





## Strategies to Build Love and Friendship

As a Caregiver it is important to carve out some time to remember why you love the person you are caring for. Sometimes during your caregiving journey, this can be lost as you become overwhelmed with the day to day demands that you face. To the right are tips taken from the *Leaning into Love Caregiver Support Line Education Call* that can help you to rekindle what brought you to love that person to begin with. Contact your Caregiver Support Coordinator to find out more about the monthly Caregiver Support Line Education Calls and upcoming topics.



**Strategies to Build Love and Friendship** In order to get the benefits of a loving relationship, we must be willing to lean in and focus on the act of giving love.

- **Remember Your Love Story** – Each partner writes or remembers out loud the story of the relationship. What attracted you? What was your experience? What did you feel and how did each of you behave?
- **Fondness and Admiration** – Think about, notice, and relate, on a daily basis the positive aspects of your partner when together and apart. This can have a powerful impact on your bond and your ability to weather difficulties.
- **Build the Friendship** – Most relationships don't end due to conflict. They end due to a loss of connection and friendship. On a daily basis, reestablish the friendship. Ask them something about themselves. Be curious.



## Communication Strategies

- All relationships have conflict. It's how you manage the conflict that matters!
- **Start by assuming something positive.** For example, "I know you work hard at work but the housework is getting overwhelming to me and I could really use your help with it."
- **Pay attention to your tone.** Be polite "Honey can we talk for a minute..."
- **Describe what makes you upset, without judgment.** "I know you didn't intend to, but you forgot to take out the garbage as you promised."
- **Don't use "you always" or "you never."**
- **Be specific about the complaint.** Don't pile up a bunch of complaints. Make the complaint a one-time specific event.
- **Don't just identify the problem. Identify what you want or need.** "I was disappointed that you made plans with friends for the weekend. I would really like to have some time with you alone."
- **Learn to Recognize Flooding.** If you or your partner are so emotionally stressed by the conversation that you can't listen or have a reasonable response, both of you would be better off at that point to take a break until you calm down.



### **Online Classes and Resources from Easter Seals :**

*These online classes from Easter Seals are a great way to get some tools, tips, and techniques for working with your loved ones, but also caring for yourself. Most are 60 minutes in length.*

As a proud member of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation's National Coalition for Military Caregivers, Easter Seals has partnered with leading military service and caregiving organizations to launch a series of practical webinars offering helpful tips and tools to support military Caregivers. Topics address areas such as building resilience, military Caregivers in the workplace and receiving with grace.

#### **Recognizing and Responding to Chronic Sorrow: Revitalizing the Weary Hearts of Veteran Caregivers:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-8.html>

#### **Military and Veteran Caregiving in a Rural Setting:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-7-military-and.html>

#### **Military/Veteran Caregiving within Latino Families**

**(en español):** <http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-6-dinmicas-que.html>

#### **Intimacy & Military Caregiver Relations:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-2-military-1.html>

#### **Beyond the Blues: When Sadness Becomes Depression:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-4-beyond-the-blues.html>

#### **Military Strong: Receiving with Grace:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-3-military-strong.html>

#### **Military Caregivers at Work: What you need to know to protect yourself and your family from discriminatory practices:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/webinar-2-military.html>

#### **From Daunting to Doable: The Power of Caregiving**

**Resilience:** <http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/military-caregiving-webinar-1-from-daunting-to-doable.html>

#### **Many Faces of Caregiving Study:**

<http://www.easterseals.com/explore-for-resources/caregivers/caregiving-study-2015.html>

## **The Caregiver Support Program**

**encourages all Caregivers to care for themselves.** The program has developed self-care courses covering topics specific to Caregivers to provide tools, strategies, and techniques to help you balance caring for your veteran and caring for yourself. The following information is just an excerpt of the information developed for Caregivers.



***Caregiving is stressful!*** Stress is a normal physical response to the many challenges you face on a daily basis. It's not just the feeling of being overwhelmed by too many demands on your time; chronic stress can actually lead to health problems, if you don't find healthy ways to cope with it.



There are tools, strategies, and techniques that can help you manage the stress in your life. They may not make specific problems or challenges go away, and they won't cure a loved one who is disabled or ill, but they will help you build your resilience.

When we talk about managing stress, **resilience** is an important concept; it's the ability to adapt to and cope with stressful situations and adversity. Think of resilience like a muscle; it takes practice to build it up over time but it helps you become stronger and increases your capacity to deal with future difficult experiences.



