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## **Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program**

### **Peer Support Mentoring Program**

Being the caregiver of a Veteran is full of challenges. VA has developed a Peer Support Mentoring Program to link you to a peer — someone who has experienced similar challenges and situations — to provide you with additional support and guidance along your journey

The Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program is available for general and family caregivers of all Veterans. The program was developed to strengthen relationships between caregivers, to provide an opportunity for networking and to empower caregivers to help one another. Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program also helps caregivers to establish relationships with each other and create a comfort zone for support.

Mentoring Can Provide:

- Personalized guidance, based on experience and knowledge
- Friendship
- A good listener when you need it

### **Why Become a Peer Mentor?**

Mentoring creates a trusting and helpful relationship between two people. Peer Mentors provide personal support to their Mentees, assist with the navigation of daily stressors and serve as role models for individuals who need help.

### **Benefits of Serving as a Peer Mentor**

- Sharing tips about caregiving that you have learned through your own experience
- sharing your experience and knowledge of resources such as VA benefits, the VA healthcare team and community agencies that can provide needed assistance

- Providing an outlet for socializing and networking
- Helping caregivers build life skills to deal with adversity in the future

*“Finding the Peer Mentor Program really helped me. Having a mentor meant that I had someone to talk to, who understood the struggles of caring for a Vet. I wanted to be able to share that help with others, so I took the training and became a mentor myself. You aren’t in this alone, and we mentors are here for you.” - Jamie, Peer Support Mentor and Caregiver for 9 years*

## **Why Work with a Peer Mentor?**

Because there are many challenges to being a caregiver, it can be helpful for you to talk with someone who has “been there” and understands the pressures that come with being a caregiver.

## **Benefits of Having a Peer Mentor**

- Creating an outlet for socializing and networking
- Learning from the experience and support of those who understand the challenges caregivers face
- Receiving support from someone who has “been there”

## **Eligibility Criteria**

- Caregivers of Veterans of all eras are eligible to participate in the VA Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program, both as Mentors and as Mentees.
- Mentors will be required to participate in training before being assigned to a Mentee.
- Background and fingerprint checks are required for Mentors through the local VA medical center Voluntary Services Department.

## **How Can I Be Connected to the Peer Support Mentoring Program?**

Your local Caregiver Support Coordinator can assist you with a referral. Caregiver Support Coordinators serve to assist Veterans and caregivers access VA services and benefits as well as local community resources. To identify your local Caregiver Support Coordinator, contact your local VA medical center or use the locator link on the [Caregiver Website](#)

## **Support**

Listen to a caregiver share their journey, be inspired and reassured that you are not alone!

### **Caregiver Support Line - Monthly Presentations**

Sign up for monthly telephone-based group sessions. These presentations provide self-care tips on a range of topics and allow time for comments and questions.

Access audio recordings, and transcripts of [Caregiver Support Line \(CSL\) Monthly Presentations](#)

### **Spiritual Care & Self-Care for the Caregiver during COVID**

Being a caregiver means that the caregiver is continually pouring out devoted attention to another person who is dependent on the caregiver. An empty vessel cannot pour out into another vessel. If a caregiver does not first provide for his or her own needs, the caregiver has nothing to give. When a caregiver ensures that he or she is receiving the spiritual care and self-care which is needed by the caregiver, the caregiver offers a gift to the one for whom the caregiver provides care.

### **Need Help?**

#### **[Caregiver Support Coordinator](#)**

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. Find your local [Caregiver Support Coordinator](#)

#### **[Caregiver Support Line](#)**

With VA's Caregiver Support Line – 1-855-260-3274 – assistance is just a quick phone call away. If you're just getting started with VA, calling the [Caregiver Support Line](#) is a great first step to take to learn more about the support that's available to you.

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

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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

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