

# MILITARY & FAMILY LIFE COUNSELING



MILITARY AND FAMILY LIFE COUNSELING

# Program Guide

September 2022

**FOR WHEREVER YOU ARE IN LIFE.**



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# Overview

The stresses of military life are complex, requiring a wide range of problem-solving skills to address areas such as: relationship challenges, communication issues, deployment, frequent relocations, grief and loss, isolation from extended family members, children coping with the absence of a parent, child education, and spousal employment. The Department of Defense recognizes these difficulties and is committed to providing the necessary counseling support for military service members and their families. The Military and Family Life Counseling Program was designed to rapidly deploy counselors for short- and long-term assignments based on each military branch's specific need. Counselors are licensed to practice independently in the location where they are providing services. The exception to licensure requirements are for those counselors working towards independent licensure, under the supervision of a counselor licensed to practice independently, and within the guidelines of the state, commonwealth or territory.

The MFCLC Program provides non-medical counseling, consultation and outreach services to more than 200 military installations or nearby civilian communities located in most all of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and commonwealths, and over 25 foreign countries including areas considered hazardous duty/danger zones. The MFCLC services assignments include rotational, camps, on-demand, and surge support services, which are both planned and reactionary. School assignments can be nine or 12 months depending on the length of the school year. MFCLC services are requested directly from installation points of contact, and the requirement is generated and approved by the Service headquarters points of contact, with the MFCLC Program Manager as the final approval authority.

The MFCLC services are intended to augment, not replace, other Department of Defense support services/programs or staff available for eligible participants.

The non-medical counseling approach is psychoeducational, which helps participants learn to anticipate and resolve challenges associated with the military life. Support is aimed at preventing the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions that may detract from military and family readiness.

The contract is centrally managed by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. These general program guidelines do not supersede service regulations.

The MFCLC Program operates through the use of two prime contractors, each supporting a service area:

Area 1 – Eastern Geographic Footprint: CONUS locations east of the Mississippi River and OCONUS locations in the Africa Command, European Command and Central Command.

Area 2 – Western Geographic Footprint: CONUS locations west of the Mississippi River and OCONUS locations in the Pacific Command and Southern Command.

## Eligibility

Active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve members (regardless of activation status), Coast Guard members when activated for the Navy, Department of Defense expeditionary civilians (90 days prior to deployment through 180 days post-deployment) and their immediate family members are eligible for services—as well as foreign military members and their families (enrolled in DEERS) and non-remarried surviving spouses and children of active-duty, National Guard and reserve service members, regardless of activation status and cause of death of the service member. Veterans and their immediate families are eligible up to 180 days past separation from the military.

## The Role of Military and Family Life Counselors

Military and family life counselors, or MFLCs, and child and youth behavioral military and family life counselors, or CYB-MFLCs, provide confidential non-medical counseling, consultation and outreach services face to face, both on and off military installations. Counselors rotate at locations worldwide.

### *Military and Family Life Counselors*

MFLCs provide support to individuals, couples, families and groups for a range of issues including, but not limited to, deployment stress, reintegration, relocation adjustment, separation, anger management, conflict resolution, parenting, parent-child communication, relationship and family issues, coping skills, homesickness, and grief and loss.

### *Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counselors*

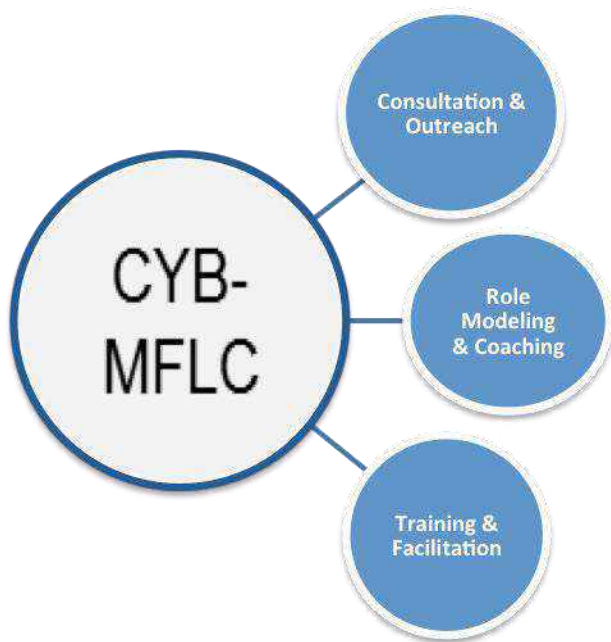
CYB-MFLCs provide support to families and augment child and youth programs, Department of Defense Education Activity schools, local education agencies, and camps designed for military children and youth and special operations commands. Counselors provide non-medical support, which includes counseling, consultation and outreach, to eligible faculty, staff, parents, children and youth. They may observe, participate and engage in activities with children and youth; provide coaching, guidance and support to staff and parents; and model behavior management techniques for staff and parents. Parents must acknowledge, in writing, their consent to CYB-MFLC support and whether their child under the age of 18 may receive assistance from a CYB-MFLC (see [Parent Acknowledgment Form](#)).

