

How to Help Dementia Caregivers During Social Distancing

Many caregivers of Veterans living with cognitive impairment are struggling during social distancing. It has worsened social isolation that often occurs in providing care. It is also much harder to find usual support from family, friends and community resources. Some of the following may be of use:

- Resources for social connection and respite, such as Adult Day Health Centers, Caregiver Support Groups, Social Activity Groups, Senior/Community Centers are closed for in-person attendance, indefinitely. Some are offering virtual connection opportunities on Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Meetings etc. Check websites for current availability. Some options include Goizueta Alzheimer's Disease Research Center <http://alzheimers.emory.edu/> and Alzheimer's Association [https://alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-tips-for-dementia-care](https://alz.org/help-support/caregiving/coronavirus-(covid-19)-tips-for-dementia-care). Your local [Caregiver Support Coordinator](#) (CSC) can link you to important resources and services that are available to you, as a caregiver, and to the Veteran. The Caregiver Support Line (CSL), **1-855-260-3274**.
- Some in-home personal care assistance services and Skilled Home Caregivers are not available or inconsistently available, due to agency staff illness and shortages, especially in rural areas. VA Homemaker Home Health Aid Services continue to be on electronic wait list status with no timeline for availability, except for those eligible for Hospice. Please continue to refer.
- Some Skilled Nursing Facilities are limiting admissions and visitors, selectively admitting and requiring COVID-19 negative tests before admissions. Hospice is still available and visitors at end of life are allowed in many facilities. Contact Social Workers for updated availability.
- Social Work Services at the VA are available for video visits, and by phone from offices and remotely. Please continue to refer, and to check with the social workers on your teams.
- Crisis Services and Suicide Prevention programs are accessible by phone.
(National hotline **(800) 273-8255, Press 1 for Veterans**)
- Mental Health services in VA and community are available by video and phone. Continue to refer.
- Community resources are accessible by phone, online and include COVID-19 updates.
(dial **211** or visit www.211.org) to search for your service area
- Some Adult Protection Services are limiting going into homes now but will contact Veterans by phone. Continue to refer (<http://www.napsa-now.org/get-help/help-in-your-area/>)
- Police in the community may limit some of their usual protocols, including response to agitation and disruptive behavior, due to staffing adjustments and availability. Safety planning for caregivers is encouraged.

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