



Caregiver Resources

Respite Care

Staff Tip Sheet

Respite is a period of rest or a break from caregiving. Whether it's for a few hours or a few days, respite can help caregivers take time for themselves. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) encourages every caregiver to incorporate respite into their lives.

Types of Respite

There are three types of respite: self-guided, informal and formal.

Self-guided respite includes:

Self-guided respite is the practice of building a self-focused activity into your normal day. An example of this could be waking up early or staying up later to engage in an activity that nurtures your spiritual, emotional or physical health. It could be as simple as taking a few moments to meditate or pray, take a walk, journal, or read a book.

Informal respite includes:

Informal respite is help from friends or loved ones. It can include direct assistance with caring for your Veteran or it could be assistance with other daily tasks. For example:

- Your Veteran's longtime friend might visit once or twice a week to talk or play games with them.
- An adult family member might provide care for your Veteran while you attend your own medical appointment.
- A neighbor might help you with grocery shopping, folding laundry, or mowing the lawn.

Formal respite care:

Formal respite care is short-term paid assistance from a professional. Formal respite care can be used to take a break, run errands, or take a vacation.

How Formal Respite Care Works: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers caregivers three formal respite options through the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care (GEC).

- In-Home Respite: a Home Health agency employee comes to a Veteran's home to provide care.

- Adult Day Health Respite: a Veteran attends an adult day health care program within their community.
- Nursing Home Respite: a Veteran goes to a VA Community Living Center or a community nursing home.

Benefits of Respite

- Helps to prevent burn-out by providing time for self-care.
- Promotes taking a break to rest and recharge.
- Assists in providing time for you to see your own doctors and to take care of your own healthcare needs.
- Reassurance that your Veteran's care needs are taken care of while you need to be away.
- An opportunity for your Veteran to socialize with others.

Additional Respite Resources and Information:

Watch these informative videos to learn more about respite and its benefits:

<https://youtu.be/iZcmDRcxu6o>

[Respite for Military & Veteran Caregivers \(psycharmor.org\)](https://www.psycharmor.org)

Explore your respite goals and establish a personalized respite plan using these tools:

[Caregiver Respite - Toolkit](#)

[Caregiver Respite - Veterans Toolkit](#)

Complete a caregiver self-assessment to explore your supportive care needs:

va.gov/GERIATRICS/docs/Caregiver_Self_Assessment.pdf

Visit GEC's website for more information on VA's formal respite care options:

https://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/pages/Respite_Care.asp

Respite Care in any of its forms can be helpful for both caregivers and the Veterans they care for. The Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is here to support you on your respite journey. To obtain contact information for your local CSP Team please use our [locator tool](#).

You can also call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274 for additional help connecting to respite and other available resources.