CYB-MFLCs provide support on topics including, but not limited to:

- Identifying feelings
- Bullying
- Conflict resolution
- Self-esteem
- Managing anger and aggression
- Separation from parents
- Problem-solving
- Coping with deployment and reunification

- Transition and moving
- Sibling and parental relationships
- Time management
- Divorce
- Food insecurity

Children of civilians are not eligible to receive counseling on a one-on-one basis; therefore, they will not need to have a signed parental consent. If nonmilitary-connected youth are in a group setting with military-connected youth, the CYB-MFLC shall support the group as a whole, to include both the military-connected youth and nonmilitary-connected youth.



Counselors support and augment installation child and youth programs by providing private and confidential non-medical counseling, consultation and outreach services to children and youth up to age 18 in groups or individually and by offering guidance and modeling to families, staff and support personnel.

## *Counselor Work Schedules*

The counselor work schedule is a highly flexible 40-hour work week. Appointments, meetings and briefings may extend beyond typical work hours and may include evenings and weekends. Counselors should take into consideration the unique nature of the work and recognize that mission requirements may necessitate work outside normal hours, including work on federal holidays. In these situations, work hours may be adjusted to accommodate the workload. Overtime beyond 40 hours is not authorized.

School rotations for CYB-MFLCs cover the entire academic year, which may range from nine to 12 months. In coordination with installation points of contact, counselors assigned to a school during the academic school year may remain on the installation during school recesses or breaks and provide services throughout the assignment rotation. This would include providing presentations and walk-around coaching services\* throughout the installation.

The decision to maintain a counseling presence on the installation or at the school during school breaks is collaboratively made by the school point of contact, installation, service headquarters point of contact and Military Community Support Programs. Final decisions regarding counselor presence during school breaks come from Military Community Support Programs.

If a counselor is unable to complete an assignment, Military Community Support Programs will work to backfill the assignment.

## *Counselor Travel*

Both MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs are authorized to provide support for activities within a 50-mile radius of their assignment location. If service members and their families need non-medical support in a location beyond 50 miles, installation points of contact may submit a request for travel in advance through their chain of command to Military Community Support Programs.

All travel must be in direct support of counselor assignments and be approved in advance by the contracting officer representative.

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\* Walk-around coaching refers to a more casual outreach opportunity that allows counselors to engage with service members and their families and discuss issues they are experiencing. Using this approach, counselors go to the people instead of waiting for them to schedule an appointment in a traditional office setting.

# Types of Support Provided by the MFCL Program

## *Rotational Support*

Rotational support is provided by counselors on an ongoing basis on active-duty military installations, as well as National Guard and reserve locations, and within various recruiting commands. Requests to initiate support are done through the [BOSS support request system](#). Once a rotational position is approved, it will automatically renew unless discontinued. Requests to discontinue support or to extend a specific MFCL or CYB-MFCL should be done by sending an email to the chain of command or service headquarters points of contact.

The same counselor may support back-to-back rotations. Requests can be made for a specific MFCL or CYB-MFCL to extend on a case-by-case basis. To request an extension of a specific MFCL or CYB-MFCL or discontinuation of support, an email should be sent through the appropriate service chain of command to the service headquarters points of contact, who will contact Military Community Support Programs for approval. Requests for extension will be approved and supported pending the MFCL's availability.

## *Surge Support*

Short-term surge support provides service members and families confidential, non-medical counseling services for up to 90 days.

Installation points of contact may request surge support using the [BOSS support request system](#). Surge support can fill short-term or unanticipated needs, such as support in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Requests for support are approved by the service headquarters points of contact, with Military Community Support Programs as the final approval authority.

