

I am a Caregiver



Freepik picture

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SPECIAL NOTE

When attempting to access information on the VA links, use the Ctrl and Click Method. The link may not seem to appear, but in fact is at the top of your computer screen on the task bar. See example:

“You can still file a claim and apply for benefits during the coronavirus pandemic

Get the latest information about in-person services, claim exams, extensions, paperwork, decision reviews and appeals, and how best to contact us during this time.

Go to our coronavirus FAQs (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)”

ACTION: place your mouse over the underlined, push ‘Ctrl’ on keyboard and click on your mouse.



Go to our coronavirus FAQs (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

For general caregiving or caregiver information, on your computer, you will go to Google and type in VA caregiver

WHAT YOU WILL SEE when accessing the Veterans Administration:

Look at the top off your computer screen where the task bar is located – there you will see the tab with the title:

<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>

Click on that ‘Task’ and the information you are searching for will appear.

Our Thinking Changes as We Age

Senile Dementia versus Alzheimer's⁽¹⁾

There is a difference

The terms Alzheimer's and Dementia are often used interchangeably, but they have very different meanings.

- Dementia is a syndrome that describes a wide range of symptoms. These symptoms impact a person's ability to perform everyday activities independently.
- Alzheimer's is a neurodegenerative disease that is the most common cause of dementia. In Alzheimer's, the brain may show signs of the disease before the person experiences any symptoms.

We will present each of the diseases separately for you.

What is Dementia (Senility)?

Dementia is the name for a group of symptoms that:

- a. make it hard to remember,
- b. think clearly,
- c. make decisions, or
- d. even control your emotions.

It is important to note that dementia is not a disease per se, and the occurrence of dementia symptoms are caused by various conditions.

Senile also known as Senile dementia is the mental deterioration (loss of intellectual ability) that is associated with or the characteristics of old age.

What is Alzheimer's Disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a neurological brain disorder, which causes problems with memory. It is named after a German physician, Alois Alzheimer, who first described it in 1906.

It is important to note that a person can have Alzheimer's without experiencing the symptoms of dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is a neurological brain disorder that causes problems with:

- memory,
- thinking skills, and

- behavior. ⁽¹⁾

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's can be rewarding but it has its challenges. Early diagnosis, having open communication and doing some simple activities can significantly help in caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's. Here are ways to help your loved one cope with Alzheimer's or dementia.

1. Seek Early Diagnosis

While an Alzheimer's diagnosis is extraordinarily difficult for everyone involved, early diagnosis can make a significant impact in quality of life, giving patients and families the opportunity to plan and find an appropriate level of care.

Common symptoms to watch for:

- Forgetting recently learned information
- Trouble completing ordinary tasks
- Disengaging from work, hobbies or socializing
- Difficulty following a conversation
- Using the wrong words for everyday things

If you see these signs in your loved one, make an appointment with their healthcare provider.

2. Open a dialogue about Alzheimer's.

Starting a conversation about Alzheimer's with a loved one is daunting. For seniors, it can trigger fear, anxiety, or grief. Adult children may understandably delay this conversation, which can make things worse. Approach the topic – and your loved one – with sensitivity. You can reassure your loved one that you will provide ongoing support.

3. Learn Techniques for Alzheimer's and dementia care

Providing a calm environment and predictable routine can help your loved one cope with the confusion, agitation, and anxiety.

- Plan regular activities and exercise
- Focus on nutrition
- Stay calm when they are agitated

4. Don't delay important decisions

Take care of financial, legal, and long-term care planning issues as soon as possible. "Try to involve your loved one in decision-making, if they are capable

of providing input, and consider their wishes related to the future care and end-of-life issues,” said Abramson. With appositve attitude, patience – and help when you need it – you can provide much needed care and support for your loved one.⁽²⁾

Bibliography and additional help

(1) <https://www.alzinfo.org>



<https://www.beconnectedaz.org/organizations/area-agency-on-aging-region-one-maricopa-county>

The information contened within this document are courtesy of Fisher Center for Alzheimer's and are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or approval by the Fisher Center of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The Luke Chapter MOAA bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality, or content of the link's external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.

(2) Permission grated to utilize an article published by Viva, A Magazine for PebbleCreek residents, October 2021; Catherine Uretsky, Publisher & Editor.

See also 'assistance for care givers' in section: Caregiver education by diagnosis this website/or hardcopy this document.



ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION – Respite Care *

* Not VA connected

WHAT: There are some free RESPITE CARE hours available!

For further information – link to the Elizabeth Dole Foundation is below: <https://hiddenheroes.org/find-help/respite/>

FREE Help for Military & Veteran Caregivers

As someone who cares for a military or veteran spouse, child, parent, or friend, we know your days are packed with responsibilities. Would having an extra pair of hands help free you up to invest a little more time in yourself? The Elizabeth Dole Foundation has created a new program, Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers, which offers family caregivers of veterans or service members access to free, short-term relief with the help of in-home care professionals.

