



Military children can be under increased stress from the challenges associated with their unique lifestyle, in particular the stress associated with a deployment. Sometimes the absence of a parent may result in behavioural changes in our children that has the once easy going child acting aggressive or more emotional than usual, or a once social teenager becoming withdrawn. Children's ages and stages during the deployment may look a little like the following:

#### Preschooler 3 to 5 Years

- Frequent nightmares, or waking through the night
- Clinging to a favourite blanket/ toy or specific person
- They may become more whiny/tearful, aggressive or sad
- Increased attention seeking behaviours

#### School age 6 to 9 Years

- Unexplained headaches and stomach aches
- Increase in nervous habits such as nail biting
- More aggressive with siblings, friends
- Making up elaborate stories to explain why their parent is away
- Decline in school performance

#### PreTeens 10 – 12 Years

- Change in typical behaviour; they may now become unusually quiet or the opposite, and have angry outbursts more often
- Grasping for control as they try to take matters at home/school into their own hands
- Fears about what the future holds
- Decline in school performance

#### Teens 13 Years and Up

- Increase in mood swings that are already common in teenagers
- Feelings of blame, shame or misdirected anger

- The short fuse – small incidents set them off
- Depression; loss of interest in usual activities or interests
- Low self esteem and self criticism
- The “I don’t care” attitudes
- Decline in school performance

If you are a family experiencing a deployment or a family separation due to IR or career courses, your GMFRC team is experienced in the unique needs military families may be facing in the area of deployment-related parenting and mental health. Please reach out today if you would like more information on parenting during your family separation at [gmfrchildyouth@gmail.com](mailto:gmfrchildyouth@gmail.com)