



MILITARY & FAMILY LIFE COUNSELING

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

FOR COMMANDERS



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What is the MFLC Program and How It Can Help

The Military and Family Life Counseling program provides services on and off installations. Counselors offer presentations and support to help service members and their families build skills and resilience. This program helps those in your command stay mission ready.

- The MFLC program is intended to augment, not replace, other Defense Department support services, programs or staff available to eligible participants.
- Military and Family Life Counseling provide Counseling, consultation and outreach to individuals, couples, families or groups.
- All counselors are master's or doctorate-level professionals with experience in a mental health-related field, hold a license or certification to practice independently, have undergone a background check and have completed training focused on military culture and life.

What MFLCs Provide

Counseling

- Confidential, short-term counseling addressing common emotional and interpersonal concerns that may detract from military and family readiness.
- Deliver face-to-face and virtually when authorized, but only from the place of employment (e.g., when the client is unable to get to the MFLC's assigned location).

- Sessions can occur in an office, on a walk-around basis or any location except a client's home.
- MFLCs work a highly flexible 40-hour workweek.

Consultation

- Provides recommendations and support to the command team on issues impacting the unit.

Outreach

- Offers education on the MFLC program or psychoeducation briefs on relevant topics.

MFLC Scope of Support

In-Scope Support

- Focuses on tackling issues early, helping prevent a need to seek intensive medical behavioral health treatment and/or services.
- Provides 12 sessions per issue.

Out-of-Scope Support

- MFLCs cannot provide treatment for serious clinical issues of a serious nature such as major depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, active suicidal or homicidal thoughts, child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault or substance use.
- In such cases, MFLCs provide an immediate warm handoff to the appropriate level or type of care.



Overview of MFLC Types

Embedded

- Assigned to a unit
- Works with adults but can support family sessions
- Intended to work with service members in their own environment to increase visibility, rapport and use of services

General

- Assigned to an installation
- Works with adults but can support family sessions

Child and Youth Behavioral

- Assigned to a school, child development center, youth center, pediatric clinics or summer camp
- Works with children under 18 but can support family sessions
- Embeds in schools, child development centers, youth centers, and summer camps and programs to support military-connected children and youth

About Embedded MFLCs

- Support a unit's active duty, National Guard and reserve members and their families
- Serve on 12-month assignment terms which are automatically renewed at the beginning of each option year, unless the installation point of contact no longer requires MFLC support at that location

- Assigned to a range of unique locations such as ground units, ships and special operations units and are located on installations worldwide

MFLC Contractor Supervision

The MFLC Program operates using two contractors, each supporting a different service area. All MFLCs are employed and supervised by one of the two contractors, who then appoints a supervisor who provides on-the-ground support and administrative and clinical oversight to MFLCs.

The MFLC contractor supervisor has a responsibility to:

- Ensure the MFLC is at their place of employment to maintain accountability
- Onboard, house and coordinate the arrival of the MFLC to assignment location
- Approve leave and timecards
- Ensure the MFLC completes daily documentation as required
- Provide clinical supervision - staff cases and provide support for serious incidents
- Maintain close communication with the designated local POC to coordinate onboarding, provide hiring and staffing updates and furnish ongoing information on the status of the MFLC



**Office of
the Secretary
of Defense**

**Service
Headquarters
POC**

**Government
Installation
POC**

Chain of MFLC Oversight

The MFLC program management office and the contracting officer ensure the counselors provide services as directed by the MFLC contract.

Each service must provide a Headquarters POC to identify an installation POC and serve as their source of information and guidance on the MFLC program. A single member of the command team may be assigned as the sole installation POC, however some services may choose to designate both a command staff member and an installation staff member to serve as joint POCs.

They act as first-line approvers of all new MFLC requests and realignment requests.

To receive MFLC support, a designated installation POC is required. Often, the unit commander or a designated command team member serves in this capacity. Each service can determine who will serve in this position. The local POC's responsibilities include providing:

- Installation access
- Installation-specific training requirements
- Essential installation information (emergency contacts, etc.)
- Counseling space

For OCONUS locations, installation POCs also support the contractor in ensuring SOFA requirements are met before an MFLC's arrival.