WHO: The Elizabeth Dole Foundation is the coordinator of this program.

HOW: If you have questions, contact:

<https://www.elizabethdolefoundation.org/contact-us/>
gia.colombraro@verizon.net

OR:

Elizabeth Dole Foundation,
600 New Hampshire Ave, NW,
Washington, DC 20037
202-221-7419 (Abigail Haigh direct line)



Information in this document

<https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | 810 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington DC 20420

Last updated: September 24, 2020

What is Respite Care?

Respite Care is a program that pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregiver.

There are two types of respite:

- 1. Home Respite Care** is a service that pays for a person to come to a Veteran's home or for a Veteran to go to an adult day health care program while their family caregiver takes a break or runs errands.
- 2. Nursing Home Respite Care** is a service that pays for a Veteran to go to a nursing home while the family goes out of town for a few days without worrying about leaving the Veteran alone at home.

VA Crisis Help Line

We're here anytime, day or night – 24/7

If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with our caring, qualified responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

- [Call 988 and select 1](#)
- [Text 838255](#)
- [Start a confidential chat](#)
- [For TTY, call 711 then 988](#)

VA Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound allowance

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors.

If you need help with daily activities, or you're housebound, find out if you qualify.

You can still file a claim and apply for benefits during the coronavirus pandemic

Get the latest information about in-person services, claim exams, extensions, paperwork, decision reviews and appeals, and how best to contact us during this time.

[Go to our coronavirus FAQs](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

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Get the latest information about in-person services, claim exams, extensions, paperwork, decision reviews and appeals, and how best to contact us during this time. **[Go to our](#)**

[coronavirus FAQs](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Am I eligible for VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits as a Veteran or survivor?

VA Aid and Attendance eligibility

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you meet at least one of the requirements listed below.

At least one of these must be true:

- You need another person to help you perform daily activities, like bathing, feeding, and dressing, **or**
- You have to stay in bed—or spend a large portion of the day in bed—because of illness, **or**
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to the loss of mental or physical abilities related to a disability, **or**
- Your eyesight is limited (even with glasses or contact lenses you have only 5/200 or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less)

- **Housebound benefits eligibility**

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you spend most of your time in your home because of a permanent disability (a disability that doesn't go away).

Note: You can't get Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time.

How do I get this benefit?

You can apply for VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits in one of these ways:

Send a completed VA form to your pension management center (PMC)

Fill out VA Form 21-2680 (Examination for Housebound Status or Permanent Need for Regular Aid and Attendance) and mail it to the PMC for your state. You can have your doctor fill out the examination information section.

[Download VA Form 21-2680 \(PDF\)](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

[Find your PMC](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

You **can also include** with your VA form:

- Other evidence, like a doctor's report, that shows you need Aid and Attendance or Housebound care
 - Details about what you normally do during the day and how you get to places
 - Details that help show what kind of illness, injury, or mental or physical disability affects your ability to do things, like take a bath, on your own
- **Nursing Home: If you're in a nursing home, you'll also need to fill out a Request for Nursing Home**

Information in Connection with Claim for Aid and Attendance (VA Form 21-0779).
[Download VA Form 21-0779 \(PDF\)](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

- **Apply in person**
 - You can bring your information to a VA regional office near you.
[Find your nearest VA regional office](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)
 - **How long does it take VA to make a decision?**
It depends. We process claims in the order we receive them, unless a claim requires priority processing.
-

VA DEFINES CAREGIVER:

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Am I eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

You may be eligible if you and the Veteran you're caring for meet all of these requirements.

Eligibility requirements for the family caregiver

You must be at least 18 years old. And at least one of these must be true for you:

- You're a spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member of the Veteran, **or**
- You live full time with the Veteran, or you're willing to live full time with the Veteran if we designate you as a family caregiver

Eligibility requirements for the Veteran

All of these must be true for the Veteran you're caring for:

- The Veteran has a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of **70% or higher, and**
- The Veteran was discharged from the U.S. military or has a date of medical discharge, **and**
- The Veteran needs at least 6 months of continuous, in-person personal care services, **and**
- The Veteran needs to be enrolled in VA health care

Note: Active-duty service members undergoing a medical discharge will need to apply for VA health care before or after submitting their application for caregiver assistance.

[Learn more about active-duty service members and VA health care](#)

What are personal care services?

These are services the eligible Veteran needs from another person.

They include care or assistance to support these parts of the Veteran's life:

- Health and well-being
- Everyday personal needs (like feeding, bathing, and dressing)
- Safety, protection, or instruction in their daily living environment

How many caregivers can the eligible Veteran appoint?

The Veteran can appoint this many caregivers:

- **1 Primary Family Caregiver** (the main caregiver), **and**
- Up to **2 Secondary Family Caregivers** (people who serve as backup support to the primary caregiver when needed)

What benefits can eligible Primary and Secondary caregivers receive?

