



Campaign for
Inclusive Care

PRACTICING INCLUSIVE CARE DURING COVID-19:

Tips for healthcare providers and allied healthcare professionals

Many of you are already practicing various elements of Inclusive Care. You regularly invite the Veteran's caregiver into the exam room; you recognize the health care interventions they provide to the Veteran; and you show appreciation for their work and commitment.

In order to ensure safety and mitigate the risks of coronavirus or COVID-19 spreading further, VA facilities have implemented stricter guidelines. These guidelines maximize virtual and tele-health options, as we practice physical distancing and stay home as much as possible.

Now, more than ever, it is critical to remember spouses, parents, family members and friends who are working to care for America's wounded, ill or injured Veterans at home.

Caregivers do not have an easy job. During the COVID-19 pandemic and in uncertain times, caregivers may be confused and overwhelmed. They need our support and partnership.

Including the Veteran's caregiver in clinical treatment decisions empowers the caregiver and supports the Veteran's health providing care outside of the clinical or virtual visit. It gives the provider valuable insights about the Veteran's condition and ensures a trusted and collaborative relationship between the health care provider and caregiver.

When caregivers have trust in the health care provider they feel confident their concerns about the Veteran's health are taken seriously. When they help you, the provider, create plans, those plans are more likely to be adhered to and successful in the long-term.

WHAT HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS CAN DO:

The Campaign for Inclusive Care (CIC), provides health care professionals with the tools to make a Veteran's care process seamless and coordinated. Through the Academy for Inclusive Care, you can access training and guidance to help make inclusive care the standard even under atypical circumstances. Inclusive care can simply include incorporating the following into practice:

In a virtual or tele-health clinical appointment:

- **Consider** asking the Veteran if he or she has someone helping them, if they are home with him or her on the visit, and if the caregiver should be invited into the room/conversation.
- **Acknowledge** the role the caregiver has taken in helping keep the Veteran safe at home during this time and express gratitude to learn more.
- **Review** the roles and tasks (current and future) the caregiver is performing and make sure they are comfortable with these roles. Ask the caregiver if they have any questions or concerns.
- **Encourage** the caregiver to share any barriers to tasks and work with them to identify solutions.

Throughout the health care journey, and if given permission, include the Veteran's caregiver on virtual correspondence with the Veteran and when sharing relevant health information deemed important for the caregiver's at-home care duties.

Utilize the VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) and engage local Caregiver Support Coordinators to access available supportive services. Consider providing the [Caregiving During COVID-19 Tip Sheet](#). In addition, if you have concerns about the caregiver's capacity to manage care at home, make a warm referral to Social Work or the CSP. Inform the caregiver as to why you are doing this and what they can expect, next.

In this country, health care professionals of Veterans are answering the call for service every day. This caregiving community continues to set a national example for resiliency and support.

Should you wish to learn more about the Campaign for Inclusive Care, visit <https://campaignforinclusivecare.elizabethdolefoundation.org/>.