Privacy and Information Sharing

Counselors document their activities (e.g., counseling, consultation, outreach, engagement and administrative work) daily on an activity form. No personally identifiable information about service members or family members is included on the activity form.

Information Sharing

- MFLC support is confidential except in cases of Duty-to-Warn and Mandated Reports.
- While MFLCs cannot share case specifics that include PII, they can share trends, such as high-level data about common issues or patterns seen in counseling.
- MFLCs can also provide recommendations on how to address trends.
 - Unit commanders can set up routine meetings with MFLCs to receive trending information or invite them to meetings to provide this information as need.

MFLC Data Warehouse – <https://apps.militaryonesource.mil/>

- Commands can use the Data Warehouse to access high-level data on MFLC trends.
- A unit commander can find the number of counseling/consultation sessions, number of outreach engagements and activities, major presenting problems, top five referrals and number of DTW and MR incidents.
- Reach out to your Headquarters service POC to request access.



MFLC Marketing Responsibilities

- MFLCs must advertise and display program materials around the installation.
- Counselors can order a variety of marketing materials to promote MFLC support and Military OneSource services.
- Installation POCs can also order materials from the Military OneSource website at **<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/>**.

Movement and Travel Requests

MFLC Support/Movement Requests - The MFLC contract is a service contract between the government and the MFLC employers.

- All MFLC movement must be coordinated with OSD in writing, typically an email between the command POC to the OSD POC. Follow your service HQ policy on realignment requests and communication to OSD.
- OSD will inform the contractor of the assignment change, who will then notify the MFLC and update their system of assignment.
- Movement of an MFLC within the same installation generally takes two to three days business days. Changes to another installation or state can take longer if the assigned counselor is unwilling to accept the new assignment.
- In a crisis situation (e.g., a death within the unit), a commander can move MFLCs immediately and notify OSD after the fact.

Travel Requests

- MFLCs can support activities within a 50-mile radius of their assignment location. Requests can be made through the MFLC supervisor.
- Any requests for travel over the 50-mile radius must be approved by OSD's MFLC program management office.

Conflict Resolution

- If a POC, commander, family program director or headquarters POC identifies a personnel issue with a particular counselor, they 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, they should contact the service headquarters POC who will reach out to OSD's MFLC Program Management Office for assistance.

Best Practices From Commands Around the World

In this section:

- In-processing an MFLC
- Integrating an MFLC
- Strengthening connections
- Assimilating MFLCs
- Maximizing MFLC Support
- MFLC Outreach, Tools and Resources

In-Processing an MFLC

Upon confirming the MFLC's start date and issuing security protocols to ensure access to the unit, it's important to schedule a meet and greet to facilitate orientation to the unit. Follow these best practices:

- Confirm MFLC supervisor contact information for ongoing communication and feedback
- Review the DTW/MR process and installation protocol and identify stakeholder contact information
- Ensure installation access (Defense Biometric Identification System, badge, etc.)
- Select an office space/setting that maximizes access and minimizes stigma
- Provide map/list of MFLC-supported buildings and areas to conduct outreach
- Coordinate schedule and areas of support with MFLC supervisor
- Facilitate introductions to key personnel and staff

Integrating an MFLC

After the MFLC is in-processed, the following actions can help them integrate fully into the unit:

- Foster collaboration and communication by inviting MFLCs to relevant briefings, providing MFLCs the unit calendar for awareness and distributing MFLC contact information to senior leaders.
- Include the MFLC on the check-in/out sheet to facilitate engagement with a counselor on arrival at the new duty station.
- Schedule regular meetings between command and MFLCs during onboarding months to identify needs and opportunities for integration.
- Identify times and events for an embedded MFLC to attend and participate in staff briefings and morning roll calls to stay connected and informed.
- Include the MFLC in distribution lists and, when appropriate, ensure they receive key information and updates from the Deployment Readiness Coordinator, chaplains, and unit Family Readiness Program contacts at unit/installation events.
- Empower MFLCs as resources by encouraging unit leaders to offer opportunities for MFLCs to brief and present on relevant topics. Introduce MFLCs to the command team as well.

