



# Department of Defense INSTRUCTION

NUMBER 6490.06

April 21, 2009

Incorporating Change 2, March 31, 2017

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USD(P&R)

SUBJECT: Counseling Services for DoD Military, Guard and Reserve, Certain Affiliated Personnel, and Their Family Members

References: See Enclosure 1

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes and implements counseling policies and identifies and assigns responsibilities for providing counseling support in accordance with the authority in DoD Directive (DoDD) 5124.02 (Reference (a)).

2. APPLICABILITY. This Instruction applies to:

a. OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the Department of Defense (hereafter referred to as the "DoD Components"). The term "Military Services" as used herein refers to the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps.

b. Members of the Active Component and of the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corp Reserve, and Naval Reserve (hereafter referred to as the "Active and Reserve Components") and their family members.

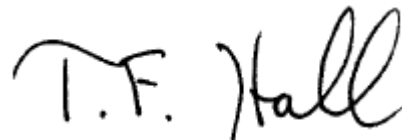
c. DoD civilian personnel designated as Civilian Expeditionary Workforce members pursuant to DoDD 1404.10 (Reference (b)) and their family members.

3. DEFINITIONS. See Glossary.

4. POLICY. It is DoD policy to:

a. Promote a culture that encourages delivery and receipt of counseling.

- b. Eliminate barriers to and the negative stigma associated with seeking counseling support.
  - c. Empower leaders to advocate for those in their charge to receive counseling.
  - d. Provide easy access to a continuum of counseling support to include prevention, early intervention, and treatment to enhance coping and build resilience.
  - e. View counseling support as a force multiplier enhancing military and family readiness.
5. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.
6. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 3.
7. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release**. This Instruction is available on the DoD Issuances Website at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives>.
8. SUMMARY OF CHANGE. The changes to this issuance are administrative and update references, effective date, and releasability for accuracy.
9. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Instruction is effective April 21, 2009.



T. F. Hall  
Performing the Duties of the  
Under Secretary of Defense  
for Personnel and Readiness

Enclosures

- 1. References
- 2. Responsibilities
- 3. Procedures

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5124.02, "Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R))," June 23, 2008
- (b) DoD Directive 1404.10, "DoD Civilian Expeditionary Workforce," January 23, 2009
- (c) DoD Instruction 6400.06, "Domestic Abuse Involving DoD Military and Certain Affiliated Personnel," August 21, 2007, as amended
- (d) DoD Directive 6495.01, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program," January 23, 2012, as amended
- (e) Section 552a of title 5, United States Code
- (f) DoD 5400.11-R, "Department of Defense Privacy Program," May 14, 2007
- (g) DoD Instruction 6025.18, "Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information in DoD Health Care Programs," December 2, 2009
- (h) American Psychiatric Association, "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV)," 1994
- (i) DoD Instruction 1342.22, "Military Family Readiness," July 3, 2012, as amended
- (j) Public Law 110-289, "Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008," July 30, 2008
- (k) Sections 501-596 of title 50, United States Code
- (l) Chapter 55 and sections 836 and 1145 of title 10, United States Code
- (m) DoD Instruction 6400.01, "Family Advocacy Program (FAP)," February 13, 2015
- (n) DoD Instruction 6495.02, "Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program Procedures," March 28, 2013, as amended

ENCLOSURE 2  
RESPONSIBILITIES

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS (USD(P&R)). The USD(P&R) shall:

- a. Develop and maintain this Instruction and ensure DoD Component compliance with its policies.
- b. Collaborate with the Military Departments to establish procedures and programs consistent with this Instruction.
- c. Program, budget, and allocate funds and other resources to meet the policy objectives of this Instruction.
- d. Ensure that information on military and civilian mental health research and programs is exchanged among the Department of Defense and the Military Services.

2. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY (DASD(MC&FP)). The DASD(MC&FP), under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), shall:

- a. Provide through Military OneSource (MOS) and the Military and Family Life Consultant (MFLC) Program, non-medical, brief counseling support to augment counseling provided by the Active and Reserve Components.
- b. Provide, through MOS and the MFLC Program, personal financial counselors to augment personal financial planning and counseling provided by the Active force and Reserve Components.
- c. Provide guidance and technical assistance to the DoD Components in addressing counseling initiatives.
- d. Collaborate with the DoD Components and Federal and State agencies that address counseling; serve on related Federal committees and advisory groups.
- e. Promote general awareness of counseling programs among the DoD Components.
- f. Monitor compliance with this Instruction and periodically evaluate DoD counseling programs in collaboration with the organizations mentioned in this Instruction.

3. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS (ASD(M&RA)). The ASD(M&RA), under the authority, direction, and control of the USD(P&R), shall collaborate with the Military Departments and the USD(P&R) to establish procedures and programs consistent with this Instruction.

4. SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall:

a. Establish policies and programs consistent with the procedures outlined in section 6 of Enclosure 3 and ensure implementation, monitoring, and evaluation at all levels of military command.

b. Program, budget, and allocate funds and other resources to meet the policy objectives of this Instruction.

c. Provide annual education and training to key personnel on the policies and procedures in this Instruction.

d. Ensure leadership oversight at all levels of implementation.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. MOS AND MFLC PROGRAMS. MOS and MFLC Program counselors provide non-medical, short-term, solution-focused counseling and briefings for circumstances amenable to brief intervention, including but not limited to stress and anger management, grief and loss, the deployment cycle, parent-child relationships, couples communication, marital issues, relationships, and relocations based on the needs of the community being served. The counseling approach is psycho-educational, which helps participants learn to anticipate and resolve challenges associated with the military lifestyle. This non-medical support is aimed at preventing the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions that may detract from military and family readiness.

a. MOS and MFLC Programs shall implement privacy and confidentiality policies to promote participation and reduce stigma, except to meet legal obligations or to prevent harm to self or others.

(1) Information disclosed to MOS and MFLC Program counselors shall be kept confidential, except to meet legal obligations or to prevent harm to self or others. (See Glossary for definitions of “legal obligation” and “harm to self or others.”)

(2) MOS and MFLC Program counselors are not authorized to receive a domestic abuse or sexual assault restricted report. If the person receiving counseling requests restricted reporting pursuant to domestic abuse or sexual assault, the MOS and MFLC Program counselors shall transfer the person to a specified individual who is authorized to receive a restricted report in the respective Military Service according to DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6400.06 (Reference (c)) and DoDD 6495.01 (Reference (d)).

(3) At a minimum, any personally identifiable information recorded by MOS and MFLC Program counselors is subject to section 552a of title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) (Reference (e), commonly referred to as the “Privacy Act of 1974”) and DoD 5400.11-R (Reference (f)); however, because MOS and the MFLC Program are not healthcare programs, this information may not be subject to DoDI 6025.18 (Reference (g)).

(4) At a minimum, this confidentiality statement shall be provided to all eligible individuals seeking counseling services pursuant to this Instruction: “Information you provide to me or other counselors 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.”

b. MOS and MFLC Program counselors do not provide clinical therapy. Situations requiring clinical therapy such as those meeting the diagnostic criteria found in American Psychiatric

Association Manual (Reference (h)) shall be referred to a military medical treatment facility, TRICARE, or other providers of professional mental healthcare.

c. MOS and MFLC Program counselors providing direct non-medical counseling support shall have at least a Masters degree from an accredited graduate program in a mental health-related field such as social work, psychology, marriage and family therapy, or counseling; 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 fields; and demonstrated current counseling competence preceding their employment with MOS or the MFLC program.

d. MOS services are provided face-to-face (continental United States (CONUS) only) to individuals, couples, families, and groups, and telephonically or over the Internet to individuals worldwide. MOS services may be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week using the toll free number 1-800-342-9647 or on the Internet at <http://www.militaryonesource.com>. Eligible participants may receive twelve non-medical counseling sessions per person per issue.

(1) Face-to-face non-medical counseling is provided using a nationwide network of affiliate providers who have been screened by MOS to assure they meet the requirements of paragraph 1.c. of this enclosure.

