

Counseling Through Military OneSource and Military and Family Life Counseling Content Guide

Updated February 2025

The following established style guidelines reflect the best practices of developers and editors of content about confidential counseling offered through Military OneSource and Military and Family Life Counseling programs. They are consistent with the rules and guidance outlined in The Associated Press Stylebook and reflective of Office of Military Community and Family Policy style and usage preferences.

Content Tips

- Link references to the specific benefits pages [Military OneSource Counseling](#) or [Military and Family Life Counseling](#), where information about confidentiality and what is covered are included.
- If character count and context allow, consider using the word “confidential” as a descriptor of the service (e.g., “Military OneSource Offers Confidential Counseling” in a title, or “Military OneSource offers confidential counseling” in body copy).
- Write in gender-neutral terms except if appropriate (for example, gender-specific services/groups).
- Write in relationship-neutral terms, such as “partner,” or “couple.”
- Focus on the positive side of content as much as possible.
- Keep the wide audience range in mind, or speak to the target audience as directed in the job start form.
- Keep in mind the different modalities for accessing counseling (phone, live chat, online request) vs. receiving counseling (in person, by phone, secure video or secure online chat) and how each could benefit the target audience.
- Highlight that callers and those using live chat will reach a real person, not a computer or a long phone menu.
- Be clear about age requirements and modalities for counseling services available to children and youth.

Things to Avoid

- Using statistics, unless vetted through the Office of the Secretary of Defense Family Advocacy Program, MC&FP's Resources and Oversight directorate (Research) or a state's point of contact for its central registry of child abuse and neglect.
- Providing general advice. Content should include support and resources Military OneSource offers.
- Characterizing confidential counseling as anonymous.
- Referencing clinical mental health issues: depression, anxiety, those who have been prescribed psychoactive medication or who are currently receiving therapy with another practitioner, fitness-for-duty evaluations or court-ordered counseling (unless referring to issues that are not supported through Military OneSource counseling or military and family life counseling).

Preferred Terms

Acceptable
Army Community Service (as opposed to Army Community Services)
Confidential Counseling Through Military OneSource or Military OneSource Counseling Services (in a title, depending on character counts)
confidential counseling options or counseling options (as opposed to consultations)
confidential counseling or counseling (as opposed to non-medical consulting or consultant)
"confidential counseling" to refer to the counseling services that support everyday life issues
"confidential help" to refer to all services/support under the Military OneSource umbrella
consultants or Military OneSource consultants (as opposed to triage consultants, describing the person who answers the initial call or live chat from someone requesting support)
Counseling or confidential counseling (as opposed to non-medical counseling), describes the service provided by Military OneSource or the Military and Family Life Counseling Program

Acceptable

counseling provider or counselor (as opposed to professional)

doctorate (as opposed to Ph.D.)

experienced (as opposed to credible)

financial counseling is available in person in some locations, by phone or video conferencing through Military OneSource (it is not available through the Military and Family Life Counseling Program)

“free” (as opposed to no cost) when the audience is not specified, or the audience is the service member or family members

“free, personalized support to tackle life’s challenges” when referring to confidential counseling through Military OneSource or Military OneSource counseling services

issue or challenge (as opposed to problem)

Military and Family Life Counseling Program (as opposed to Military and Family Life Counselor Program)

Military and family life counseling is available in person on or near your installation (as opposed to Military and Family Life Counseling Program is available online, by chat or phone)

Military and family life counseling is confidential, and counselors do not take notes or keep records on individuals

military and family life counselor (lowercase); MFLC can be used on second mention

Military OneSource counselor or counselor (as opposed to consultant, depending on character count and context)

“no cost” (as opposed to free) when addressing leadership about Military OneSource policy or contract