Installation points of contact may request an extension of surge support by sending an email for extension up through the chain of command to the service headquarters points of contact, or via the [BOSS support request system](#) communication page. Requests for extensions must be received in Military Community Support Programs no fewer than 15 workdays prior to the end of the initial surge support.

## *School and Child Development Center Rotational Support*

School and child development center rotational support is provided to DODEA schools and local education agencies with a substantial population of military children during the academic school year. Support is also provided in child development and youth centers on approved military installations. School-based counselors may be in place up to two days prior to the beginning of the school year. School rotational support is the length of the academic year. Counselors may remain for a second academic year if requested by the school. Use the [BOSS support request system](#) when requesting school support.

## *Summer Program and Camp Support*

Summer program and camp support is provided to military children during installation child and youth summer programs, DODEA summer school, Operation Purple Camps and Family Retreats, National Guard and reserve camps, and Operation Military Kids camps. Program directors may request support using the online [BOSS support request system](#). Submissions should be submitted no later than 90 days from the requested start date of the camp to ensure adequate staffing.

## *On-demand Support*

Counselors may be deployed to support events, such as Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program events and family events, during weekdays, weekends and on drill weekends. These events, typically lasting one to three days, are held primarily in the United States and U.S. territories. Unit representatives or event points of contact may request support using the [BOSS support request system](#). Submissions should be made at least 15 business days in advance of the event; the event location must be confirmed at least 10 days prior to the event.

## *Support Request Reviews*

Requests for MFLC and CYB-MFLC support are thoroughly reviewed upon submission and evaluated based on each request's merit. Military Community Support Programs makes the final determination for request approval, and the following areas are taken into consideration when requests for support are submitted:

- The identified needs of the participants at the location or on the installation
- The number of MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs currently providing support
- The previous utilization of MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs at the location, installation or supported event, if available



# Basic Guidelines for Counseling Support

Counseling is private and confidential, with the exception of mandatory state, federal and military duty-to-warn reporting requirements.

Eligible participants may receive up to 12 sessions of non-medical counseling **per issue**.

Counselors may be assigned to various locations including, but not limited to, installation Military and Family Support Centers, resiliency centers, selected pediatric clinics, child development centers, teen centers, DODEA schools, local education agencies and installation welcome centers. In addition, counselors may be embedded within military units. They are not limited to their assigned location and are encouraged to meet in various locations as they provide walk-around coaching support. Support may not be provided in a client's home or vehicle. CYB-MFLCs may provide support to children and families enrolled in **installation-certified** family child care, or FCC, homes. When support is provided in the FCC home, all applicable policies, to include line-of-sight supervision, must be followed. Any engagement by CYB-MFLCs must be coordinated/approved through the installation FCC coordinator or appropriate office.

The MFLC Program can provide a source of assistance in addressing issues encountered by military families. However, ***diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression or other medical and mental health disorders are outside the scope of MFLC support.*** Situations meeting the diagnostic criteria for mental disorders, such as those found in the current edition of the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,” are not authorized for support. Participants needing treatment for these conditions will be referred via a warm handoff to behavioral health providers, TRICARE, military treatment facilities or other providers of professional mental health services as appropriate.

**Installation points of contact or designees should have a robust communication system established to guide MFLCs to where support is needed.** It is important that the installation designees understand their roles and responsibilities, including the scope of the program, to help guide MFLCs for the most effective utilization. This can be accomplished by building relationships based on communication, collaboration and trust.

The MFLC Program contract is a non-personal services contract, centrally managed by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy; therefore, the government does not direct or supervise the counselors.

All counselors must have a master's or doctorate degree in a mental health-related field, such as social work, psychology, marriage and family therapy or counseling. Counselors must also possess a valid unrestricted counseling license or certification from a state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. commonwealth or a U.S. territory that grants authority to provide counseling services as an independent practitioner in their respective field, or be provisionally licensed and pursuing an independent practitioner license. The provisionally licensed practitioner must be supervised by an unrestricted licensed counselor who is approved by their licensing board supervision. The provisionally licensed counselor must also be co-located with a counselor who has a valid unrestricted counseling license or certification from a state, the District of Columbia, a U.S. commonwealth or a U.S. territory that grants authority to provide counseling services as an independent practitioner. Provisionally licensed MFLCs will not be assigned to positions that are OCONUS, isolated or require a high level of security clearance. The use of provisionally licensed counselors enables hiring counselors who have relocated to another

state and are awaiting independent licensure (e.g., military spouses) and creates a career path for new master's level practitioners pursuing clinical licensure and a specialty in caring for the military community. Additionally, CYB-MFLCs working in child care, pediatric and school settings are required to complete training competencies for supporting children in developmentally appropriate ways and identifying child abuse and problematic sexual behaviors. This high level of training ensures quality services for the eligible participants.

