CKSP Establishment

Phase 1: Vision

Understanding the purpose of the program: The CKSP promotes individual, family, and unit readiness, establishes continuous contact with families, encourages peer-to-peer support, provides family links to leadership, strengthens the leadership support team, and is vital to building strong Air Force communities. It enhances family readiness, resilience, and connectedness by facilitating clear communication and resource connection between leadership and families. It also increases awareness of installation/community resources, helps identify/resolve issues at the lowest levels, enhances up/down information flow, prepares and supports families during separations, increases the sense of unit support, improves the quality of life among unit families, increases readiness and retention, and enhances family resilience.

M&FRC Discussion: Initial consultation with the M&FRC is crucial for guidance and support in establishing the CKSP. Identifying:

- **Mission:** Align the CKSP's mission with the Commander's vision for unit family support and the overall mission. This will vary by unit needs and goals.
- **Needs (Community):** Assess the specific needs of the unit's families. Consider demographics, deployment cycles, common challenges, and existing support systems.
- **Emergency Readiness:** Consider how the program can support you and the unit during an emergency situation.
- **Program Goal:** Define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals for the CKSP.

How to bring families to the circle: Utilize various communication channels (email, social media, unit events) to inform families about the CKSP and encourage participation. Newcomer briefings and sponsorship programs are valuable avenues. Consider family-friendly events, workshops, and social gatherings to foster connections.

Phase 2: Establishment

Who?

- **Commander:** The driving force behind the program, responsible for establishing, maintaining, and guiding the CKSP.
- **First Sergeant:** A key partner in implementing the program and connecting with families.
- **KSM (Key Support Mentor):** One KSM per unit, selected by the Commander, provides mentorship and guidance to KSLs.
- **KSL (Key Support Liaisons):** The number of KSLs is determined by unit size and needs, appointed by the Commander.
- **M&FRC POCs:** M&FRC personnel provide training, resources, and ongoing support to the CKSP.
- **Chief / Superintendent / Senior NCO:** Invaluable partners for supporting the Commander's vision and integrating the CKSP into unit operations.
- **Families:** The core of the CKSP – their needs and feedback shape the program's direction.
- **Community:** Leverage resources and support from the broader base and local community.

Recruitment and Selection:

- **How?** Email announcements, flyers at unit events, word-of-mouth referrals, social media posts.
- **Who?** Spouses, family members, or other volunteers who are committed to supporting the unit.
- **Process: Applications, interviews with the Commander and/or First Sergeant, and selection based on qualifications and commitment.**

Appointment / Admin:

- **CKSP Files:** Maintain organized records of volunteer appointments, training completion, contact information, and any relevant documentation.
- **Meeting plan:** Establish regular meeting schedules for the CKS Team to discuss progress, address challenges, and plan activities.
- **Unit roster plan:** Develop a system for tracking unit families and their contact information, ensuring privacy and compliance with regulations.
- **Team roster / Information dissemination plan:** Disseminate contact information for CKS Team members to unit families and ensure information flows effectively within the team and to the unit.

CKSP Establishment

Phase 3: Implementation

- **Schedule meetings:** Regular CKS Team meetings are essential for communication, planning, and problem-solving.
- **Create awareness of the CKSP – share vision:** Promote the CKSP's benefits and activities to unit families through various communication channels.
- **Recognize contributions:** Acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of KSLs/KSMs through formal and informal recognition programs.
- **Monitor and review for any changes or additional support:** Regularly assess the CKSP's effectiveness and adapt to changing needs. Seek support from the M&FRC as needed.
- **Tip:** Focus on addressing situations and challenges objectively, without singling out individuals.

Phase 4: Beyond the Day-to-Day

Readiness and Contingency Planning:

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clarifying who handles specific tasks during routine operations and contingencies. This contributes to a more organized and effective response during emergencies.
- **Support Capabilities Inventory:** Instead of simply defining roles, develop a support capabilities inventory for each team member. This inventory should document each member's skills, experience, and available resources (time, transportation, etc.) that can be leveraged during various situations, including emergencies. This allows for a more dynamic and adaptable response based on individual strengths and available resources.
- **Contingency and Emergency Plans:** Establish comprehensive contingency plans that address a range of potential scenarios, from natural disasters and deployments to family emergencies and unit-specific crises. These plans should include communication protocols, resource allocation procedures, and clearly defined roles for each CKS Team member. Consider incorporating checklists and flowcharts to facilitate quick and efficient action during emergencies. Ensure these plans are regularly reviewed and updated, especially before major exercises or deployments.

Continuity:

- **Plan for volunteer changes:** Establish procedures for onboarding new volunteers and managing transitions when KSLs/KSMs leave their positions (Appendix G, according to source material).
- **Plan for your transition or absence:** Ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities when leadership changes or during absences. Maintain updated contact lists and program documentation. Engage new commander and provide overview and in-brief.

Remember to visit Commander's Key Support Program (af.mil) for additional information and resources.
The M&FRC offers briefings for Commanders, Command Chief Master Sergeants, and First Sergeants on the CKSP. Ensure proper handling of volunteer information and obtain necessary consents for communication.

Initial Training

CKSP Resources