

## Caregivers FIRST Curriculum Overview

Caregivers FIRST is an evidence-based “grab and go” curriculum package that uses an interactive group class approach for family caregivers to build coping, support-seeking, and hands-on skills and strategies. It is part of a larger program (Function QUERI) to implement and evaluate evidence-based clinical programs to maximize function and independence in vulnerable Veterans.

The core curriculum is designed to help general caregivers connect with other caregivers and VA staff to learn and practice:

- Psychological (coping) skills and strategies
- Support-seeking skills and navigation strategies
- Clinical (hands-on) skills and shared decision-making strategies

### **Core Component: 4 in-person weekly group classes**

Core Class Structure:

- Self-care (relaxation) activity
- Skill building in coping, support-seeking, or clinical strategies
- Caregiver discussion interaction

Delivery options:

- Single service line, e.g. CSP only
- Collaboratively with other service lines (e.g., CSP + GRECC, CSP + HBPC)

Curriculum Package includes:

- Participant workbook + resource guide
- PowerPoint slides
- Talking points
- Facilitator guide

#### **Class 1: Introduction and caregiving discussion**

- Frustrations, rewards of caregiving
- Helping Veteran remain independent
- Relaxation exercise

#### **Class 2: Hands-on and shared decision-making strategies**

- Basics of daily care
- Safety
- Veteran preferences
- Communication with providers

#### **Class 3: Coping skills and strategies**

- Stress management
- Value of self-care
- Recognizing depression, burnout

#### **Class 4: Support-seeking skills and navigation strategies**

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

### **Optional Components**

1. Optional training on individual topics (1-3)

Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Managing Dementia Behaviors</li><li>• Improving Your Sleep</li><li>• Medication Management</li><li>• Planning for the Future</li><li>• Relaxation</li><li>• Understanding Anger</li></ul>

2. Booster calls (1-2) after group classes, general check-in and follow-up on any action items