Eligible Primary and Secondary Family Caregivers can receive these benefits:

- Caregiver education and training
- Mental health counseling
- Travel, lodging, and financial assistance when traveling with the Veteran to receive care

Eligible Primary Family Caregivers may also receive these benefits:

- A monthly stipend (payment)
- Access to health care benefits through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)—if you don't already qualify for care or services under another health care plan
[Learn more about CHAMPVA](#)

How do I apply for this program?

You and the Veteran will need to apply together and participate in an application process to determine if you're eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. You'll both need to sign and date the application, and answer all questions for your role.

Note: If the Veteran is already enrolled in this program and wants to add a new family caregiver, the Veteran and the new caregiver will need to submit a new application. Remember, there can only be 1 Primary and up to 2 Secondary Family Caregivers designated at any one time.

You can apply online, by mail, or in person.

Option 1: Online

You can apply online right now.

[Apply for caregiver assistance](#)

Option 2: By mail

Fill out a joint Application for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (VA Form 10-10CG).

[Get VA Form 10-10CG to download](#)

Mail the form and any supporting documents to this address:

10-10CG Evidence Intake Center
PO Box 5154
Janesville, WI 53547-5154

Option 3: In person

Bring your completed VA Form 10-10CG to the Caregiver Support Team at your nearest VA medical center.

You can find a Caregiver Support Team in one of these ways:

- [Go to our Caregiver Support Program Teams directory](#), or
- Call the Caregiver Support Line at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274) (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Don't send medical records along with your application. If you need help with completing the application or if you'd like to check the status of your application, you can call us at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274) (TTY: 711). We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m. ET.

What documents can I submit if I'm signing this application on behalf of a Veteran?

If you're a representative signing this application on behalf of a Veteran, you must have legal authority to make decisions on behalf of the Veteran. Or you must have authority to fill out and sign applications on behalf of the Veteran.

You can submit one of these types of documents:

- A valid power of attorney, **or**
- A legal guardianship order, **or**
- Another type of legal document that your state considers proof of this authority, **or**

- An Alternate Signer Certification (VA Form 21-0972), **or**
- An Appointment of Veterans Service Organization as Claimant's Representative (VA Form 21-22), **or**
- An Appointment of Individual As Claimant's Representative (VA Form 21-22a)

What happens after I apply?

A member of the Caregiver Support Team where the Veteran receives care or plans to receive care will contact the Veteran and any caregivers to discuss this application and eligibility.

What if the Veteran I'm caring for doesn't meet the eligibility criteria for this program?

Family caregivers of Veterans who aren't eligible for this program may still be able to get support and resources. The VA Caregiver Support Program consists of 2 programs: this Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and another program called the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS).

Here's how you can learn more:

- [Read about the Program of General Caregiver Support Services](#)
- Call the Caregiver Support Line at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274) (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET
- Discuss your options with a Caregiver Support Team at your nearest VA medical center
[Go to our Caregiver Support Program Teams Directory](#)

What if the Veteran isn't enrolled in VA health care yet?

If the Veteran isn't yet enrolled in VA health care, they'll first need to apply for VA health care benefits (VA Form 10-10EZ).

[Learn more about how to apply for VA health care](#)

Note: Active-duty service members undergoing a medical discharge will need to apply for VA health care before or after submitting their application for caregiver assistance.

[Learn more about active-duty service members and VA health care](#)

CAREGIVER TRAINING by the VA

Note: You can read the information here or use the hyperlink to go directly to VA Program of Caregiver Services.

https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+the+va+caregiver+program&sca_esv=553650bb8dd64e30&sca_upv=1&biw=1525&bih=733&ei=nIOqZvCFDpugkPIPz42fkA8&oq=Is+the+VA++caregiver+program%3F&gs_lp=Egxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcjA0IHRoZSBWQSAgY2FyZWdpdmVylHByb2dyYW0_KglIBjlFEAAyGQyBhAAGAcYHjlGEAAyBxgeMgsQABiABBIRAhIKBTIEEAAYHjlIEEAAYHjlGEAAyBRgeMggQABgFGAcYHjlGEAAyCBgeMgYQABgIGB5lwz5Q4QVY4QVwAXgBkAEAmAGaAaABmgGqAQMwLjG4AQHIAQD4AQGYAgKgAqYBwgiKEAAySAMY1gQYR5gDAIlgGAZAGCJIHAzEuMaAH4wc&scient=gws-wiz-serp

Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)



Program of General Caregiver Support Services



Program of General Caregiver Support Services

The Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) is one of two programs within the Caregiver Support Program. PGCSS provides peer support mentoring, skills training, coaching, telephone support, online programs, and referrals to available resources to caregivers of Veterans.

The Veteran must be enrolled in Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and be receiving care from a caregiver in order for the caregiver to participate. **Caregivers who participate in PGCSS are called General Caregivers. General Caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the Veteran.**

Is PGCSS Right for You?

If you are a caregiver of a Veteran enrolled in VA health care who is interested in connecting with other caregivers, receiving additional support from a professional care team, or looking to enhance your skills as a caregiver, PGCSS may be right for you.

