

Absence and deployment guide for  
**PARENTS OF CF MEMBERS**



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The use of the word “son” in this document is for the sole purpose of brevity.

## 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
- afraid
- angry
- proud
- helpless

### **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 Make the Deployment Easier, it is Important to :

Discuss the progression of the deployment, holidays, and homecoming. Be open to the possibility of a 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, risks are possible, but not automatic).

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 encouragement.

Understand that he may wish to spend time with other people too before he leaves, during his holidays, and when he returns. He is leaving behind all his friends and loved ones.

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

Take care of yourself, maintain healthy habits, and set new goals.

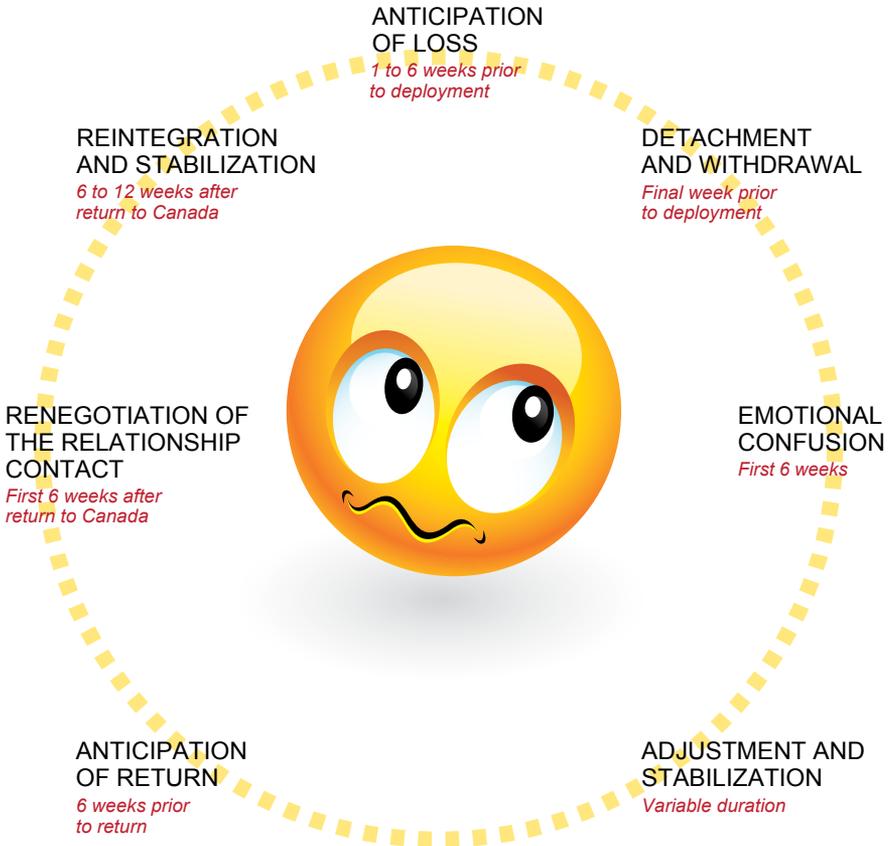
Surround yourself with friends, family members and neighbours who will be understanding without judging you.

Verify the information disseminated by the media by calling the MFRC closest to you or simply reduce your exposure to different sources of news.

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

# The Emotional Cycle of Deployment

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 may also go through these various stages.



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

# Everyday Life while Deployed on a Mission : A Very Different Reality from Ours !

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 upcoming operations or those in progress for security reasons. However, he can tell you about his leisure activities, daily routine, social life, etc., however, over time, his daily routine may become repetitive and he may have less to tell you.

For all information relating to the mission and military living conditions, you can check the "Operations" tab on the Canadian Forces website [forces.gc.ca](http://forces.gc.ca). You can also check the Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre's Facebook page where we will share all the relevant information from the pages of the deployed units.

## How Can I Keep in Touch ?

### Telephone :

Depending on his location, the member may have access to a standard telephone directly on camp. If he is outside of the camp and communications are limited he may have access to a satellite telephone. In addition, he may also be able to use his personal cellphone by paying a mobile package locally, depending on the country in which he is deployed.

## **Internet:**

There are more and more facilities put in place for Internet access on the camps. Members can use locally available computers for free as soon as the facilities become permanent or more structured. They may sometimes have access to Wi-Fi and could use their laptop, tablet or personal cell phone. If not, they may be able to buy data if the service is available.