Acceptable
on-demand support (as opposed to on demand)
regardless of their activation status (when describing eligibility of designated DOD expeditionary civilians, as opposed to "90 days before and 180 days after a period of active duty of at least 180 days")
secure online (as opposed to online)
secure online chat (as opposed to online, real-time chat format or live chat, to describe text-based counseling options)
short-term, confidential counseling (as opposed to solution focused or problem solving)
video counseling is a platform that allows people to securely transfer information over the internet in real time (as opposed to secure video conferencing program)
video-enabled computer or mobile device (as opposed to video-enabled computer)

Definitions

Term	Definition
child and youth behavioral military and family life counselors	Master’s or doctorate-level mental health clinicians, specifically trained to work with children and youth, and licensed to practice and provide confidential counseling independently.
face-to-face confidential counseling	Available for individuals to see a licensed counselor or therapist in their local community through the Military and Family Life Counseling Program and Military OneSource. Military OneSource face-to-face counseling is not available at OCONUS locations.
confidential counseling	Involves a discussion, or series of discussions, during which the counselor helps the participant or participants identify feelings or problems, talk about them, and find ways to cope with or solve them. Confidential counseling may address general life skills, for example, conflict resolution, stress, and parenting or relationship

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	issues, or topics unique to military life, such as deployment and relocation.
confidential online, chat-based counseling	Help is available online, in a secure, real-time chat format.
confidential telephonic counseling	Counseling conducted over the phone.
confidential video counseling	Takes place using a secure video conferencing program in real time – that requires the participant have a video-enabled computer or mobile device – with the participant and the counselor capable of seeing and hearing each other throughout the session.
counselors or Military OneSource counselors	Master’s or doctorate-level mental health clinicians licensed to practice and provide confidential counseling independently. They can provide counseling in person, by phone, via secure online video or via secure online chat.
Military and Family Life Counseling Program	A Defense Department-wide program that provides short-term, confidential counseling on or near installations and presentations focused on problem-solving and life skills development.
military and family life counselors	Master’s or doctorate-level mental health clinicians, licensed to practice and provide confidential counseling independently, on or near installations.
Military OneSource	Provides a key access point to a network of support for service members and their families, while offering call center and online support for counseling and consultations on any number of issues, such as spouse education and career opportunities, issues specific to families with a member with special needs, and financial support and resources.
on-demand support	A service delivery option that provides face-to-face, confidential military and family life counseling and financial counseling, briefings and presentations at unit events, such as Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Programs, drill weekends, family events, annual

Term	Definition
	training, and marriage retreats, for one to three days, through the Resource Request System. Military OneSource provides on-demand support 24/7/365.
Resource Request System	Military Community and Family Policy’s online system (https://supportrequest.militaryonesource.mil/) that allows military units and military-connected organizations to request Military OneSource representatives, military and family life counselors, child and youth behavioral military and family counselors, and personal financial counselors.
surge support	A flexible, timely and tailored service delivery option available through the Military and Family Life Counseling Program that provides face-to-face, confidential counseling and presentations to active-duty members, National Guard and reserve service members, and their families for up to 90 days in targeted locations for emerging issues, such as planned and unplanned events, military contingencies, natural disasters or crises, and deployment-related issues, like reintegration challenges.

Official Resources

Defense Department policy

- [Department of Defense Instruction 6490.06, “Counseling Services for DoD Military, Guard and Reserve, Certain Affiliated Personnel, and Their Family Members,” April 21, 2009, Incorporating Change 2, March 31, 2017](#)

Military OneSource web pages

- [Military OneSource Counseling](#)
- [Military and Family Life Counseling](#)

Additional Resources and Information

Background

Confidential counseling is offered through both Military OneSource and the Military and Family Life Counseling programs and is intended to prevent the development or exacerbation of daily life conditions that may detract from military and family readiness.

Counseling through Military OneSource or MFLC programs is short-term and confidential and is provided by mental health clinicians. Counseling is intended to help individuals and families address a variety of issues and build important skills to tackle life's challenges, such as relationship conflicts, stress management, coping with loss and managing deployments.

Counseling does not provide diagnoses or treat diagnosed mental health conditions. Therapy services may be available through [TRICARE](#) or your nearest military treatment facility.