Am I a General Caregiver?

A General Caregiver is a person who provides personal care services to a Veteran enrolled in VA health care who: needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living or needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological care or other impairment or injury.

Steps for Enrollment –

Every Veterans Affairs Facility is staffed with a [**CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator**](#). This team can help assist you with determining the resources and services available for you and assist you with enrolling in CSP programs.

There is no formal application required to enroll in PGCSS. To enroll, complete the following steps:

1. Reach out to the facility [**CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator**](#) or request a referral from the Veteran's provider.
2. Complete an intake with the facility [**CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator**](#). The Veteran will need to agree to receive care from you as their caregiver, as you will be listed in their healthcare record.
3. Enroll and begin to utilize the supports and services offered.
 - [**PGCSS Fact Sheet - English \(PDF\)**](#)
 - [**PGCSS FAQs Flyer - English \(PDF\)**](#)
 - [**Hoja de datos de PGCSS - Spanish \(PDF\)**](#)
 - [**Folleto de preguntas frecuentes sobre PGCSS - Spanish \(PDF\)**](#)
 - [**PGCSS factsheet - Tagalog/Filipino \(PDF\)**](#)
 - [**Flyer ng Mga FAQ ng PGCSS - Tagalog/Filipino \(PDF\)**](#)

PGCSS - Services/Support

Skills Training

VA S.A.V.E. Training

VA S.A.V.E. is a skills training that provides information and steps that anyone can take when a Veteran may be at risk for suicide. S.A.V.E. stands for signs, ask, validate, encourage and expedite. Caregivers play an important role in suicide prevention. They may be the first to notice changes in the Veteran or may be the one that a Veteran turns to when having suicidal thoughts. It is important that caregivers have the tools

they need to intervene. S.A.V.E. provides simple steps that anyone can take when talking with Veterans at risk for suicide. [VA SAVE Training \(PDF\)](#) - [VA S.A.V.E. Training for Caregivers Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#)

Building Better Caregivers (BBC)

[Building Better Caregivers \(BBC\)](#) is an online six-week workshop that helps caregivers in two key ways: training in how to provide better care, and helping caregivers learn how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health. After the workshop, you can stay connected to other caregivers through the alumni community. This service is free and secure. Connect with other caregivers today! Read the [BBC Fact Sheet](#) (pdf) to learn more.

Mobile Support

Annie Caregiver Text Program

Annie, the VA's text messaging service, has several text programs for caregivers. Caregivers can receive messages to help them manage stress, take better care of themselves, manage dementia behaviors, and cope with bereavement. Messages may be educational, motivational or an activity to manage stress. You may stop the service at any time. Caregivers need a phone capable of text messaging to enroll. Talk to your [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) to receive Annie messages.

One on One Coaching

Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA

You can participate in REACH VA via individual sessions. Connect with a coach who will provide you with a workbook and help you with a variety of issues caregivers face. They will coach you in stress management, problem solving, self-care and healthy behaviors, as well as Veteran safety, behaviors, problems or concerns linked to a diagnosis. Your assigned coach will call you for a total of four sessions, over a two to three-month period. If you participate in support groups, you and other caregivers will meet together with a coach. The same REACH sessions and training will occur during six group sessions over three to six months. Learn more about the [REACH VA Program](#).

Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaching

[Whole Health](#) is VA's cutting-edge approach to care and supports your health and well-being. It centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. A Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coach is your personal guide who works with you to

develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals. The Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coach uses the [Circle of Health](#) visual tool to help explore connections between important aspects of your life and a self-assessment tool known as the Personal Health inventory to help you create your Personal Health Plan. Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaches are trained to draw on your strengths and values to optimize your efforts towards achieving your aspirations.

- [Caregiver Health and Wellbeing Coaching Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Hoja de datos de orientación sobre salud y bienestar para cuidadores \(PDF\)](#)
- [Fact Sheet ng Pagtuturo sa Kalusugan at Kagalingan ng Caregiver \(PDF\)](#)

*Available at select sites. Partner with your local [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) to determine availability.

Group Support and Coaching

Caregiver Self-Care/Resilience Courses

Caregiver Self-Care courses are in-person or virtual group trainings provided to caregivers with a focus on supporting and meeting their needs. The classes are led by trained facilitators. In these fun and interactive sessions, you might learn about managing stress or coping with your emotions, you may learn a new relaxation technique such as yoga, meditation, or qigong, you may listen to music or practice Zen doodling. Contact your [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) to find out which classes are available for your facility.

Caregivers FIRST

Caregivers FIRST (Caregivers Finding Important Resources, Support, and Training), is an evidence-based skills training program for caregivers of Veterans of all eras and diagnoses. Caregivers FIRST is a highly adaptable grab-and-go curriculum package that includes a series of four proactive group classes to help caregivers build self-care and psychological coping, health system navigation, and hands-on clinical skills. Classes held virtually.

