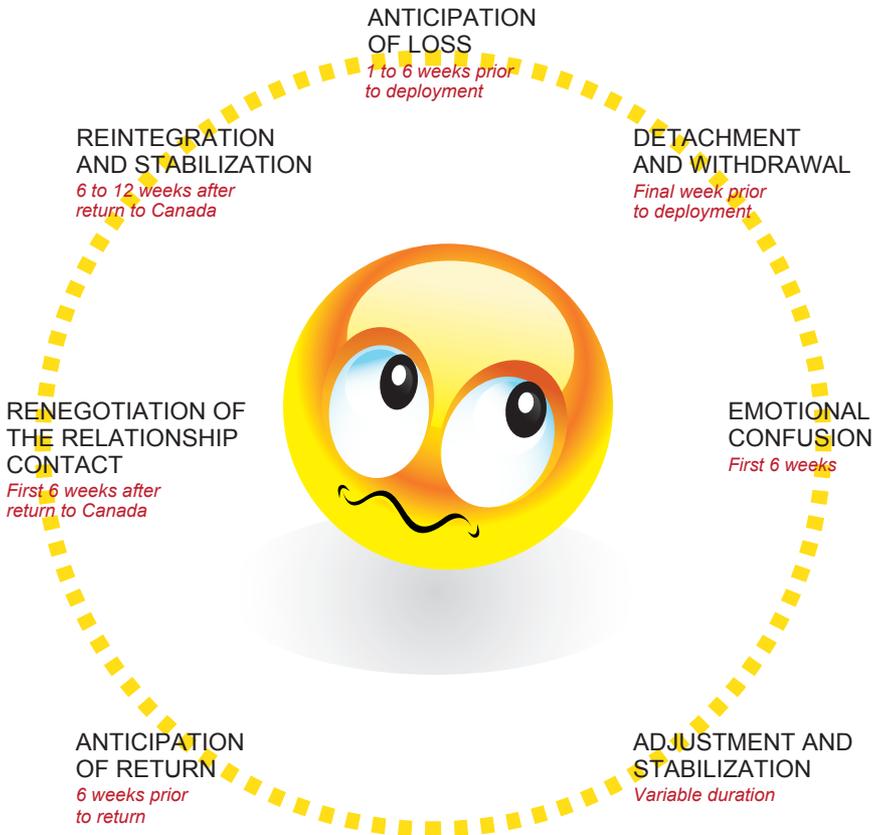
Verify the information given out by the media by calling the Family Information Line or simply have less contact with the media.

Get involved with a formal or informal support group to share your experiences with people who are going through the same thing.

Distribution lists are created to keep you informed throughout the absence period. Ask about this at your Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) or Deployment Support Group (DSG).

The Emotional Cycle of Deployment

This emotional cycle of deployment depicts the various stages and emotions that spouses and children of CF members may experience.



This emotional cycle of deployment was developed based on a study carried out with military spouses. Over the years, we have noticed that parents of military members also go through these various stages.

Each stage brings a different reality.

Anticipation of loss: this mission is perhaps your first experience of long-term separation from your son. It is normal to feel concerned.

Detachment and withdrawal: It is possible that the military member begins to distance himself and that may make you realize that departure is nearing, in turn increasing your stress and concern.

Emotional confusion: Once your son has left, you will have to re-establish your daily routine, your lifestyle that will enable you to adjust and cope better during the deployment.

Anticipation of return: During the absence each person has experienced different things and you may be preoccupied with the potential impact of this fact on a return to normal life. For the military member, returning home requires a great deal of adjustment.

Renegotiation of the relationship contract: Each person has to get back into his/her routine. There may be changes now that your son has returned home. This is a time of adjustment for everyone.

Reintegration and stabilization: Things fall gradually back into place, but there may still be certain types of behaviour or actions that make you wonder. Your son may need a bit more time to adjust and you may find it interesting to talk with him about this.

These various stages carry emotional weight, and you should feel free to schedule a meeting with Valcartier Family Centre staff if you feel the need.

Everyday Life during a Mission: A Very Different Reality from Ours!

The CF member's everyday life during a mission:

His schedule is full. He is constantly at his workplace where there is always lots to do.

His primary focus is on the task at hand, mainly the mission.

He lives in a group setting and is building strong ties with his companions.

He has become hyper-vigilant in order to react immediately to danger, ensuring his security and the security of others.

At times, this might give you the impression that he is not paying attention to what you are saying or does not show interest in your daily life. You may want to know everything about his military life and his deployment. Be aware that he cannot give you detailed information about operations in progress for security reasons. However, he can tell you about his leisure activities, daily routine, social life, etc. although his time for talking will be limited. Over time, the routine takes over and daily life seems to him less interesting to talk about.

For all information relating to the mission and military living conditions, contact the DSG, the Support Program for Extended Absences at the Valcartier Family Centre (VFC) and the Family Information Line. You may also go to the Website of the Canadian Forces at forces.gc.ca

In the Event of a Critical Incident

MEDICAL SERVICES

CF members benefit from medical services and moral support during the mission (nurses, doctors, chaplains, social workers, etc.) In the event of an injury, medical assistance is offered at each camp.

However, if the CF member requires care that is even more specialized, the member may be transferred to an outside hospital already identified according to the location of the mission. When possible, it is preferable for the CF member to contact his family personally to tell them about the state of his health. If not possible, representatives from the chain of command will travel to the home of the member's next of kin (chosen by the member and written in his file).

Furthermore, some of the next of kin, identified on a form intended for this purpose, may, in some cases, have occasion to travel to the hospital where the member is receiving care to be with him. If you do not have a passport, it is possible to obtain one in 24 hours with your original birth certificate from the registrar of civil status. However, it must have been issued after January 1, 1994.