## **Sending morale boosting care packages**

The Canadian Armed Forces offers families the opportunity to send parcel and letters to members for free when they are deployed outside of Canada. It takes 4 to 6 weeks for a package to arrive at its destination and packages are subject to the standards of Canada Post.

There are several drop-off points:

### **Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre**

All material for packing is available onsite.

### **Sainte-Foy: Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre Satellite office**

2630 blvd Hochelaga

### **Mail Room**

Building 200 – Valcartier

Your package must be wrapped and ready to send.

### **Reserve Units in your region**

You will find the different units on the website:

<http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/35-cbg/index.page>

It is recommended to contact them beforehand.

Your package must be wrapped and ready to send.

### **The different MFRCs across Canada**

You will find the contact information on: [CAFconnection.ca](http://CAFconnection.ca)

### **Canada Post Office**

You will have to pay to ship the package to Belleville, Ontario according to the size and weight of the package.

Additional information and rules for shipment available at [www.forces.gc.ca/en/write-to-the-troops/mailing-instructions.page](http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/write-to-the-troops/mailing-instructions.page) or by contacting the Valcartier Military Family Resource Centre.

# In the Event of a Critical Incident

## MEDICAL SERVICES

CF members have access to medical services and moral support during the mission (nurses, doctors, chaplains, social workers, etc.). However, if the CF member requires care that is even more specialized, the member may be transferred to an outside hospital selected ahead of time based on the location of the mission. When possible, the CF member will contact his family personally to tell them about the state of his health. If this is not possible, representatives from the chain of command will contact the member's next of kin (chosen by the member ahead of time).

If a military member passes away during a mission, a chaplain and a representative of the unit will travel to the home of the member's next of kin (chosen by the member and written in his file) to inform them. In remote regions, it is possible that a member of the clergy or a police officer delivers the news. A designated person will be present to assist and accompany the family. Normally, after the immediate family has been contacted, the name of the CF member is released to the media.

## Homecoming (Holidays, End of Mission)

Only your son has the information about the date and time of his flight home, so be sure to coordinate with him. If your son has a family of his own, discuss the organization of his return with them. It is of foremost importance to ask the member's opinion and take his choices into account. Remember that your son will want to celebrate his return with many people or simply rest, since the trip may have been long, and he may be coping with jet lag.

You may have a whole bunch of questions, but your son may not be ready to talk yet. The best thing to do is to respect his space and remain available. When you ask him a question, be aware that the answer you get may not necessarily be the one you expected.

Give him the time and space necessary to adapt to his return. Your son has gone through experiences that may have changed him. During the transition from mission to home, the military member must gradually modify behaviours that were helpful during his mission (hypervigilance,

emotional detachment, etc.) and settle into everyday life. This can take time.

*During holidays, it is possible that your son may not fully relax since he knows that he will soon have to return to his mission.*

## **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 notice 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 being dramatic ;
- Respect his rhythm. Sometimes the adjustment does not occur as fast as you might wish.

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

# Reminders

Find out your son's rank, service number, unit and section. This makes it easier to reach him in case of emergency or when you want to send him a package.

In the event of an emergency situation in Quebec (serious illness, death), you can contact the VMFRC or the FIL in order to contact the CF member on mission.

Do you know the two names listed as "next of kin" on the unit's emergency form?

If your son is single, has he signed a Power of Attorney?

We recommend that you obtain a civilian power of attorney, as it makes it easier to deal with non-military institutions.

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

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.

# Resources

## VALCARTIER MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE (VMFRC)

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

[cafconnection.ca/valcartier](http://cafconnection.ca/valcartier)

- Support During Absences
  - Personalized support
  - “Preparing for the Departure”, and “Preparing for the Return”
  - Support group
  - Packages drop-off location
- Support During Postings
- Psychosocial Services
- Volunteering and Community Activities
- Childcare Services
- Early Childhood Services
- Youth Services
- Information and Referral
- Employment and Education Support
- Veteran Family Program

## FAMILY INFORMATION LINE (FIL)

1 800 866-4546

Counsellors available 24/7.

## 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)

Don't forget:  
we are here for you!

## VALCARTIER MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Building 93  
P.O. box 1000, Station Forces  
Courcellette, Québec, G0A 4Z0

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Toll free: 1 877 844-6060  
Fax: 418 844-6060

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