All counselors are under the supervision and control of their contractor. Contract supervisors provide weekly supervision of the counselors. The contract supervisor should remain in contact with the installation point of contact on a monthly or as-needed basis to address counselor support. Contract personnel cannot participate on boards, become voting members on boards or committees, or attend conferences on behalf of a command.

In cases where the military chain of command, or related medical professional, requests MFLC non-medical counseling-related information concerning a service member, the MFLC shall remind them of the confidential nature of the MFLC services in accordance with current and applicable Department of Defense Instructions and refer them to the MFLC Program Manager for further guidance, if applicable. Additionally, in instances when the chain of command refers service members for MFLC counseling or requests MFLC support, MFLCs shall inform them it is not possible due to the confidential nature of the program. However, MFLCs are encouraged to consult with the military chain of command, or related medical professional, on trending issues for service members and families while maintaining confidentiality.

The contractor, in collaboration with the designated installation point of contact, establishes a schedule and a system to demonstrate day-to-day counselor accountability. At a minimum, the MFLC or CYB-MFLC will notify the designated installation point of contact when the counselor begins and finishes each workday, either through email or another auditable process. Installation points of contact may opt out of receiving these notifications by submitting a request to Military Community Support Programs via their service headquarters point of contact. The government anticipates that the MFLC daily activity reflects an average minimum of four hours daily of providing in-person counseling and four hours daily of nontraditional walk-around service activity during the course of an eight-hour day. An in-person counseling activity is considered to occur when the counselor engages a participant, determines the participant is in need of counseling, and provides the Limits of Confidentiality Statement to the participant. CYB-MFLC daily activity differs from adult MFLC activity in that, while encouraged, in-person counseling/consulting is not required to meet the four-hour/four-hour ratio, as nontraditional walk-around and classroom participation are the predominate activities.

The contractor shall provide a seamless and transparent transition between the outgoing and incoming MFLCs for both CONUS and OCONUS assignments. The government anticipates an overlap of at least one day. During this assignment transition, the outgoing MFLC shall, at minimum, convey pertinent data such as on-the-ground knowledge of installation points of contact and procedures, critical issues, and status of the installation's current MFLC service needs.

# Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

## **Military Community Support Programs**

- Centrally manages the MFLC contract
- Establishes policy, guidance and scope of the contract
- Reviews MFLC Program performance
- Reviews and approves requests for MFLC support

## **Service Headquarters Point of Contact**

- Reviews and forwards requests for MFLC support
- Receives data and monitors trends
- Communicates trends, staffing and programmatic updates received from Military Community Support Programs to the stakeholders
- Makes suggestions to stakeholders on how to use data to improve support services
- Keeps Military Community Support Programs apprised of curricula and training requests (The program office must approve counselor attendance at installation trainings in advance.)
- Approves access of installation points of contact to [Data Warehouse](#)

## **Contractor**

- Verifies each counselor's education, license and supervision requirements if provisionally licensed prior to employment
- Ensures all counselors undergo background checks
- Ensures a Tier 1 National Agency Check with Inquiries, or Tier 1 NACI with child care, investigation is processed by the government for all approved counselors
- Ensures a background check is processed by the government in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 1402.05, "Background Checks on Individuals in DOD Child Care Services Programs"
- Ensures each counselor receives a background check letter signed by the program office prior to the beginning of the assignment
- Provides required training on military culture to include chain of command, rates, ranks and insignia, and other specialized subject areas

## **Contract Regional Supervisor**

- Ensures MFLCs work required hours
- Provides initial orientation and ongoing training for MFLCs
- Ensures MFLCs have an established work schedule
- Provides regular administrative and clinical supervision to MFLCs
- Consults with MFLCs regarding duty-to-warn and mandated reporting situations