- [Caregivers FIRST Referral Guide \(PDF\)](#)

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behaviors, as well as Veteran safety, behaviors, problems or concerns linked to a diagnosis. Your assigned coach will call you for a total of four sessions, over a two to three-month period. If you participate in support groups, you and a coach and other caregivers will meet together. The same REACH sessions and training will occur during six group sessions over three to six months. Learn more about the [REACH VA Program](#).

[Peer Support Mentoring Program](#)

The [Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring \(PSM\)](#) program was developed to strengthen relationships between caregivers, to provide an opportunity for networking and to empower caregivers to help one another. PSM provides an opportunity for caregivers to receive guidance and to share their experience, wisdom, skills and passion with other caregivers.

In addition to providing support, PSM also helps caregivers to establish relationships with each other and create a comfort zone for support. Learn more about PSM by reading the fact sheet below.

- [Peer Support Mentoring Caregiver Fact Sheet\(PDF\)](#)
- [Hoja de datos del cuidador de tutoría de apoyo de pares - Spanish Version\(PDF\)](#)

If you would like to participate, please contact your [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#).

Additional/Other Support

VA Caregiver Connect

With the United States Department of Veterans Affairs' VA Video Connect app, Veterans can quickly and easily meet with their VA care team over a secure and private video connection using your smartphone, tablet, or computer. And with the Caregiver Connect scheduling option, Veterans can invite up to five guests, such as their caregiver or family member, to attend their VA video telehealth visits. Please visit [VA Telehealth Services | Telehealth VA](#) to learn more.

Respite Care

Respite care is a program that pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregivers.

Why is Respite Care important?

Self-care is important for caregivers. Respite care can be a resource to help prevent

burn-out and allow you time to take care of your own needs with the comfort of knowing your Veteran is in a safe and caring environment.

VA Respite Care

Respite care through VA is offered by the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC). Visit GEC's webpage for more information about respite care for caregivers: https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Respite_Care.asp.

Connection and referrals to available VA and community resources

Referrals

The [CSP Teams/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) is knowledgeable about the various resources available to caregivers both at VA and in the community. The [CSP Teams/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) can connect you with resources based on your individual needs.

CSP Resource Fairs

Caregiver and Family Resource Fairs, provided through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP), offer caregivers the opportunity to find a wealth of support from a variety of agencies, organizations and non-profits. Caregivers also find the fairs helpful in broadening their networks. Visit CSP's Events page to find a resource fair near you: [VA Caregiver Support Program \(CSP\) - Events - VA Caregiver Support Program](#)

Need Help?



Your local [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinators](#) is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and providing you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay smart, strong and organized as you care for the Veteran you love.

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) at your local VA facilities.



*Be sure to check back for updates or [subscribe](#) to receive email updates and information about VA Caregiver Support Program services.



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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NW Washington DC 20420**

Last updated November 1, 2021

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp

with some formatting added

Health Care for Caregivers

Note: The Veteran must be enrolled in Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and be receiving care from a caregiver in order for the caregiver to participate.

General Caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the Veteran.

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC](#)

To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder anytime, day or night:

- Call **[800-273-8255](tel:800-273-8255)**, then press **1**.

[Start a confidential chat.](#)

- Text **[838255](tel:838255)**.

- If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 800-799-4889.

If you're concerned about a Veteran who's homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

Call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at [877-424-3838](tel:877-424-3838) for help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You or the Veteran can talk privately with a trained VA counselor for free.

VA values your commitment as a partner in our pledge to care for those who have "borne the battle," and we have several support and service options designed with you, the caregiver, in mind. Many programs are available both in and out of your home to help you care for the Veteran you love and for yourself.

VA Definition of Caregiver: A General Caregiver is a person who provides personal care services to a Veteran enrolled in VA health care who: needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living or needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological care or other impairment or injury.

Reader, you can also go to the following website by placing this in your browser

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Care_Caregivers.asp

(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

OR

[VA Caregiver Support Program Table of Contents](#)

(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link and it will take you to the program(s))

Caregiver Resources for:

1. [CHAMPVA Caregiver Resources](#)
2. [Dementia Caregivers](#)
3. [Fisher Houses](#)
4. [HIV Caregivers](#)
5. [Homemaker & Home Health Aides](#)
6. [Hospice and Palliative Care](#)
7. [Long Term Care](#)
8. [Multiple Sclerosis Caregivers](#)
9. [Polytrauma/Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) Caregiver Support](#)
10. [Respite Care](#)

11. Stroke Caregivers

Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) - VA Caregiver Support Program (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

There are 2 Sub-Programs that are described are described below. Each of the programs are highlighted in yellow.

(1) **Program 1.**

General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) is one of two programs within the Caregiver Support Program.



Is PGCSS Right for You?

If you are a caregiver of a Veteran enrolled in VA health care and who is interested in connecting with other caregivers,

And you are:

- **receiving additional support** from a professional care team, or
- **looking to enhance your skills as a caregiver,**

Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) may be right for you.

