

**Published on *VirginiaNavigator* (<https://virginiannavigator.org>)**

## **Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)**

### **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
    - [PGCSS FAQs Flyer](#) English
    - [Hoja de datos de PGCSS](#) Spanish
    - [Folleto de preguntas frecuentes sobre PGCSS](#) Spanish
    - [PGCSS factsheet](#) Tagalog/Filipino
    - [Flyer ng Mga FAQ ng PGCSS](#) Tagalog/Filipino
- 

## Explore PGCSS - Services/Support

[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 S.A.V.E.](#)

### [Training for Caregivers Fact Sheet](#)

[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!

**Annie Caregiver Text Program**, 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. Caregivers need a phone capable of text messaging to enroll. Talk to your [CSP Team/Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) to receive Annie messages.

**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](#)

**Caregiver Self-Care/Resilience 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 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](#)

[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.

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](#)
- [Hoja de datos del cuidador de tutoría de apoyo de pares - Spanish Version](#)

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. 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.

## **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, and 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 agencies, organizations and non-profits. . 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.