

# Program of General Caregiver Support Services Fact Sheet

June 2020

The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) empowers caregivers with a wide range of resources through the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS). All caregivers who provide personal care services to Veterans enrolled in Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare have access to PGCSS.

## Program features

Caregivers who enroll in PGCSS have access to education and training, including courses at local VA medical centers (VAMCs). In addition, caregivers can participate in support services and take advantage of VA home and community based care.

## Education and training

Education and training are available to caregivers in a variety of formats to help them care for themselves and the Veteran, including:

- **Workshops and courses**
  - **Building Better Caregivers (BBC)** provides a free, six-week online workshop that helps caregivers provide better care to the Veteran and learn how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health. Visit [BBC's webpage](#) to learn more.
  - **Self-care** worksheets and daily attention diaries are available on CSP's [Self-Care Activities webpage](#). Caregivers also have access to self-care courses at local VAMCs. To learn more about VAMC self-care courses, contact your local CSC.
- **Videos**
  - **Office of Rural Health Dementia Series** offers a two-series education video for caregivers of Veterans diagnosed with dementia. Visit CSP [Tips and Tools webpage](#) to learn more.
  - **Financial management** videos assist caregivers with budgeting and planning. Videos can be found on CSP [Caring for Your Finances webpage](#).
- **Self-guided material** is available on CSP [Tips and Tools webpage](#) including:
  - Managing medicines
  - Talking with your provider
  - Caring for oneself
  - Caring for your finances
  - Plan ahead for disasters
  - Emergency preparedness

## Steps for enrollment

No formal application is required to enroll in PGCSS.

- Contact the VA Caregiver Support Line (CSL) for a referral or your local Caregiver Support Coordinator (CSC) directly, as listed in the *Information and resources* section.
- Complete a brief intake process.
- If eligible, enroll in services that meet your needs.

- **Group educational calls** are offered monthly by the CSL. During the call, caregivers can discuss self-care tips and ask questions on a variety of topics. Past presentations are available on the [CSL webpage](#).

## Support services

Caregivers can receive wrap-around support from both the VA and the community through the support services listed below. Learn more by visiting the [PGCSS webpage](#), contacting your local CSC, or calling the CSL.

- **Peer Support Mentoring** provides an opportunity for caregivers to receive guidance and share their experiences. Mentors and mentees communicate regularly for at least six months through email, telephone, face-to-face meetings, and letters.
- **Compassionate Connections** offers one-time sessions with experienced mentors for caregivers who are not ready or able to commit to a long-term mentoring relationship.
- **Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers Health (REACH) VA** provides education, a focus on safety for the patient, and support for the caregiver through individualized sessions over the course of two to three months. Sessions may be held face-to-face, over the telephone, or over telehealth video conferencing.

## Home and Community Based Care

Below are home and community-based services available through VA to support eligible Veterans and their caregivers. Caregivers who are interested in learning about these services should contact their local CSC for more information. Caregivers can also learn more about the following options on the [VA In-Home and Services](#) webpage:

- Respite care
- Home telehealth
- Home-based primary care
- Homemaker and home health aides
- Adult day health care centers
- Remote monitoring care
- Skilled home care
- Home hospice care

## Information and resources



**CSCs** are available at each VAMC to help caregivers find the right support to meet their needs and to enroll in PGCSS. Caregivers can find their local CSC by using this [locator tool](#).



**VA's CSL** serves as a primary resource and referral center to assist caregivers and Veterans seeking caregiver information. The CSL can also assist with PGCSS enrollment. Caregivers can contact the CSL at **1-855-260-3274** (Toll Free Monday–Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST).



**Online assistance** is available on [CSP website](#). Caregivers can find numerous resources, including tips and tools, self-care guidance, educational publications, frequently asked questions, fact sheets, and more. Many online resources are open to the general public and do not require PGCSS enrollment for access.



**VA's Annie Caregiver Text Program** is a text-messaging based service that promotes self-care for managing day-to-day stress. Contact your CSC if you would like to receive messages from Annie.