

## LIKELY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **1. Why did MSF appoint two more Divorce Support Specialist Agencies (DSSAs)? Is there a rise in the number of divorces in Singapore?**

Divorce rates have gone down in 2018, therefore, it is pertinent to note that the addition of new DSSAs is not in response to the rise in the number of divorces. The addition of 2 new DSSAs is to expand divorce support services in different regions of Singapore so as that services are more accessible to those who need it.

### **2. What programmes are offered by these new DSSAs? Will they offer any new programmes?**

The DSSAs provide the following programmes which adopt a child-centric approach:

- the Mandatory Parenting Programme (“MPP”),
- Parenting Pact (“PP”)
- Children-in-Between (“CiB”)
- Supervised Exchange and Visitation Programme (“SESV”)
- Casework and Counselling (“C&C”).

These programmes are delivered by specialist counsellors and social workers to help divorcing and divorce families understand the impact of divorce on children.

The new DSSAs will also be offering these programmes.

### **3. If I need divorce support, which DSSA should I approach? Are they all the same?**

The DSSAs provide programmes such as the Mandatory Parenting Programme (“MPP”), Parenting Pact (“PP”), Children-in-Between (“CiB”), Supervised Exchange and Visitation Programme (“SESV”) and Casework and Counselling (“C&C”). Each DSSA may also provide additional services according to the needs of their clients and their areas of focus.

Divorcing parties may refer to the DSSA website at [www.msf.gov.sg/divorcesupport](http://www.msf.gov.sg/divorcesupport) to identify the agency with the programmes that are suited for them. They may also wish to approach the DSSA closest to them.

### **4. Are support programmes and counselling offered for free at DSSAs?**

The support programmes and counselling services provided by the DSSAs are free. To find out more, please contact your nearest DSSA (see [Annex C](#) for the locations and contact details of the DSSAs).

### **5. What are some of the pre-divorce considerations?**

Some of the things you need to consider before getting a divorce are:

- a. The legal requirements based on the type of marriage (for example, you would need to file for divorce with the Family Justice Courts for civil marriages or the Syariah Court for Muslim marriages).
- b. The financial and psychological impact of divorce on your family
- c. The parenting plan for your children and their well-being
- d. The housing and living arrangements that may affect separate household budgets
- e. How prepared you are for life changes after divorce

## **6. What is co-parenting?**

Co-parenting happens when both you and your ex-spouse continue to work together to raise your children even though you are divorced and may no longer be living together. Cooperative co-parenting gives your children stability and continuity in building relationship with both parents, despite changes to the family structure.

## **7. How can I get help on child maintenance issues?**

The parent who has custody, care and control of the children can apply for child maintenance. If you are not receiving divorce maintenance regularly, or if you are not receiving the full amount of the maintenance, you may apply to enforce the maintenance order. This is a legal matter and needs to be done through the Courts.

If you prefer not to do this at the Family Justice Courts, you may also file your complaint via the video-filing service which is available at the Maintenance Support Central (MSC) of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations or HELP FSC.

These organisations can also assist with the filing of fresh maintenance applications. The social workers and staff will help you with the application process which uses a video link service with the Family Justice Courts. They can also provide counselling and other areas of social support, if needed.

Parties may also seek to vary their maintenance order if their circumstances have changed. You may approach the Community Justice Centre for assistance to vary your maintenance order.

## **8. Where can I get free legal advice?**

Some organisations offer legal clinics where you can seek free legal advice on divorce matters. These may include child custody, divorce maintenance issues, and/or any other ancillary matters. More information is available at [go.gov.sg/legalaid](http://go.gov.sg/legalaid).

## PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY DSSAS

1. The DSSAs provide support and care to families through support services such as counselling, case management and family dispute management. The DSSAs provide the following programmes which adopt a child-centric approach. These programmes are delivered by specialist counsellors and social workers to help divorcing and divorce families understand the impact of divorce on children.

### Mandatory Parenting Programme

2. The Mandatory Parenting Programme is a consultation session for parents with minor children before they file for divorce. This is compulsory for all parents with children below 21 years old, as required under the Women's Charter. It is designed to encourage divorcing couples make informed decisions that prioritise the well-being of children.

3. This programme is provided free to all eligible parents with minor children before they file for divorce. It is a two-hour session by counsellors from Divorce Support Specialist Agencies (DSSAs). All parents with children below 21. are required under the Women's Charter Section 94A to attend this programme if they do not have a signed formal agreement pertaining to a parenting plan and all other divorce matters.

4. The consultation aims to help parents understand:

- a. the financial challenges of divorce
- b. how divorce impacts living arrangements
- c. child custody and access
- d. the importance of co-parenting and having a parenting plan

5. To check eligibility and apply for the Mandatory Parenting Programme, log in with the individual's SingPass at <http://www.ssnet.sg/ClientPortal>. MSF will process the application online and a DSSA counsellor will contact the individual to schedule an appointment.

### Parenting PACT

6. Parenting PACT is a one-time consultation session for divorced parents with children who are 21 years old and below. This is a two-hour session conducted by family counsellors from the Divorce Support Specialist Agencies. Divorced parents who are required by the Courts to attend this parenting programme will get a notification to attend Parenting PACT by post.

7. The session aims to help parents:

- a. Understand the impact of divorce on their children
- b. Learn cooperative co-parenting strategies
- c. Practise self-care; and
- d. Get more information about the community support resources available.

## Children in Between

8. Children in Between is a programme for parents and their children who are between 6 to less than 15 years of age. This workshop is run by family counsellors from the Divorce Support Specialist Agencies. Both parents and their children are encouraged to attend the workshops in separate sessions.

