

# Mental Health

## Title Sponsors

---



**U.S. Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

## Partner Sponsor

---





# 2023 Statewide Symposium in Support of Service Members, Veterans & Their Families

APRIL 19-20, 2023 | PHOENIX, ARIZONA

 arizona coalition  
for military families



beconnected  
service members • veterans • families • communities

---

# Mental Health

April 19, 2023

---



# The Landscape

---

## Session 1

---



# Facilitators



**Nicki Bartram**  
Program Administrator  
Arizona Coalition for Military  
Families

## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

**Erica Leffler**  
Community Mental Health Liaison  
Phoenix VA Healthcare System

# Before we begin . . .

---

**The discussion of mental health can include some intense material.**

- Please watch for triggers and practice self care.
- If you need to step out of the room for any reason, please give us a “thumbs up” if you’re okay, otherwise someone from our team will head out to check on you.

# Agenda

1

**Introduction**

2

**Mental Health  
Barriers**

3

**Interview #1 -  
The Veteran**

5

**Interview #2 - The  
Family Member**

6

**VA Caregiver  
Support Program**







# Mental Health Barriers

---

- **Trauma Injuries:**
  - MST
  - Combat
  - Moral Injury/Survivor's guilt
  - PTSD Symptoms: flashbacks, hallucinations, and panic attacks

# Mental Health Barriers

---

- **SDOH Stressors:**
  - Finances
  - Unforeseen life events
  - Over-scheduled
  - Employment stress
  - COVID
  - Academic issues
  - Relationships

# Mental Health Barriers

---

- **Underdeveloped Coping Skills:**
  - Substance abuse/addictions
  - Anger
  - High risk activities

# Mental Health Barriers

---

- **Overall Mental Health:**
  - Anxiety: social anxiety, OCD
  - Adjustment disorders
  - Depression
  - Substance Abuse

# Mental Health Barriers

---

- **Access to Care:**
  - Stigma associated with mental health/admitting there is a problem
  - Knowing where to go and what to do
  - Counseling/medication in a timely manner

# Case Studies

---

## Christopher Smith - Veteran

# Q & A





# Case Studies

---



## Sandra Ballester - Military Spouse

# Q & A





# Carl T. Hayden Caregiver Support Program

Korrie A. Pernicka, LCSW

# CSP Supports and Services to Eligible Veterans & their Caregivers

# Support & Services Available to Eligible Veterans

## In-Home Care

- Skilled Nursing
- Home Health Aide
- Home Based Primary Care
- Veteran Directed Home & Community Based Care

## Respite Care (Up to 30 Days Per Year)

- Residential (VA Community Living Center or Community Facility)
- In-Home
- Adult Day Health Care

## Equipment & Supplies

- Mobility aids
- Home modification grants (HISA)
- Communication devices
- Cognitive prosthetics
- Incontinence supplies



*\*Note: Some of these supports may not be available at all facilities*

# Support & Services Available to Qualified Caregivers

VA is committed to providing services to caregivers of eligible Veterans of all eras. Services include, but are not limited to:

**Resource and Referral:** Assistance navigating VA services, including those available as part of the Veteran's healthcare and benefits.

**Education, Training, and Support:** Linkage to VHA and community resources that assist caregivers through self-care courses, skill development trainings, and mentoring opportunities.



# Support & Services Available to Qualified Caregivers

**Building Better Caregivers Building Better Caregivers® (BBC)** is an online program to help Caregivers of Veterans with dementia, memory problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, a serious brain injury or any other serious injury or illness. The Caregiver must meet criteria and be willing to participate in the Caregiver support program in either the Program of Comprehensive Assistance (PCAFC) or Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) programs.

**<https://va.buildingbettercaregivers.org/>**

**Caregiver Support Line** Responds to calls from caregivers, Veterans and community seeking information about VA Caregiver Services. 1 (855) 260-3274.





# Support & Services Available to Qualified Caregivers

**Resources for Enhancing All Caregivers' Health in the VA (REACH VA)** is an evidence-based program that providing interventional support to caregivers.

**Caregiver Self-Care Courses** are offered by trained facilitators from the VA Memphis Caregiver Center and are provided via telehealth with caregivers at local VA facilities.

**Caregiver FIRST** is an evidence-based, caregiver skills group training program with the goal of connecting caregivers with each other and to resources to help them feel more confident, capable, and supported in their caregiving role.

# Find Online Support at [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

- Contains information on the VA Caregiver Support Program
- Provides caregiving tips by diagnosis
- Offers ways to connect with other caregivers
- Shares tips and tools for caregivers such as managing medication or talking with medical providers
- Hosts publications and resources by topic
- Contains Directory of VA Caregiver Support Coordinators/Caregiver Support Program Teams by state and U.S. territory
- Provides access to the application for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

# Peer Support Mentoring Program

VA's Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program links enrolled Family/General caregivers of all eras in a Mentor/Mentee relationship to provide peer support and guidance.



- Experienced caregivers are trained to serve as Mentors and matched with less experienced caregivers seeking support and comfort.
- Mentors provide personalized guidance based on experience and knowledge and decreases loneliness and isolation for caregivers.
- Family/General caregivers of all eras are eligible to participate in the Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring Program, both as Mentors and as Mentees.

# Annie Caregiver Text Program

Annie is VA's text messaging service that promotes self-care for Veterans enrolled in VA health care and now for caregivers. You just need a phone that can receive text messages to enroll!

- Annie will help you manage stress and support self-care.
- You will receive text messages 3 times per week for a year with the option to renew yearly.
- You can pause or stop at any time.
- Messages will be educational, motivational, and include activities to manage stress.





# Q & A



# Session Evaluation

We want to hear from you!