- Maintains ongoing communication with installation points of contact, including addressing any issues or concerns

### **Installation Point of Contact or Designated Point of Contact**

- Requests MFLC Program support
- Remains current on MFLC Program policies, guidelines and resources
- Reports any MFLC Program compliance and performance issues
- Reports any issues with MFLC compliance in duty-to-warn protocol
- Communicates to families and staff the role of MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs
- Coordinates access for MFLCs onto military installations
- Possesses knowledge of the whereabouts and schedule of assigned MFLCs
- Maintains open communication with the regional and service headquarters point of contact, contractor representative and Military Community Support Programs (as appropriate) to address issues that cannot be resolved locally
- Serves as the liaison for all community contact and coordination for the MFLC Program
- Ensures a variety of logistical and communications activities are in place for MFLCs, as well as coordinating and guiding work schedules
- Trains MFLCs on procedures and protocols for the local child and youth program, DODEA and local education authorities
- Ensures parental consent for CYB-MFLC services
- Provides MFLCs with community and unit orientations, including information on the installation mission and demographics
- Provides information on installation reporting procedures for domestic abuse and child abuse or neglect, potential harm to self and others, and other duty-to-warn situations
- Coordinates space for MFLCs' use (if available)
- Serves as the liaison between the MFLC and the local community
- Provides training on service-specific positive guidance and touch policies for MFLCs working with children and youth
- Assists in prioritizing community support needs
- Maintains an awareness of issues encountered by MFLCs
- Informs Military Community Support Programs via service headquarters point of contact of temporary or permanent changes in reporting location

# Virtual Non-medical Counseling, Consultation and Outreach Support

The MFLC Program requires services to be delivered in person, unless extenuating circumstances require virtual support. Situations that would prohibit face-to-face interaction could be unexpected and affect global, national, regional or local areas (e.g., hurricane, pandemic). In those situations, MFLCs are authorized to provide telephonic and virtual support from their place of employment to provide continuity of care until face-to-face interaction is allowable. Virtual support will be conducted on a platform that meets the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, regulations for technology and processes to ensure privacy, security and the integrity of the participants (e.g., Zoom for Healthcare). MFLCs providing telephonic and virtual support shall be trained, competent in using the platforms, and follow their respective licensing board regulations on providing telehealth. As with all MFLC services, telephonic and virtual support are also **free of cost** to participants.

If telephonic or virtual support is authorized, the MFLCs will provide contact information on scheduling, provide access to services and provide all participants with possible advantages and disadvantages of using telehealth. While using telephonic and virtual platforms, the MFLCs will continue to provide non-medical counseling, consultation and outreach within the scope of the program and are still under the duty-to-warn and mandated reporting guidelines.

For participant safety, MFLCs request the participant's contact number and location if the connection is dropped or emergency services are needed. This information is destroyed after the session to maintain confidentiality.

In providing non-medical counseling to children, the parents/guardians must log in, approve MFLC services and remain in line of sight of their child. Children 13 years of age and over can receive individual counseling. Children 12 years of age and under can participate in family counseling with their parents/guardians. All children can participate as part of an organized group activity with the child and youth programs, school or camp. When MFLCs support group activities, a staff member must also be present on the platform to monitor the classroom and provide line-of-sight supervision. Whether face-to-face, telephonic or virtual, MFLCs maintain a high quality of confidential care.

## Presentations

MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs can access a variety of products approved by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy in the [Military and Family Life Counseling Program presentation library](#). If an installation point of contact would like a briefing or presentation reviewed and approved for use by an MFLC or CYB-MFLC, the installation point of contact or designated point of contact must submit the request through the chain of command to the service headquarters for review and submission to Military Community Support Programs.

## Reporting and Documentation

Domestic abuse, child abuse or neglect, problematic sexual behavior in children and youth, potential harm to self and others, and other duty-to-warn situations must be reported to the designated installation point of contact and contractor chain of command immediately. Counselors must personally report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local child protective services agency in order to meet the requirements of state and federal law and must report suspected domestic abuse and child abuse or neglect to the nearest installation's Family Advocacy Program office. Counselors are not responsible for determining the veracity of the report or the seriousness of the incident and should facilitate a warm handoff of the affected individual to the proper resource. The point of contact should verify the incident is reported to the appropriate reporting agency in accordance with installation protocol but should not screen reports of suspected child abuse or neglect or domestic abuse in lieu of the counselor making the report. The counselor must notify their contract supervisor as soon as possible. Duty-to-warn protocols may vary depending on federal, state, local and installation regulations.