9. The workshops under CiB cover topics for both parents and children:

| CiB for Parents  | CiB for Children                                  |
|--|---|
| Practical Co-parenting skills                                    | Positive ways to cope with their parents' divorce |
| Ways to reduce parental conflict                                 | Exploring feelings and fears, myths and truths    |
| Understanding the needs of their children in a divorce situation | Skills to share their feelings                    |

## Supervised Exchange and Visitation Programme

10. The Supervised Exchange and Visitation (SESV) Programme helps high conflict families manage difficulties over child access matters. It provides a safe platform for children who express strong reluctance and discomfort about meeting their access parent. Counsellors help by mitigating distrust and working on the complex family dynamics. This programme is strictly for court ordered cases only.

11. The SESV programme is an interim measure to facilitate families to work towards independent child access. The end goal is to help parents co-parent effectively and build secure parent-child relationships over time without compromising the child's sense of personal and emotional safety.

12. Thye Hua Kwan Centre for Family Harmony, Care Corner Centre for Co-parenting and Thrive Parenting! are the three appointed Divorce Support Specialist Agencies that offer the Supervised Exchange and Visitation Programme.

13. This programme is strictly for court ordered cases only.

## Counselling and Support Programmes

14. During the counselling sessions, individuals and families come together in a safe and confidential platform where they can share experiences and offer mutual support to one another.

15. Some free support programmes at the DSSAs are:

### Care Corner Centre for Co-Parenting

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| 1 | <b>Enlivened Hearts Women's Support Group</b><br>The 4-session group work is designed to help women cope with the pain of divorce and to recover from the emotional trauma. |
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### HELP Family Service Centre

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| 1 | <b>Video Conference</b><br>A direct video link service to the courts to apply for the enforcement of existing spousal and/or child maintenance orders.                               |
| 2 | <b>RAINBOWS</b><br>A peer support group to facilitate emotional healing for parents and children.  |
| 3 | <b>The Big Brother and Big Sister (BBBS)</b><br>A befriending programme for children aged 10 to 16 who are affected by their parents' divorce.                                       |
| 4 | <b>The Family Enrichment Programme (FEP)</b><br>This programme provides opportunities for personal growth and development for families by strengthening their family support system. |

### PPIS As-Salaam Family Support Centre

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| 1 | <b>M.A.W.A.R Support Programme for Single Mothers</b><br>This programme provides support to divorced mothers with dependent children. |
| 2 | <b>SALAAM Support Programme</b><br>For children/adolescents who experience grief arising from loss of parents through divorce.        |

### Thye Hua Kwan Centre for Family Harmony @ Commonwealth

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| 1 | <b>Mindfulness Parenting</b><br>This programme helps divorcing/divorced parents to improve their communication skills for better parent-child relationships.               |
| 2 | <b>Daddy's for Life</b><br>A support programme to help divorcing/divorced fathers learn from each other's experiences, and build a strong relationship with their children |

## LOCATIONS AND CONTACT DETAILS OF DSSAS

1. **Care Corner Centre for Co-Parenting**  
**Tel:** (65) 6258 0020  
**Email:** [ccp@carecorner.org.sg](mailto:ccp@carecorner.org.sg)  
**Address:** Blk 21 Eunos Crescent #01-2983 Singapore 400021  
**Opening Hours:** Tues, Wed, Fri & Sat: 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 6pm, Thurs: 9am - 1 pm, 2pm - 9pm  
*(All consultations by appointments only)*
  
2. **Thye Hua Kwan Centre for Family Harmony**  
**Tel:** (65) 6357 9188  
**Email:** [cfh\\_dssa@thkmc.org.sg](mailto:cfh_dssa@thkmc.org.sg)  
**Address:** Blk 54 Commonwealth Drive #01-566 Singapore 142054  
**Opening Hours:** Wed and Fri: 9am – 6pm, Tues and Thurs: 9am – 9pm,  
Sat - By appointment only
  
3. **HELP Family Service Centre**  
**Tel:** (65) 6457 5188  
**Email:** [e-counsel@helpfsc.org.sg](mailto:e-counsel@helpfsc.org.sg)  
**Address:** Blk 570 Ang Mo Kio Avenue 3 #01-3317 Singapore 560570  
**Opening Hours:** Mon – Fri: 9am – 6pm, Sat - by appointment only
  
4. **PPIS As-Salaam Family Support Centre (for Muslim couples & families)**  
**Tel:** (65) 6745 5862  
**Email:** [as-salaam@ppis.sg](mailto:as-salaam@ppis.sg)  
**Address:** Blk 322 Ubi Ave 1 #01-591 Singapore 400322  
**Opening Hours:** Mon – Fri: 9am – 5pm, Sat - by appointment only
  
5. **Healing Hearts @ Fei Yue**  
**Tel:** (65) 6235 5229  
**Email:** TBC  
**Address:** Blk 381 Choa Chu Kang Ave 4, #01-348 Singapore 680281  
**Opening Hours:** Mon – Fri: 9.30 am – 6 pm, Extended hours till 8.30 pm on Tuesday  
- by appointment only
  
6. **Thrive Parenting!**  
**Tel:** (65) 6553 6643  
**Email:** [thriveparenting@amkfsc.org.sg](mailto:thriveparenting@amkfsc.org.sg)  
**Address:** Blk 643 Ang Mo Kio Ave 5 #01-3001 Singapore 560643  
**Opening Hours:** Mon, Tue, Wed and Fri: 9:00am to 6:00pm  
Thurs: 9:00am to 9:30pm (6:30pm to 9:30pm by appointment only)  
Sat: 9:00am to 1:00pm (by appointment only)