If necessary, an assisting officer from the unit can help you with these steps.

If the Member Dies

In the majority of cases, a chaplain and a representative from the unit visit the home of the next of kin (as chosen by the member and identified in his file) to inform them. In certain instances, the news is given by a parish priest or a civilian police officer.

In order to make the process easier, the family will be assisted by a designated officer for as long as is necessary.

Normally, after the member's immediate family has been informed, the name of the deceased CF member will be released to the media.

Homecoming (Holidays, End of Mission)

THE HOMECOMING IS AN OCCASION TO CELEBRATE. HOWEVER, TRY TO HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Your son has gone through experiences that may have changed him. Give him the time and space necessary to adapt to his return.

Remember that your son will want to get in touch with other people when he returns. He may want to celebrate with a variety of people or simply relax.

If your son has a family, discuss the organization of his return with them. It is of foremost importance to ask the member's opinion and to take his choices into account.

You may have many questions, but your son might not be ready to talk to you about his deployment. The best thing to do is to respect his wishes and remain available to him. When you ask a question, be aware that the answer you get may not be the one you were expecting.

During the transition from mission to home, the military member must gradually modify behaviours that were helpful during his mission (hyper-vigilance, emotional detachment, etc.) and settle into everyday life. This can take time.

While on vacation, it is possible that your son may not be entirely able to stop thinking about the mission, knowing that he must return to it soon.

YOU MAY WITNESS THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIOUR DURING THE HOMECOMING TRANSITION

The CF member may:

- Give orders and have difficulty receiving instructions
- Show signs of emotional detachment
- Have diminished ability to concentrate and some memory loss
- Be irritable
- Be jumpy and hyper-vigilant
- Have trouble sleeping
- Isolate himself
- Feel guilty
- Experience physical and mental fatigue
- Increase or modify his alcohol consumption
- Have diminished interest in activities or try to do too many things.

If you observe some of these behaviours:

- Remain available and listen if your son wants to talk. Be aware that he will perhaps want to discuss it with someone else who has experienced the same thing;
- Be attentive to changes, and mention them without dramatizing;
- Respect his rhythm. Sometimes the adjustment does not occur as fast as you might wish.

If, on the other hand, these behaviours increase for more than three to six months or worsen, or negatively affect his daily ability to function, encourage your son to make use of available resources.

Reminders

If your son is single, has he signed a Power of Attorney?
We recommend that you obtain civil power of attorney,
as it makes it easier to deal with non-military institutions.

Has he completed a Mandate in Case of Inability with a notary?

What are the two names listed as next of kin on the unit's
emergency form?

If you are listed as one of the next of kin and must be away for
more than 24 hours, it is a good idea to advise the DSG so that
they can contact you if necessary.

Make sure you have your original birth certificate, or a valid
passport, in case you have to go to be with your son in case
of an emergency.

Find out your son's rank, service number, unit and section.

In the event of an emergency situation in Quebec (serious illness,
death), you can contact the DSG so that they may contact the
CF member on mission.

Remember that you have the right to decline media questions.
A guide entitled *Dealing With the Media: Guide for Military
Families* is available to you at the DSG.



How Can I Keep in Touch?

VARIOUS MEANS AVAILABLE TO MILITARY MEMBERS

Telephone: On average 30 minutes of access per week. Depending on the location, the member may use a standard or a satellite telephone; the call quality will be affected.

Internet: Generally, when installations have become permanent or more structured, Internet-equipped computers are available. Time use is limited and varies from one location to another.

VARIOUS MEANS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES

Internet: Computer stations are available in most Military Family Resource Centres.

Drop-off points for packages and letters:

Deployment Support Group – Building 93 – Valcartier

Valcartier Family Centre – Sainte-Foy Service Centre – Wolfe Avenue
Mail Room, Building 200 – Valcartier

Reserve Units in your region (*it is recommended that you contact them before travelling anywhere*).

Canada Post Office – you must pay the cost as far as Belleville, Ontario.

DO NOT FORGET TO INDICATE ON YOUR PARCEL

Name, rank, service number, unit, section and mailing address.

Contents, sender's address.

For more detailed information regarding letters and parcels and the procedures to follow when sending them, contact the Deployment Support Group (DSG) or visit their Website at gsdlv.ca

Resources

VALCARTIER FAMILY CENTRE (VFC)

418 844-6060 / Toll free 1 877 844-6060

familyforce.ca

Support service

Volunteer Action / Community Services and Activities

Information and Referral

Regional military families' liaison officer

Support program for extended absences

Services specifically for parents:

- Support group (can be offered in your locality according to demand)
- Deployment Online
- "Preparing for the Departure," "Preparing for the Return" and "Post-deployment impact awareness workshops"

DEPLOYMENT SUPPORT GROUP (DSG)

1 877 844-5607 / 418 844-5607

24/7 Service, information, referrals, mail. gsdv.ca

FAMILY INFORMATION LINE (FIL)

1 800 866-4546

Recorded message about deployed operations, counsellors available.

MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)

1 800 268-7708

Short-term counselling services for CF members and their families.

CHAPLAIN SERVICES

418 844-5000, ext. 5473 (business hours) - ext. 5777 (after hours)

OTHERS RESOURCES

Local community organizations: CSSS, Maison de la Famille,

Centre de crise de Québec, listing of community resources: 211, etc.



Don't forget:
we are here for you!

VALCARTIER FAMILY CENTRE

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Toll free: 1 877 844-6060
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