



This Month's **ADVICE** JUNE 2023

Medical
RELEASE



**Military Family
Resource Centre**
Montreal Region

WELCOME • SUPPORT • UNITE



Canada

How can I help myself and my family through my medical release and reintegration into the civilian world

Michael: I've been on sick leave six or seven times in the last few years, and each time it gets harder to come back to work. The last time I was off work it was suggested that I start the evaluation for a potential medical release. I am not sure what the outcome will be, and if I am released, I am not sure how I will be able to support my family. I used to think of myself as a rugged, reliable man and seeing myself as unable to work for medical reasons is a very hard pill to swallow.

A little perspective :

Michael has been in the forces long enough to get training, learn a trade and have responsibilities. These accomplishments show that he can learn, work and fit into a work setting. If he is on the road to medical release, SISIP, the insurer for CAF members, will pay two years of Michael's salary after his release to enable him to get training for a new job more suitable to his current skills, abilities and experience. In addition, the CAF Transition Unit offers support and counselling during this period. The MFRC offers psychosocial support to families of members and veterans, and workshops such as L'Escale and art-therapy. When the member is released, the MFRC Veterans Family Program Coordinator can guide you to find the right resources and offer you emotional support.

Three important factors to consider if you are experiencing negative feelings related to the transition process:

- An optimistic, open-minded, problem-solving attitude helps you to see beyond negative emotions; be ready to be creative and explore new solutions. Try to stay optimistic!
- Support, coming from colleagues, friends, loved ones and professionals (counsellors, social workers, etc.) helps diminish the impact of stress and negative feelings. Reach out and get the support you need!
- Institutional support- the leaders in your work environment, as well as the other organisational supports can reduce anxiety by offering you support and solutions to the problems you face in your particular situation. Take advantage of all the resources available to you!



DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Researchers are in general agreement about the top ten major stressors in life: death of a loved one, divorce, moving, major illness or injury and job loss are always at the head of the list. Having an illness or accident which triggers medical release can cause very high stress levels. That is why it is important to reinforce things that give us strength: communicating with our loved ones, learning to adjust to the new situation, developing a support network, and using the services that are there to help.

Some suggestions for talking with your family:

- **Take** one thing at a time; you can't do everything at once or talk about everything at once.
- **Stay optimistic**; believe that good things can still happen.
- **Be truthful**, frank, and age appropriate- keep your loved ones up to date on your illness, the treatments, and the risks. Don't scare your little children, but when Daddy is really sick, they have to know that.
- **Financial** issues: career counselling, training and job search are important to assure financial independence. Make a plan and keep your family informed of how it's going.
- **Living** through a change in life triggered by something out of our control like illness or injury confronts us with mortality and our sense of self. How do we accept the new situation? Can we find positives in how we deal with the situation? Talking about it with your partner, your kids and a councillor will help everyone be more positive and feel more in touch with reality.
- **The MFRC** offers counseling for families dealing with the illness, injury and the effects of the release; it can be individual, couple or family sessions. For the member, counselling services are insured by the medical section of the CAF until the release and by the VAC and MAP (Military Assistance Program) afterwards. Sometimes the member being released and their family are not used to talking about feelings, and counselling can facilitate good communication, and protect the member and family from the stress that might come with this transition. Talk about the transition with your family.
- **Problems** that frequently come up: learning how to use the Veteran's Affairs programs, getting career counselling, using the two years of salary to prepare for a new career, getting health services. Remember that it's always complicated dealing with a bureaucracy.

As a parent, how can I maintain my well being?

- Career change is stressful. Be patient
- Stay focused on the fact that the problem is the career change, not your family
- Seek out concrete information about the new reality that awaits you and make plans as a family
- Make decisions together
- Exercise
- Do some breathing exercises



Références:

- Google "Military career transition", Canada.ca, and you will find a large selection of transition tools and information.
- Présentation du Groupe de transition des Forces armées canadiennes - Canada.ca (FR)
About the Canadian Armed Forces Transition Group - Canada.ca (EN)
- Go to the MFRC Montreal Region Portal, and look for the workshop l'Escale, to be given several times in 2023. This is a weekend event for military members and recent veterans and their partners, to explore the challenges of the transition to civilian life. Otherwise, contact the Accueil Psychosocial at the CRFM, 450-358-7099, 2917 for a referral to a counsellor specialized in these issues.

Need help?

Contact Psychosocial Intake at the Military Family Resource Centre, Montreal Region:

Saint-Hubert: 450-462-8777, Ext. 6821 and Saint-Jean: 450-358-7099, Ext. 2917 or SvcPersCRFMSoutienPsySt-Jean@forces.gc.ca