Caregivers who participate in PGCSS are called "General Caregivers."

Program One (PGCSS) provides

- peer support mentoring,
- skills training,
- coaching,
- telephone support,
- online programs, and
- referrals to available resources to caregivers of Veterans.

(2) Program 2

[Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers \(PCAFC\)](#)

=

[VA Caregiver Support Program](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

The VA recognizes the important **role of family caregivers** in supporting the health and wellness of Veterans. Read the following questions to determine if **you may be eligible and how to apply** for the **Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC)**.

Question 1:

Am I eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

Do you and the Veteran you're caring for meet all of the requirements listed below.

- Eligibility requirements for the family caregiver

You must be at least 18 years old and at least one of these must be true for you.

You must be either:

- A spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member of the Veteran, **or**
- Someone who lives full-time with the Veteran, or is willing to do so if designated as a family caregiver

- How much is the monthly stipend for a VA caregiver?

- For example: If an eligible veteran requires 10 hours of personal care services weekly (Tier 1) and the caregiver's hourly wage (including COLA) is \$10 per hour, then the monthly stipend would be: $(10 \text{ hours} \times \$10) \times 4.35 = \mathbf{\$435}$. Sep 21, 2021
- [VA In-Home and Support Services - VA Caregiver Support Program](#)
(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)
- Eligibility requirements for the Veteran

All of these must be true for the Veteran you're caring for. i. The Veteran must have a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of **70% or higher**.

ii. The Veteran's service-connected disabilities must have been caused or made worse by their active-duty service during one of these periods of time:

- On or after September 11, 2001, **or**
- On or before May 7, 1975

iii. **And** the Veteran must:

- Have been discharged from the U.S. military or have a date of medical discharge,
- and**
- Need at least 6 months of continuous, in-person personal care services

Question 2:

What are personal care services?

These are services the eligible Veteran needs from another person. **They include care or assistance to support the Veteran's:**

- Health and well-being
- Everyday personal needs (like feeding, bathing, and dressing)
- Safety, protection, or instruction in their daily living environment

Question 3:

How many caregivers can the eligible Veteran appoint?

- **The Veteran can appoint:**

- **1 Primary Family Caregiver** (the main caregiver), and
- Up to 2 **Secondary Family Caregivers** (people who serve as backup support to the primary caregiver when needed)

Eligible Primary and Secondary Family Caregivers can

- **receive:**

- Caregiver education and training
- Mental health counseling

- Travel, lodging, and financial assistance when traveling with the Veteran to receive care

- **Eligible Primary Family Caregivers may also receive:**

- **A monthly stipend** (payment)

- **Access to health care benefits** through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)—if you don't already qualify for care or services under another health care plan

[Learn more about CHAMPVA](#) (Ctrl and Click

mouse) ○ At least **30 days per year of respite care** for the Veteran

How do I apply for this program?

You and the Veteran will need to **apply together and participate in an application process** to determine if you're eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. You'll **both need to sign and date the application and answer all questions for your role.**

You can apply online right now:

[APPLY FOR CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Note: Each time the Veteran *wants to add a new family caregiver*, the Veteran and

the new caregiver will need to submit a new application. Remember, there can only be 1 Primary and up to 2 Secondary Family Caregivers designated at any one time.

You can also apply:



By mail

Fill out a joint Application for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (**VA Form 10-10CG**).

[Download VA Form 10-10CG \(PDF\)](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Mail the form and any supporting documents to:

Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers
Health Eligibility Center
2957 Clairmont Road NE, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30329-1647



In person

Bring your completed **VA Form 10-10CG** to your local VA medical center's Caregiver Support Coordinator.

To find the name of your local coordinator, you can:

- [Go to the VA Caregiver Support Coordinator directory](#), (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link) **or**
- Contact the Caregiver Support Line at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Please don't send medical records along with your application. We'll follow up after we receive your application.

If you need help with completing the application or if you would like to check the status of your application, call us at [855-488-8440](tel:855-488-8440), **option 3**.

We're available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.



What if the Veteran I'm caring for doesn't meet the eligibility criteria for this program?

Family caregivers of **Veterans who aren't eligible for this program may still be able to get support and resources...**

Because the VA Caregiver Support Program
consists of 2 programs:

1. **The program that you just read about, AND this program below**

"What to do if they are not yet enrolled in a VA program"



Read about the Program of General Caregiver Support Services ([Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link](#))

OR



Call the Caregiver Support Line at [855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274), Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Discuss your options with your local Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC)

[Go to the VA Caregiver Support Coordinator directory](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)



What if the Veteran isn't enrolled in VA health care yet?

If the Veteran **isn't yet enrolled in VA health care, or is on active duty and undergoing a medical discharge**, they'll first need to apply for VA health care benefits on the following form:

<https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-10ez>

(Highlight and right click – click on search link on menu to follow link)

AND

Find out how the Veteran can apply for VA health care
(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)



Program Two - Call **VA's Caregiver Support** Line (CSL) at 1-855-260-3274 to learn more about the support that is available to you, and for assistance connecting with the

...