***“Stress is not what happens to us. It’s our response TO what happens. And RESPONSE is something we can choose.”***

- Maureen Killoran

***“The care you give your loved one depends on the care you give yourself.”***

- Caregiving daughter

## Veteran Family Caregiver Self-Care Courses



Friday, November 18, 2016

Sponsored by

VA New Jersey Health Care System &

Easter Seals of New Jersey, Morristown, NJ

**Pre-Registration  
Required  
Space Limited to 25**

### Taking Care of Yourself Everyday

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

This course is designed to provide some quick and easy strategies, tools, and tips to help you protect yourself from stressors and improve your health and well-being everyday.

#### What You Will Learn:

- Healthy Eating and Recipes
- Protecting and Improving Your Physical Health
- Falling and Staying Asleep
- Protecting and Improving Your Emotional Health
- Caregiver Survival Tools
- How to Create a Personal Action Plan for Taking Care of Yourself

### Problem Solving & Effective Communication

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Caregivers are busy people and finding effective ways to solve challenges and minimize the frustration related to being a caregiver is critical to everyday life with our veterans.

#### What You Will Learn:

- Caregiver will learn to use "I messages"
- Empathetic Listening Techniques
- Connect with other Caregivers and learn what works for them.
- Learn about Caregiver Technologies to communicate with your care team

To register or for more information, contact: Jennifer Adams-Barsch, LCSW at 973-676-1000 x3085.  
Come for both programs and enjoy a day honoring VA caregivers!



VA New Jersey Health Care System Presents:

## Couples Relationship Skills Training

*Tools for successful communication  
and effective problem solving*

Friday - Saturday *Free for Veterans and their Partners*

November 18-19

*Registration Deadline: November 4<sup>th</sup>*

*Contact: Michele Robinson x6741*

#### Location:

"Heart of Home"  
Lyons VA- Planetree Suite  
Building 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
151 Knollcroft Road  
Lyons, NJ 07920

Parking available behind  
Building 7

#### Schedule:

##### Friday:

5PM: Registration &  
Dinner  
5:30-8:30PM: Session 1

*Facilitators: Chaplain Barry Baughman, Carol Cashin,  
Kaydeen Bishop, Shaun Henry*

##### Saturday:

Continental Breakfast  
9AM: Session 2  
12PM: Lunch  
1PM: Session 3

## VA NJ Caregiver Support Coordinators:

Jennifer Adams-Barsch, MSW, LCSW  
East Orange and northern clinics 973-676-1000 x 3085

Peterson Pierre-Paul, MSW, LSW  
Lyons Campus and southern clinics

908-647-0180 x 4003

## Caregiver Support Program Resources

**VA Caregiver Support Line:  
1-855-260-3274**

The Caregiver Support Line is a toll free number (1-855-260-3274) for Caregivers, Veterans and/or Community Partners to call for supportive counseling, information, education, referral to community local resources and/or Caregiver Support Coordinators.

**VA Monthly Caregiver Support Line  
Education Calls:**

Participate in calls focusing on strategies to enhance resilience and restore balance. The calls are facilitated by the VA Caregiver Support Line. Typically one topic is offered each month at different times.

**VA Peer Support Mentoring Program:**

Peer Support Mentoring Program is a program that matches Caregivers with peer mentors, who can provide personalized support, guidance and friendship, experience and knowledge, and wisdom and skills about thriving as a Caregiver.

**VA Building Better Caregivers:**

Building Better Caregivers™ (BBC) is a six-week online interactive workshop for Caregivers who are caring for someone with dementia, memory problems, post-traumatic stress disorder, a serious brain injury, or any other serious injury or illness. BBC helps Caregivers in two key ways: it offers training in how to provide better care, and it also helps Caregivers learn how to manage their own emotions, stress and physical health.

**VA Caregiver Website:**

Go to [www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov) and sign up for email updates on Caregiver topics. Look at the Diagnosis Care Sheets, download Everyday Tips and Checklists, read other Caregivers' stories and more.

**Veteran's Health Library:**

Go to [www.veteranshealthlibrary.org](http://www.veteranshealthlibrary.org) for an easy-to-access source of consistent, Veteran-centered, up-to-date healthcare information.

**Veteran Caregiver Educational DVD's:**

Caring for a Veteran with PTSD, TBI, or Chronic Pain are available by contacting the NJ VA Caregiver Support Program directly. Your role as caregiver is challenging let us help you find the resources you need!

*Call us today to discuss and sign up for any of the above services and learn more.*