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OPERATION
READY
Resources for Educating About Deployment and You

GETTING PREPARED, STAYING PREPARED

Online Key Caller Training

Third Edition, 2006



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- Attention: At the end of this training, you will be required to complete and pass an exam before receiving a Certificate of Completion.
- You may complete the training in person, if preferred. Please contact Army Community Service at 915-568-1132.
- No exam is required for in-person training



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Purpose of Phone Tree

- Phone tree is a FRG mission activity
- Primary purpose is to provide timely and accurate information from command to families
- Phone tree also provides the FRG an opportunity to:
 - Introduce families to FRG
 - Welcome new families to unit
 - Notify and encourage families to attend unit and FRG-sponsored activities
 - Assist families by providing referrals
 - Monitor unit families' well-being
 - Maintain families' connection to the FRG and unit



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Setting Up the FRG Telephone Tree

- FRG member roster compiled from:
 - Unit roster
 - Completed Family Readiness Information forms
 - Requests to Soldiers and families for family contact information
- FRG leader (in conjunction with phone tree chair) develops the phone tree
- Each key caller to contact a small list of families on ongoing basis
- Keep in mind participation in FRG is voluntary



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FRG Phone Tree Operations

- FRG leader receives information from command
- Information passed to key callers via FRG leader or FRG Phone Tree Chair
- Key callers contact their assigned families
- Key callers then notify either FRG leader or FRG Phone Tree Chair
- Specific guidance to be provided by FRG leader



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Contact with Families

- Frequency of contact with families will depend on:
 - Number of families assigned
 - Phase of unit's deployment cycle
 - Activity level of FRG
 - Whether families seek help from FRG



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FRG Key Caller Responsibilities

- Relay information from command accurately; in some cases, command will provide a script
- Make information calls in **TIMELY** manner
- Call periodically to check on families, especially in deployment and post deployment phases of deployment cycle
- Address families' questions, referring to others when appropriate
- Maintain family privacy and confidentiality



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FRG Key Caller Responsibilities (continued)

- Perform administrative tasks per FRG leader's guidance
 - Register as statutory volunteer (DD Form 2793)
 - Submit volunteer hours monthly
 - Submit necessary forms for reimbursement of incidental expenses (i.e., long distance telephone costs)
 - Track all calls with families
 - Provide updated family contact information to FRG leader (including when family members leave the area during deployment) to keep FRG roster up to date



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Key Caller Resources

- Operation READY Key Caller Handbook
- Personalized Key Caller Smart Book
- FRG Phone Chairperson, if assigned
- FRG leader
- Other key callers



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Tips to Handling Key Caller Role

- Understand the boundaries of your role
- Learn effective ways to handle different types of calls
- Maintain confidentiality
- Know when to notify FRG leader (or phone tree chair)
- Take care of yourself and learn effective ways to handle stress
- Develop and use your Smart Book and other resource materials



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Tip: Understand Key Caller Role

- Key caller is responsible for providing referral and **not** solving family's problem
- Keep in mind you are not expected to know everything, but know where to look for answers to families' questions
- Follow-up is not required (i.e., you are not responsible for checking to make sure family contacted the referral agency)
- Seek help from FRG leader or phone tree chair when:
 - Unable to answer question or provide referral
 - Have difficulty dealing with a family



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Tip: Learn How to Handle Different Types of Phone Calls

Calls by key caller to family:

- Information
- Social/health and welfare

Calls by family to key caller:

- Information
- Problems
- Gossip and rumor
- Chronic
- Crisis



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Tip: Keep FRG Leader Informed

- FRG leader to provide procedural guidance
- Situations when it is important to notify FRG leader:
 - Crisis situation
 - Issues experienced by many families
 - Emerging issues being experienced by families
 - Difficult issues families are facing
 - Rumors families are hearing
 - Questions that require command response



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Tip: Take Care of Self

- Maintain health and well-being
- Manage demands and have the proper mindset for the job
- Take action “when stressed out”
- Find effective ways to relax



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Tip: Develop a Smart Book

- Operation READY Key Caller Handbook
- List of assigned families and contact information
- Forms (e.g., phone tree log form, family contact form, volunteer incidental expense reimbursement form)
- Materials and handouts from trainings
- Community directories
- Other pertinent information (e.g., FRG events schedule, unit deployment and training schedules)



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FRG Mission

FRGs increase family readiness by:

- Providing official, accurate command information
- Offering mutual support
- Advocating use of available community resources
- Helping families solve problems.



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FRG's Communication Activities

- FRG leader and unit commander determine what activities FRG will provide and level of effort.
- Type and breadth of activities will depend on:
 - Commander's budget
 - Unit Soldier and family needs
 - Command interest and emphasis
 - Number of FRG volunteers
 - Geographical dispersion of family members
 - Unit's deployment schedule



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Purpose of FRG E-Mail

- Relay information from command
- Publicize FRG events
- Disseminate FRG newsletter
- Serves as an alternative method of instant communication with Soldiers' "family" members



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Guidance on FRG E-Mail

- Requires having e-mail addresses
- FRG leader responsible for establishing procedures and recruiting FRG volunteer to perform this task (if not performed by FRG leader)
- Timeliness and accuracy important
- Unit commander or RDC approves FRG e-mails containing company or deployment-related information
- FRG leader approves e-mails about FRG meetings and social events



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Purpose of Virtual FRG Web Site