MFLCs are not authorized to receive domestic abuse or sexual assault restricted reports. If the person receiving counseling requests restricted reporting pursuant to domestic abuse or sexual assault, the counselor should transfer the person to a specified individual who is authorized to receive a restricted report in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 6400.06, "DOD Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Abuse Involving DOD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel," December 14, 2021, and Department of Defense Directive 6495.01, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program," January 23, 2012.

Duty-to-Warn and Mandated Reporting reports are provided to inform services of duty-to-warn situations that have occurred and been reported by the MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs. Reviewing the reports provides an opportunity to cross-check reports received through the reporting chains and provides the ability to monitor compliance with reporting protocols. In addition, the reports provide data to target resources and better support service members and their families.

The MFLC Activity Report summarizes the non-medical MFLC Program services provided to military personnel and their family members. The MFLC Activity Report, along with monthly Military OneSource reports and Duty-to-Warn and Mandated Reporting reports, may be accessed by installation points of contact via the [Data Warehouse](#).

## Conflict Resolution

Most conflicts can be resolved through open communication between the counselor and the installation point of contact. If a counselor or an installation point of contact cannot resolve an issue, the contract regional supervisor and Military Community Support Programs should be contacted to help resolve the issue.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *The Role of Military and Family Life Counselors*

### **Q: Do MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs receive training before they arrive at an assignment?**

A: Yes, MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs arrive at an assignment fully trained. Counselors also receive training by installation points of contact on installation access, security, military service protocols and culture, and installation-specific protocols.

### **Q: Can an installation request an MFLC or CYB-MFLC to attend training during an assignment?**

A: Yes, requests for training should be submitted through each service's chain of command to Military Community Support Programs for consideration. Training must be shown to benefit the MFLC or CYB-MFLC in supporting service and family members. Not all types of training are approved by the program. Requests for trainings should be submitted through the chain of command or service headquarters point of contact for review and submission to Military Community Support Programs.

### **Q: What are the normal work hours for counselors?**

A: Counselors work a highly flexible 40-hour work week to accommodate the needs of the community. Appointments, meetings and briefings may extend daily work hours and may include evenings and weekends. In these situations, work hours may be adjusted to accommodate the workload. Overtime beyond 40 hours per week is not authorized. The work hours and locations should be a product of ongoing collaboration and communication between the installation point of contact and the counselor.

### **Q: How do MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs submit timecards?**

A: Counselors submit timecards as directed by the respective contract company.

### **Q: How far can counselors travel to support service members and their families?**

A: Both MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs are authorized to provide support for activities within a 50-mile radius of their assignment location. If service members and their families need non-medical support in a location beyond 50 miles, installation points of contact may submit a request for travel in advance through their chain of command to Military Community Support Programs.

## *Basic Guidelines for Counseling Support*

### **Q: What types of issues can MFLCs address?**

A: Military and family life counselors assist service members and their families with circumstances occurring across the military life cycle and are tasked with enhancing operational and family readiness. Counselors provide support to individuals, couples, families and groups for a range of issues including, but not limited to, deployment stress, reintegration, relocation adjustment, separation, anger management, conflict resolution, parenting, parent- child communication, relationship and family issues, coping skills, homesickness, and grief and loss.

### **Q: What types of issues can CYB-MFLCs address?**

A: Child and youth behavioral military and family life counselors can address the same issues as MFLCs. Counselors support families, and support child and youth programs and schools to augment services provided by others through augmenting classroom activities with education and skill building, activities, staff consultation and outreach such as walk-around coaching support and counseling to military children, youth, families and staff. This may include modeling effective strategies and interactions for challenging behaviors. Additionally, CYB-MFLCs provide individual non-medical counseling to youth on issues including, but not limited to, school adjustment, deployment and reunion adjustment, and parent-child communication. All CYB-MFLCs conduct their work within line-of-sight supervision by staff or parents.

### **Q: What are the background check requirements for CYB-MFLCs?**

A: All CYB-MFLCs must undergo a background check in accordance with Department of Defense Instruction 1402.05, “Background Checks on Individuals in DOD Child Care Services Programs.”