(2) In addition to non-medical counseling support, MOS provides personalized assistance with special-needs family members, child care, relocation, health and wellness, translation services, and more.

e. The MFLC Program provides worldwide non-medical counseling support in accordance with these service delivery options:

(1) Rotational. Rotational non-medical counseling support in which MFLC Program counselors travel to designated areas to provide temporary support is available to the active force in and outside CONUS to augment counseling services provided by the Military Departments. Service delivery may occur on or off military installations. Non-medical counseling is provided face-to-face, to individuals, couples, families, and groups. Rotations may not exceed 90 days. Requests for rotational support must be submitted through the appropriate designated Military Service headquarters points of contact to the Office of the DASD(MC&FP).

(2) On-Demand. On-demand non-medical counseling support is provided to the Reserve Components for mobilization, deployment, and reunion activities. Units and commands may request on-demand support by completing a request form at <http://jfsap.mhf.dod.mil/request>. Requests are submitted through the appropriate Reserve Component chain of command to the Office of the DASD(MC&FP). On-demand support may also be requested by calling toll free 1-888-256-9920.

(3) Full-Time. MFLC Programs may provide full time non-medical counseling support for special projects such as legislatively or DoD-mandated programs.

f. Additional information on the MFLC program may be found at <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/service/counseling>.

2. PERSONAL FINANCIAL COUNSELING. Personal financial counselors assist with issues including, but not limited to, developing saving and investing strategies, spending plans, understanding military benefits, purchasing a home, debt management, taxes, and financial emergencies. Circumstances requiring legal assistance shall be referred accordingly. Financial counselors shall operate in accordance with DoDI 1342.22 (Reference (i)).

a. Personal financial management is a baseline service in all DoD family centers (Reference (i))).

b. MOS financial counselors are available face-to-face or by phone at 1-800-342-9647.

c. MFLC Program financial counselors provide face-to-face support in accordance with the rotational and on-demand service delivery options contained in paragraphs 1.e.(1) and 1.e.(2) of this enclosure and may be requested using procedures contained in those paragraphs.

d. Members of the Active force and Reserve Components may utilize the State and Territory Transition Assistance Advisors to access information about local financial counseling resources.

e. Service members covered by this Instruction who are returning from and departing for service on active duty abroad shall be advised on actions to take to prevent or forestall mortgage foreclosures including, but not limited to, credit counseling, home mortgage counseling, and such other counseling and information appropriate for this purpose (Public Law 110-289 (Reference (j))). They will also be provided, in writing, notice about the appropriate provisions of sections 501-596 of title 50, U.S.C. (Reference (k), commonly known as the "Servicemember's Civil Relief Act"). All members covered by this Instruction shall be advised on actions to forestall mortgage foreclosures in accordance with section 1 of this enclosure.

3. FAMILY CENTERS. Reference (i) governs family centers.

a. Family centers provide baseline services and may, without releasing DoD Components of their obligations to perform functions required by statute or DoD policy, provide other support programs including but not limited to non-medical counseling for individuals, couples, and families.

b. Family center staff providing non-medical counseling shall meet the criteria in paragraph 1.c. of this enclosure and criteria established by the respective Military Departments.

c. Contact information for DoD family centers may be found at <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>.



4. CHAPLAINS. Authorized personnel counseled by military chaplains in a manner intended to be confidential, and made either as a formal act of religion or as a matter of conscience, shall be entitled to the protections of privileged communication as delineated under military rules of evidence (section 836 of title 10, U.S.C. (Reference (1))), applicable statutes, regulations, and service policies. Chaplains may provide counseling to individuals, couples, families, and groups. Authorized personnel may request chaplain counseling services through direct contact or via appropriate Service protocols.

5. FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM (FAP). DoD Instruction 6400.01 (Reference (m)) governs the FAP.

a. FAP addresses family violence in military families through prevention, early identification, and intervention.

b. FAP provides support for victims and treatment for abusers, to include clinical therapy, marital therapy, and support groups.

c. Contact information for DoD FAPs may be found at <http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil>.

6. MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM (MHS). The MHS ensures delivery of world-class healthcare to all DoD Service members, retirees, and their families. The MHS provides non-medical counseling and clinical therapy at military medical treatment facilities (MTFs) and through TRICARE.

a. MTFs are the primary source of specialty mental healthcare for military personnel. Services may include clinical therapy for mental health conditions, such as post traumatic stress disorder, major depression, and conditions found in Reference (h). They also provide non-medical counseling for issues related to work, school, or family.

b. Active duty Service members seeking mental healthcare through the TRICARE network must obtain a referral from their military medical support office or their primary care provider.

c. Dependents may receive up to eight outpatient non-medical or clinical therapy treatment sessions per year from a TRICARE network mental healthcare provider without prior authorization. The mental healthcare provider must seek authorization from the TRICARE contractor for additional visits.

d. Reserve Component members and their families may also be eligible for non-medical counseling and clinical therapy through TRICARE in accordance with chapter 55 and section 1145 of Reference (1).

e. The MHS mental health provider shall provide a copy of the Military Health System Notice of Privacy Practices, available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/tmaprivacy>, to patients upon intake for their initial care.

7. SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (SAPR). Reference (d) and DoDI 6495.02 (Reference (n)) govern sexual assault prevention and response.

a. SAPR allows for care and services to be delivered to victims of sexual assault. Service member victims may make either a restricted report or an unrestricted report and may receive treatment and services pursuant to Reference (n).

b. Only individuals specified in Reference (d) may receive restricted reports.

c. Additional information about DoD and Military Service SAPR policies may be obtained at <http://www.sapr.mil> or by calling the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office at 703-696-9422.

GLOSSARY

DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise noted, these terms and their definitions are for the purpose of this Instruction.

child abuse. Defined in Reference (m).

clinical therapy. Therapy provided for circumstances amenable to long-term therapeutic intervention by a clinical provider. Clinical therapy may be provided to individuals, couples, and families. Issues such as post traumatic stress disorder, depression, traumatic brain injury, drug and alcohol abuse, child and spouse abuse, suicidal ideation, or conditions meeting the diagnostic criteria found in Reference (h) may be addressed in clinical therapy. This definition is not intended to limit the authority of the Military Departments to grant privileges to clinical providers modifying this scope of care consistent with current Military Department policy.

domestic abuse. Defined in Reference (c).

family center. Defined in Reference (i).

family member. Defined in Reference (i).

FAP. Defined in Reference (m).

financial planning and counseling. Defined in Reference (i).

harm to others. Includes circumstances indicating a danger of domestic violence, child abuse or neglect; violence against any person; or present or other future illegal activity.

harm to self. Includes circumstances indicating suicidal thought, intent, or a desire to harm oneself. For Service members this includes any expression of past or present illegal use of controlled substances while on active duty.

legal obligations. Uses and disclosures of information that are required by Federal law, applicable State law, applicable host-nation law outside the United States, or DoD or Military Service regulations and similar issuances.

non-medical counseling. Short term, non-therapeutic counseling that is not appropriate for individuals needing clinical therapy. Non-medical counseling is supportive in nature and addresses general conditions of living, life skills, improving relationships at home and at work, stress management, adjustment issues (such as those related to returning from a deployment), marital problems, parenting, and grief and loss. This definition is not intended to limit the authority of the Military Departments to grant privileges to clinical providers modifying this scope of care consistent with current Military Department policy.

psycho-education. A means to educate people through counseling, trainings, or activities addressing topics including but not limited to those listed in the definition of non-medical counseling in this Glossary. Psycho-education helps people learn to anticipate and resolve challenges, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, develop coping and self-management skills, and may help prevent the development or exacerbation of mental health conditions that may detract from military and family readiness.

restricted reporting

Defined in Reference (c) as it applies to adult victims of domestic abuse who are eligible to receive military medical treatment, including civilians and contractors who are eligible to receive military healthcare outside CONUS on a reimbursable basis.

Defined in Reference (d) as it applies to Service members who report or disclose being victims of sexual assault.