- Allow units to perform some FRG functions online
 - Send e-mails and update telephone and e-mail lists through secure communications with families
 - Post FRG newsletter and information of interest to families
- Provide information from command, especially forward deployed commander
- Provide secure communication between unit, families and Soldiers



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Guidance on vFRG Web Site

- Unit commander responsible for signing up and establishing unit's own web page on battalion's virtual FRG web site
- Unit commander authorizes users and approves all content; Commander responsible for having content posted on unit's web page
- If battalion does not have a vFRG web site, FRG may use AKO to run a web site
- Private FRG web sites are not allowed



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Supporting a Diverse Membership

- The FRG will be challenged to support a wide array of groups that include:
 - Broader Soldier family (immediate and extended family members)
 - Families dispersed across a wide geographical area or different states
 - Deployed and nondeployed
 - Augmentees to unit
 - Guardians
 - Families of wounded Soldiers
 - Families of fallen Soldiers
 - New arrivals to unit
- To support families, will require:
 - Using a variety of communication methods
 - Providing different information and referral assistance to different groups
 - Offering support in different ways.
- When providing support to families, the FRG's intent is to support families **where they live.**



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Controlling Rumors

- Rumors frequently arise during a deployment. If not handled, rumors can run rampant and create panic.
- Controlling rumors is important. While this is the responsibility of unit leadership and FRG leader, FRG volunteers (especially key callers) can assist.
- Providing accurate information in timely manner to families is critical to minimizing rumors.
- Everyone needs to know that official information comes from military leadership.
- The FRG can keep the RDC informed on families' questions and issues. The RDC in turn will provide the FRG with the information to disseminate to families and/or will speak to families directly.



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Things to Remember About FRG's Role

- FRG serves as an extension of the unit.
 - In this role, the FRG is responsible for providing families with timely and accurate information **from command**.
 - Help maintain operational security.
- FRG responsible for providing referrals and educational information that help families solve their problems.
 - FRG is NOT responsible for solving families' problems.
- FRG needs to maintain communication with families throughout deployment cycle.
 - By doing so, FRG can assist families with each phase and in transitioning from one phase to another.



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Types of Soldier and Family Crises

- Unexpected and unplanned events
- Life or developmental events
- Functional situations arising from chronic difficulty coping or experiencing significant individual or family problem
- Caregiver “crisis”; Family Care Plan is no longer valid



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What Creates a Crisis

When an individual:

- Experiences a stressful event or an event perceived as significant and threatening
 - Has been unable to resolve situation with usual coping or problem-solving skills
 - Is unaware or unable to pursue alternatives
- Then the individual may perceive the event as an unmanageable situation and becomes distressed and, in some cases, functionally impaired



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What Creates a Crisis (continued)

- The temporary upset or disequilibrium is generally short lived (i.e., 4-6 weeks)
- A crisis may be different from a problem or emergency:
 - Problem: can be resolved by family or with the aid of a referral
 - Emergency: requires immediate attention by professionals to respond to life-threatening event
 - Crisis: by definition is time limited; situation can wait 24 to 72 hours for a response without placing individual in jeopardy



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Characteristics of Individual in Crisis

- Will be feeling vulnerable and overwhelmed
- Can exhibit any of the following:
 - Disorganized thinking
 - Preoccupation with insignificant activities
 - Hostility or emotional distancing
 - Impulsiveness
 - Dependence on the individual offering help
 - Arrogance or withdrawal
- Are generally receptive to getting information or help



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Goals of Crisis Intervention

- To provide timely and skillful support that will help the individual to:
 - cope with the situation,
 - end distress or crisis,
 - restore independent functioning.*
- To prevent or mitigate negative impact from event.
- To encourage individuals to seek help as sign of strength.

* Second order intervention



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Goal of Intervention by RDC and FRGs

- Act at the most opportune time
- Refer Soldiers and families to professionals who can provide skilled support and, if necessary, crisis therapy
- Provide psychological first aid
- Be involved for minutes to hours
- Be available

Note: *this is first order intervention*

Keep in mind the goal is NOT to solve the family's problem or to "rescue" the family.



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Guidelines for Intervention

- Identify crisis and individual's efforts to solve situation. When talking with individual:
 - Listen carefully and allow the individual to talk.
 - Speak calmly.
 - Help focus the discussion on the situation that needs to be addressed.
- Help individual by taking action and referring to appropriate agency.
 - Don't make promises can't keep.
 - Stick to the current event of concern.
 - Provide reassurance.
- Record the contact with the family on the family contact form.
- Follow-up to ensure individual received assistance needed.



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Guidelines on Making Referrals

- When a situation is outside of your responsibility, refer family to agency best suited to handle situation.
- Whenever possible, give family a point of contact at agency.
- In some instances, you may need to assist the family by scheduling an appointment with the agency. (RDC responsibility only)
- If family is hesitant to go to the agency alone, then find someone to accompany the family. (RDC responsibility, FRG can offer if they choose)



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Congratulations! You have completed the online review of Key Caller training.

To complete the training you must now pass a short exam located at:

<http://quizstar.4teachers.org/indexs.jsp>

Begin by registering at QuizStar then search for the quiz under keywords: Key Caller Quiz (Ft. Bliss)



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Once you have completed the quiz with a 90% or better, send an email to:

thuy.depew1@us.army.mil requesting your Certificate of Completion.

Your quiz results will be verified and your certificate will be available for pick up at Army Community Service, 2494 Ricker Road, Ft. Bliss.