Counselors must work under line-of-sight supervision regardless of their background check status.

### **Q: Are CYB-MFLCs permitted to make contact with children whose parents are on deployment, or is this by request only?**

A: Counselors may make contact with children if the parent or guardian requests the child to be seen. Additionally, the parent or guardian must have signed the [Parent Acknowledgment Form](#) authorizing MFLC support.



**Q: Can a counselor participate in physical contact, for example holding an infant, having a child sit in the counselor’s lap or hugging?**

A: Each branch of service has established positive guidance and appropriate touch protocols and policies based on Department of Defense Instruction 6060.02, “Child Development Programs,” August 5, 2014, Enclosure 3. Counselors should follow their service’s positive guidance and touch policies when interacting with children and for coaching and mentoring child and youth program staff. Designated installation points of contact will review the service-specific policies with the CYB-MFLC during installation in-processing.

**Q: Do service and family members need a referral to see an MFLC?**

A: No, service and family members may see an MFLC without a referral. Service providers can assist those interested in contacting MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs, but service members and their family members may also contact counselors directly.

**Q: What is the cost of counseling to military service members and their families?**

A: There is no cost to the active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve members, their family members and other eligible populations.

**Q: Are MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs able to support civilians?**

A: Counselors support civilians who are the spouses or children of service members (to include anyone who has legal responsibility for a service member’s children or dependent parent during deployment or separation). They also support Department of Defense expeditionary civilians and their immediate family members 90 days prior to deployment, throughout deployment and 180 days post-deployment. Civilians may attend group settings that an MFLC or CYB-MFLC is supporting.

**Q: What do MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs do when an installation is closed due to a natural or regional disaster or for another reason?**

A: The MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs should look for guidance from the local point of contact and installation during these situations. In general, if the installation is closed, the MFLC or CYB-MFLC cannot report for duty on the installation and may find it necessary to stay home or in his or her designated housing area. If the installation point of contact requests that the counselor work at an off-installation location (and the counselor is safely able to do so) then he or she may do that. In locations where face-to-face interaction is prohibited (e.g., hurricane, pandemic), the MFLC may be approved to provide telephonic and virtual non-medical counseling, consultation and outreach. The installation point of contact must make a request for telehealth and virtual support to Military Community Support Programs through their service headquarters.

**Q: Are CYB-MFLCs allowed to participate in the Inclusion Action Teams that support families of children with special needs?**

A: The CYB-MFLC may participate in the Inclusion Action Team to improve support to children and families when requested by program leadership. Information sharing is to be limited to the context of supporting the continuum of care.

CYB-MFLCs are not dedicated resources for families with special needs. If eligible members of the family need non-medical counseling support, the CYB-MFLC may provide support. It is imperative that non-medical counseling support the primary purpose of the Inclusion Action Team goals.

The MFLC Program is designed to address issues that occur across the military lifestyle through non-therapeutic counseling. This psychoeducational counseling is not for individuals needing clinical therapy for issues of a medical nature and diagnosis. If individuals are receiving services through other Department of Defense support programs, counselors should not duplicate services nor replace them, but they can augment them.

**Q: Are MFLCs or CYB-MFLCs allowed to participate in Behavior Support Plans?**

A: Although CYB-MFLCs may not participate in the development of Behavior Support Plans, counselors may provide non-medical counseling support to families who have a Behavior Support Plan established for their child. This includes supporting classrooms by modeling effective interactions for challenging behaviors. Counselors may not conduct or administer systematic and structured assessments for the purpose of developing a Behavior Support Plan.

**Q: Can a CYB-MFLC provide support outside a child development center?**

A: Yes, depending on the needs of the child development center, counselors may provide support outside the center if coordinated by the installation point of contact. For example, CYB-MFLCs may support outreach events and programs at the installation Military and Family Support Center or unit family events if there are needs to support the request.

**Q: Are MFLCs allowed to be a member of a unit Ready Resilient Team meeting or participate as one of the members sitting around the table?**

A: Yes; however, contract personnel cannot participate on boards, become voting members on boards or committees, attend conferences on behalf of the command or attend events in which strategy and policy are discussed.