Program of Comprehensive

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line (CSL) at 1-855-260-3274 to ...

Caregivers Support Line (CSL)

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 to learn ...

Program of General Caregiver

The Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) is ...

Caregiver Support Coordinator

Caregiver Support Program (CSP) Teams/Caregivers Support ...

VA In-Home and Support ...

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 to learn ...

PCAFC decisions

Program Assistance Family Care Givers (PCAFC)

PCAFC appeals, PCAFC reviews, Beaudette ruling, ...

(**RED** links - Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

[More results from VA.gov »](#)

For each of the bolded '**BLUE**' titles: (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/tips_by_diagnosis/index.asp

Highlight, Ctrl and click mouse to follow link

CAREGIVER Tips by Diagnosis

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS)
- Dementia
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- Parkinson's Disease
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Emergency Preparedness
- Community Resources

GENERAL INFORMATION

Steps for Enrollment –

Every Veterans Affairs medical center (VAMC) is staffed with a Caregiver Support Program (CSP) team. This team can help assist you with determining the resources and services available for you and assist you with enrolling in CSP programs.

There is no formal application required to enroll in PGCSS. To enroll, complete the following steps:

1. **Reach out** to the facility CSP team or request a referral from the Veteran's provider (see page: 16 - [Caregiver Support Coordinator](#))
2. **Complete an intake** with the facility CSP Team. The Veteran will need to agree to receive care from you as their caregiver, as you will be listed in their healthcare record.
3. **Enroll and begin** to utilize the supports and services offered.

→For each of the 3 following items ([Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link](#))

- [PGCSS FAQs Flyer - English \(PDF\)](#)
- [Folleto de preguntas frecuentes sobre PGCSS - Spanish \(PDF\)](#)
- [Flyer ng Mga FAQ ng PGCSS - Tagalog/Filipino \(PDF\)](#)

Services Provided Through PGCSS



Skills Training

VA S.A.V.E. Training

VA S.A.V.E. is a skills training that provides information and steps that anyone can take when a Veteran may be at risk for suicide. S.A.V.E. stands for signs, ask, validate, encourage and expedite. Caregivers play an important role in suicide prevention. They may be the first to notice changes in the Veteran or may be the one that a Veteran turns to when having suicidal thoughts. It is important that caregivers have the tools they need to intervene. S.A.V.E. provides simple steps that anyone can take when talking with Veterans at risk for suicide.

Building Better Caregivers (BBC)

Building Better Caregivers (BBC) is an online six-week workshop that helps caregivers in two key ways: training in how to provide better care, and helping caregivers learn how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health. After the workshop, you can stay connected to other caregivers through the alumni community. This service is free and secure. Connect with other caregivers today! To learn more **Read** the [BBC Fact Sheet\(pdf\)](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Mobile Support

Annie Caregiver Text Program (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Annie, the VA's text messaging service, has several text programs for caregivers.

Caregivers can receive messages to help them manage stress, take better care of themselves, manage dementia behaviors, and cope with bereavement. Messages may be educational, motivational or an activity to manage stress. You may stop the service at any time. Caregivers need a phone capable of text messaging to enroll. Talk to your Caregiver Support Coordinator to receive Annie messages.

One on One Coaching

Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA

You can participate in **REACH VA** via individual sessions. Connect with a coach who will provide you with a workbook and help you with a variety of issues caregivers face. They will coach you in stress management, problem solving, selfcare and healthy behaviors, as well as Veteran safety, behaviors, problems

or concerns linked to a diagnosis. Your assigned coach will call you for a total of four sessions, over a two to three-month period. If you participate in support groups, you and other caregivers will meet together with a coach. The same REACH sessions and training will occur during six group sessions over three to six months. Learn more about the [REACH VA Program](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Caregiver Health & Wellbeing Coaching

Whole Health is VA's cutting-edge approach to care and supports your health and well-being. It centers around what matters to you, not what is the matter with you. A Whole Health Coach is your personal guide who works with you to develop a personalized health plan based on your values, needs, and goals. The Whole Health Coach uses the Circle of Health visual tool to help explore connections between important aspects of your life and a self-assessment tool known as the Personal Health inventory to help you create your Personal Health Plan. Whole Health Coaches are trained to draw on your strengths and values to optimize your efforts towards achieving your aspirations.

*Available at select sites. Partner with your local CSP team to determine availability.

Group Support and Coaching

Caregiver Self-Care/Resilience Courses

Caregiver Self-Care courses are in-person or virtual group trainings provided to caregivers with a focus on supporting and meeting their needs. The classes are led by trained facilitators. In these fun and interactive sessions, you might learn about managing stress or coping with your emotions, you may learn a new relaxation technique such as yoga, meditation, or qigong, you may listen to music or practice Zen doodling. Contact your Caregiver Support Coordinator to find out which classes are available for your facility.