Military OneSource confidential counseling services are available by appointment over the telephone, face-to-face or through a secure real-time video or online chat. Face-to-face sessions occur in a traditional office setting with a Military OneSource provider located in the community within 30 minutes of the participant. Military OneSource confidential counseling is available to children and youth ages 6-17 under the conditions described in the "Eligibility" section. Eligible individuals can take advantage of Military OneSource by calling 800-342-9647 or [visiting the Military OneSource website](#) and connecting via secure chat 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Military and Family Life Counseling Program has military and family life counselors and child and youth behavioral counselors who support service members and their families at installations worldwide. Child and youth behavioral military and family life counselors provide support to military children for a variety of issues, including low self-esteem, behavioral problems and changes at home. MFLC program counselors deliver valuable face-to-face counseling services and presentations to the military community with flexible hours both on and off the installation. Military and family life counselors give service members and their families the level of comfort they need to benefit from a counseling relationship.

Over 90% of those surveyed by the Rand Corporation about Military OneSource confidential counseling and the Military and Family Life Counseling Program would use counseling services again.

Eligibility

Individuals eligible for confidential counseling services through Military OneSource and the Military and Family Life Counseling Program include the following:

- Active-duty service members in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Space Force, and their immediate family members.
- Members of the Army Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Navy Reserve and Air Force Reserve of the United States, and Air National Guard members, regardless of activation status, and their immediate family members.
- Coast Guard members who are activated as part of the Department of the Navy under Title 10 authority, as well as their family members. All Coast Guard veterans and their immediate family are eligible from their separation date until 180 days past end of tour of service.
- Anyone who has legal responsibility for a service member's child(ren) during deployment or separation from the family. Services requested must clearly benefit the child.
- Retired and separating service members and their immediate family members for up to 365 days following their end of tour of service, retirement date, or discharge date for Military OneSource services, or up to 180 days following their end of tour of service, retirement date, or discharge date for Military and Family Life Counseling Programs.
- Extended family members when they seek assistance on behalf of the service member.
- Any member of the Defense Department Expeditionary Civilians workforce, as defined by DOD Directive 1404.10, and their immediate family members during deployment, regardless of their activation status.
- Survivors, non-remarried spouses and their children, of deceased active-duty, National Guard and reserve service members, regardless of the cause of death.
- Military academy cadets.
- Active-duty foreign military service members assigned to U.S. Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Space Force installations who are registered in DEERS. Foreign military service members who have DOD-issued CAC with MWR/commissary/exchange privileges.
- Immediate family members of foreign military active-duty service members registered in DEERS. This includes spouse as defined by 10 USC Section 101 and children.

Children are eligible to receive confidential counseling services through Military OneSource with a few caveats:

- Youths ages 13 through 17 are eligible for individual, face-to-face or video counseling, with parent/legal guardian permission.
- Military children from ages 6 through 12 can see a family counselor with at least one parent/legal guardian attending each session.
- Young children from newborn to 5 years are not eligible for confidential counseling services.
- Children and youth can participate in counseling services in person or via secure online video; they are not eligible to receive counseling services via phone or secure online chat.

Children and youth up to age 18 are eligible to receive confidential counseling services through Military and Family Life Counseling with signed parental consent and within line of sight of teacher, staff, or parent/guardian.

Contact Information

Military OneSource is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

- Request a confidential counseling appointment through secure [live chat](#).
- [Request a confidential counseling appointment online](#).
- Stateside: 800-342-9647. International: 800-342-9647 or 703-253-7599.
- Calling instructions for specific international locations can be found on the Military OneSource website by clicking on the Connect Now button at the top of every page, then clicking on Call Us OCONUS.
- Collect from overseas: Dial an international operator first, then ask to be connected with 703-253-7599.
- Voice over Internet Protocol, or VoIP: If service members or their family members have a VoIP account set up, they can use VoIP to call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647.
- En español llame al: 800-342-9647.
- Telecommunications Device for the Deaf/Teletypewriter (TDD/TTY): Dial 711 and give the toll-free number 800-342-9647.