- Promote the program and provide examples of areas best supported by MFLCs to support referrals to the right resource at the right time.

MFLC Support Examples	
Marital or relationship issues	Academic problems
Communication and stress management skills	Parent-child relationship issues, Parenting skills and strategies
Grief or loss	Transition out of the military
Job stress	Deployment, reintegration, PCS

Strengthening Connections

Create opportunities for MFLCs to meet family members and attend community events for networking.

- Share MFLCs' phone numbers and email addresses with unit members for direct access
- Raise awareness of MFLC services by including counselors in unit events, meeting and areas... where they can provide support, such as:
 - Pre-deployment and re-deployment briefings
 - Commander calls/command meetings, like the Commander's Ready and Resilient Council
 - Spouse and family meetings and events
 - New joins briefs, new spouse trainings (ex. Army Family Team Building and Key Spouse)
 - Motor pools, dining facilities
 - Roll calls, muster

Assimilating MFLCs

With the MFLC now integrated into the unit, a leader can consider opportunities for the MFLC to absorb the unit's knowledge, beliefs, behavior and culture through assimilation into a commander's area of responsibility.

- Incorporate the MFLC program into PCS surveys and sponsor checklists for seamless assimilation.
- Foster unit participation by inviting MFLCs to formations, physical and other unit training sessions for increased engagement and suggesting places where an MFLC can meet with service members and families (i.e., bowling alley, library, gym, walking track, parks, coffee shops).
- Collect leadership testimonials to showcase the benefits of MFLC support, especially for lower ranks.
- Facilitate open discussions about pressing concerns, issues and emerging trends within the unit to address them effectively.
- Provide strategic updates to keep MFLCs informed about upcoming command changes, unit growth or shifts in unit dynamics.
- Provide MFLCs a brief history of the unit and key conditions that have influenced its culture and operations.
- Discuss unit deployment challenges and cycles, and explore how MFLCs can offer support to members and their families during these periods.



Maximize MFLC Support

Use the MFLC as a resource for targeted support for unit's service and family members.

- Ensure MFLC services are strategically aligned with the core values, directives and specific needs of the unit for maximum impact
- Use MFLCs as trusted advisors to the command team, leveraging their expertise in behavioral mental health and well-being
- Promote MFLCs as key resources for maintaining emotional and behavioral functioning and boosting unit morale and provide messaging from command about the value and impact of MFLC services to help reduce stigma and encourage service members to access support early
- Recognize MFLCs as integral to overall resiliency and morale-building efforts within the unit
- Encourage proactive use of MFLC services to foster wellness and build resilience among unit members over time
- Position MFLCs as force multipliers for the unit, amplifying the effectiveness of support services and enhancing overall unit readiness and cohesion

MFLC Outreach, Tools and Resources

MFLCs have access to a number of informational resources they can share with the unit's service members and command.

- MFLCs can provide targeted and casual outreach to a unit or location and make general rounds to meet and greet all service members and families. They can provide outreach at special events like family gatherings, command ceremonies, physical training exercises, lunch cafeterias and elsewhere.

- MFLCs can be a trusted advisor on salient issues facing commands, non-commissioned officers and leaders. They can be invited to meetings to advise and consult on the issues service and family members are experiencing. As subject matter experts, they can provide helpful resources on a variety of issues service and family members are facing.
- MFLCs can provide program briefings at regular unit events or commander calls. They can address issues such as relationship concerns, parenting, stress management, etc., and speak to how MFLCs can help address these concerns. MFLCs have an entire OSD-approved library of interactive and engaging presentations at their disposal.
- MFLCs can share observed trends with command at meetings, regularly or as prompted, to help leaders understand the issues that are happening inside their unit, while maintaining member confidentiality.



Thank you!

Contact information:

osd.pentagon.ousd-p-r.mbx.
mcfp-mcsp@mail.mil

571-372-4530

Helpful Links:

www.militaryonesource.mil

apps.militaryonesource.mil

[www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/
military-and-family-life-counseling-program/milprovider-app/](http://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/military-and-family-life-counseling-program/milprovider-app/)

<https://www.militaryonesource.mil/resources/tools/mflc-locator/>

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