**Q: How is the number of MFLCs and CYB-MFLCs on an installation determined?**

A: Counseling services are requested by installation points of contact through their respective service headquarters. Once Military Community Support Programs receives the request, it is reviewed. The program office considers the merits of the request, the number of current MFLCs supporting the location and current MFLC utilization (if available).

## *Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities*

**Q: Can an installation request a contractor to hire a specific counselor?**

A: The Federal Acquisition Regulation prohibits by-name requests for counselors. In accordance with contract regulations, government personnel must avoid implying or specifying who a contractor should hire.

**Q: Who supervises counselors? How are concerns about a specific counselor addressed?**

A: Counselors are managed by supervisors employed by their respective contract companies. If a point of contact, commander, family program director or headquarters point of contact identifies a personnel issue with a particular counselor, he or she should address the concern with the contract supervisor first. If the contract supervisor does not resolve the issue or responds in an unsatisfactory manner, or if the issue needs higher level attention, he or she should contact the service headquarters point of contact who will reach out to Military Community Support Programs for assistance.

## *Reporting and Documentation*

**Q: Can the MFLCs take notes or keep records on individuals who receive counseling services?**

A: MFLCs do not take notes or keep counseling records on individuals unless specifically determined by the program office for pilots and approved research studies.



## Military and Family Life Counseling Program

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### CYB Parent Acknowledgment Form

Subject: Parent Acknowledgment and Consent Letter for Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counseling Services

Dear Parents,

We take this opportunity to inform you of a valuable resource provided by the Department of Defense. Due to the unique challenges military members face and the impact they have on families, the Office of Military Community and Family Policy provides Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counselors (CYB-MFLCs). CYB-MFLCs have advanced degrees (master's or doctoral-level) in the mental health field and specialized training in child and youth development. They support the needs of children and families by partnering with parents, faculty, counselors, and staff to foster healthy growth and social skill development. The well-being and safety of your child is our top priority. To ensure a comprehensive continuum of care for your child, CYB-MFLCs may work in collaboration with school or program professionals.

CYB-MFLCs address challenging behaviors and strengthen the capacity of staff, families, programs, and systems to meet the needs of military children and youth by:

- Observing, participating, and engaging in classroom activities
- Developing strategies for supporting positive behavior, age-appropriate behavioral interventions to enhance coping, and behavioral skills in the classrooms and at home
- Meeting one-on-one or in groups, providing evidence-based prevention and intervention services
- Implementing and modeling strategies for teacher and staff responses to children's behavior
- Conducting trainings for staff
- Facilitating groups to increase parents' understanding of social-emotional development and positive behavior guidance strategies
- Linking families with community resources or military family programs
- Working with military children in settings such as field trips and other center, camp, or school sponsored activities
- Conducting individual sessions to address the unique challenges of school-aged military children and youth

At no time will the CYB-MFLC meet individually with a child without being in line of sight of a teacher, staff, or a parent/guardian. CYB-MFLCs are mandated reporters, and information provided to the CYB-MFLC will be kept confidential, except to meet legal obligations or to prevent harm to self or others. Legal obligations include requirements of law and DoD or military regulations. Harm to self or others includes suicidal thought or intent, a desire to harm oneself, domestic violence, child abuse or neglect, violence against any person, and any present or future illegal activity. The CYB-MFLC is obligated to follow school and military child and youth programs' mandated reporting regulations.

CYB-MFLCs encourage the participation of parents in decisions that affect their children and strive to empower parents with the knowledge and skills to act in their children's best interest.

CYB-MFLCs are flexible and can schedule appointments, meetings, and activities after hours and on weekends, if needed, with advance notice. They are available to meet with individuals and families who have interest in seeking consultation about their child or family.

Thank you for allowing us to provide support services to your child/children.

**Acknowledgement of Understanding:**

I understand the role of the CYB-MFLC and that they may work in collaboration with school or program professionals to ensure a comprehensive continuum of services. I also understand that the CYB-MFLCs are mandated reporters as outlined above.

Please select applicable boxes below:

I understand the above CYB-MFLC program description and authorize my child to participate in CYB-MFLC direct face-to-face non-medical counseling sessions. This authorization is valid for the duration of my child's enrollment and can be revoked at any time in writing.

I understand the above CYB-MFLC program description and authorize my child to participate and be supported *as a part of a formal group focused on different topic areas*. This authorization is valid for the duration of my child's enrollment and can be revoked at any time in writing.

Print Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name of Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_