Caregivers FIRST

Caregivers FIRST (Caregivers Finding Important Resources, Support, and Training), is an evidence-based skills training program for caregivers of Veterans of all eras and diagnoses. Caregivers FIRST is a highly adaptable grab-and-go curriculum package that includes a series of four proactive group classes to help

caregivers build self-care and psychological coping, health system navigation, and hands-on clinical skills.

Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA

You can participate in REACH VA via group sessions. Connect with a coach who will provide you with a workbook and help you with a variety of issues caregivers face. They will coach you in stress management, problem solving, self-care and healthy behaviors, as well as Veteran safety, behaviors, problems or concerns linked to a diagnosis. Your assigned coach will call you for a total of four sessions, over a two to three-month period. If you participate in support groups, you and a coach and other caregivers will meet together. The same REACH sessions and training will occur during six group sessions over three to six months. Learn more about the [REACH VA Program](#). (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Peer Support Mentoring Program

The Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring (PSM) program was developed to strengthen relationships between caregivers, to provide an opportunity for networking and to empower caregivers to help one another. PSM provides an opportunity for caregivers to receive guidance and to share their experience, wisdom, skills and passion with other caregivers.

In addition to providing support, PSM also helps caregivers to establish relationships with each other and create a comfort zone for support. Learn more about PSM by reading the fact sheet below.

- [Peer Support Mentoring Caregiver Fact Sheet](#)(PDF)
- [Hoja de datos del cuidador de tutoría de apoyo de pares - Spanish Version](#)(PDF)

If you would like to participate, please contact your [Caregiver Support Program](#)

[Team](#). (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

ADDITIONAL/OTHER SUPPORT

Respite Care

Respite care is a program that pays for care for a short time when family caregivers need a break, need to run errands, or need to go out of town for a

few days. Respite Care can be helpful to Veterans of all ages, and their caregivers.

Why is Respite Care important?

Self-care is important for caregivers. Respite care can be a resource to help prevent burn-out and allow you time to take care of your own needs with the comfort of knowing your Veteran is in a safe and caring environment.

VA Respite Care

Respite care through VA is offered by the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC). Visit GEC's webpage for more information about respite care for caregivers: https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Respite_Care.asp.

(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Connection and referrals to available VA and community resources

Referrals

The CSP team is knowledgeable about the various resources available to caregivers both at VA and in the community. The CSP team can connect you with resources based on your individual needs.

CSP Resource Fairs

Caregiver and Family Resource Fairs, provided through the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Caregiver Support Program (CSP), offer caregivers the opportunity to find a wealth of support from a variety of agencies, organizations and non-profits. Caregivers also find the fairs helpful in broadening their networks. Visit CSP's Events page to find a resource fair near you: [VA Caregiver Support Program](#)

[\(CSP\) - Events - VA Caregiver Support Program](#) (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link) **Need Help?**



Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible, and providing you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay smart, strong and organized as you care for the Veteran you love.

Call VA's Caregiver Support Line at **1-855-260-3274** to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the [Caregiver](#)

[Support Coordinator](#) at your local VA Medical Center. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.

NEED HELP?

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/Connect_Others.asp (Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

https://www.caregiver.va.gov/docs/VA-Caregiver_Fact-Sheet_5_18_2020.pdf#
(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator is a licensed professional who can support you by matching you with services for which you are eligible and providing you with valuable information about resources that can help you stay smart, strong and organized as you care for the Veteran you love.

Call **VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274** to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center.

Caregiver Support Program (CSP) - [Menu of Resources](#)

(Ctrl and Click mouse to follow link)

Call **VA's Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274** to learn more about the support that is available to you and for assistance connecting with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at your local VA Medical Center.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs | 810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20420**

Last updated November 1, 2021

Info consist with VA as updated 07-12-24 Luke Chapter MOAA



Picture by FreePik

The Stress of Caregiving

IDENTIFY YOUR SYMPTOMS

- No energy reserves
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changing/irregular sleep patterns
- Easily irritated, angered, over-reacting
- Poor concentration
- Short-term memory problems
- Repeating actions or chores
- Being neglectful
- Changing eating habits
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed
- Frequent physical problems
- Increased alcohol/drug abuse
- Increased cigarette smoking

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS

- Accept your limits
- Create a caregiver support group
- Get organized
- Schedule time for yourself
- Make your own health your first priority
- Eat a balanced diet
- Get plenty of rest
- Exercise regularly
- Relax and do something fun
- Take a break
- See your doctor about health issues
- Use community resources
- Ask for and accept help
- Maintain your social ties

WARNING SIGNS

Health Problems	Sleeplessness	Anxiety	Exhaustion
Irritability	Social Withdraw	Denial	
Lack of concentration	Anger	Depression	

Information presented was shared with Luke Chapter MOAA 10-02-2023 seminar on Caregivers by Cypress Homecare Solutions, Bob Roth- President by way of Renee Rizzo Care Services Coordinator.

Mr. Roth was a member of AZ Governor's Council on Aging.

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