

# Resource of the Month

## Caregiver Referral Guide

### Caregivers FIRST



Friends and families who help care for Veterans can learn to navigate the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system, discover new strategies for caregiving, and connect with other caregivers all through **Caregivers FIRST**. Caregivers FIRST --Caregivers Finding Important Resources, Support, and Training -- is offered nationwide by Caregiver Support Program teams. The program is available to caregivers enrolled in VA's Program of General Support Services or Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

#### How Caregivers FIRST works

Caregivers FIRST is a four-session group training program. Depending on location, CSP teams at local VA facilities offer in-person or virtual group sessions. Every participant enrolled in Caregivers FIRST receives a workbook and supplemental materials that guide topics of interest, including coping with anger and other emotions, substance abuse, sleep challenges, and more. In addition, each session within the series has an individual focus. For example, the four-week sessions may follow the outline below:

#### • **Session 1:** Introduction and Caregiving Discussion

- Frustrations and rewards of caregiving.
- Helping your Veteran remain independent.

#### • **Session 2:** Hands-on and Decision-Making Strategies

- Safety.
- Veteran preferences.
- Communication with providers.

#### • **Session 3:** Coping Skills and Strategies

- Stress management.
- Recognizing depression, burnout.

#### • **Session 4:** Support Seeking Skills and Navigation Strategies

- Navigating VA services, the Caregiver Support Program, and non-VA resources.
- Non-VA resources.
- Preparing for the future and legal issues.

#### Advantages of Caregivers FIRST

- Flexible training with in-person and virtual options.
- Increased satisfaction with VA care.

#### How to learn more and sign-up for Caregivers FIRST:

Check out the [Caregivers FIRST video](#) to learn more. You can also learn more or sign-up for Caregivers FIRST by contacting your local CSP team.

To find your local CSP team, visit

[www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New\\_CSC\\_Page.asp](http://www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp)

#### BENEFITS OF CAREGIVERS FIRST



Connections with other caregivers



Gain hands-on skills training and shared decision-making strategies.



Learn new psychological and coping skills.