CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS
A STAR NETWORK FELLOWSHIP

A FREE, PEER LED, TRAUMA-INFORMED LIFESTYLE PROGRAM FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE WHO ARE TAKING CARE OF OTHERS.

Launching in November 2026 · National Family Caregivers Month

Most caregivers carry the work alone. Caregiver Connections is a free, anonymous, trauma-informed peer fellowship and curriculum, specifically designed for caregivers, helping them heal from compassion fatigue, grief, and the wounds of adverse childhood experiences. Grounded in real trauma science, and open to you wherever you are in the world.

It is a recovery and a lifestyle program, not therapy or crisis care.

63 million

Americans are family caregivers, nearly one in four adults.

AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025

INSIDE A MEETING

Always free
No fees, now or later.

Anonymous
Any name. Camera optional. Listening is enough.

Never recorded
Meetings are confidential.

Two mentors
Trained, with lived caregiving experience and over two years in recovery.

ON ZOOM Mon 10 a.m. Wed 1 p.m. Fri 2 p.m. Eastern

MORE THAN A MEETING

Caregiver Teleconnection
Free 1-hour expert-led educational sessions available on demand.

Caregiver SOS
Free coaching, Stress-Busting Program, radio and videos from WellMed Charitable Foundation.

Steps and Promises
Twelve Steps and Promises written for caregivers, free to download.

Tools for looking ahead
MyWhatIf Foundation tools to help caregivers plan a future of their own (pilot project).

BUILT ON TAR ANON®

Three years of TAR Anon: five meetings a week, 70–100 participants each. Caregiver Connections uses its format, mentor training and Steps.

HOW WE PLAN TO MEASURE IT

Participation and retention, and, for members who choose to answer, loneliness and belonging.

WAYS TO PARTNER

1 Refer
Share the free meetings with the caregivers you serve, from launch day.

2 Host
Hold a weekly meeting, in person or on Zoom. STAR Network will train hosts and train two mentors for each meeting.

3 Get involved
Contact Dr. Jamie Huysman for more information on the current program and needs.



"Peer-led, trauma-informed, and grounded in hope — Caregiver Connections gives family caregivers the structured community that care has always been missing."

George M. Rapier III, M.D., Founder and CEO, WellMed

PARTNERS

WellMed Charitable Foundation (founding funder), MyWhatIf Foundation (pilot partner), Florida Council on Aging and PACEs Connection. Florida is the first demonstration state.

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Caregiver Connections, a STAR Network® fellowship, powered by WellMed Charitable Foundation and PACEs Connection. STAR Network Inc. · 501(c)(3) nonprofit

SCAN TO VISIT

THE NEED

1 in 4
caregivers feel socially isolated.

$7,200
a year spent out of pocket on caregiving.

~1 in 2
hit a major financial blow.

40+ hrs
of care a week for nearly 1 in 4.

11%
have had medical training.

AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025

WHO WE SERVE

Neurological and cognitive conditions. Dementia and Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, traumatic brain injury, caregivers of veterans.

Physical health conditions. Chronic illness, terminal and end-of-life care, acute and critical events, bereaved caregivers.

Children with additional needs. Special needs, foster, kinship and adoptive caregivers.

Addiction and mental health. Caregivers of people with substance use disorder, serious mental illness, eating disorders and self-harm.

WHY IT WORKS

Steps written for this wound. TAR Anon's twelve steps, adapted specifically for caregiver trauma.

We heal at the source. Anxiety, hypervigilance and the inability to rest are treated as responses to an unhealed wound.

Healing happens in connection. For caregivers, isolation is often the deepest injury of all.

You re-parent yourself. Caregivers learn to offer themselves the safety and care they give others.

GROUNDED IN REAL TRAUMA SCIENCE

The recovery framework draws on Dr. Judith Herman, Dr. Gabor Maté, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, Dr. Marsha Linehan, Dr. Richard Schwartz, Pete Walker M.A., Polyvagal theory, and decades of ACEs research.

2 years
Project Compassion, conducted at WellMed Medical with the Polyvagal Institute.

3 years
of STAR Network's own donated-fund investment in building the model.

Thousands
in a scalable Trauma Network, with life-saving testimonials worldwide.

IN THEIR WORDS

"Since joining Caregiver Connections, I've felt a kind of peace I honestly didn't think was possible for me. My mother's dementia hasn't changed. What changed is that I am no longer carrying it alone, and someone finally called what I was feeling grief."

Rachel A., member

"I just want to say thanks. Your meetings have been such a lifeline for me, helping me work through guilt I never thought I'd be able to let go of. The peace I feel now is something I didn't think was possible while still caregiving. Thank you for being there and for creating this space."

Ryan P., member

OUR FOUNDERS AND LEADERSHIP

Jamie Huysman, PsyD, LCSW, CCFT

Co-Founder and Executive Director

Coined the term TAR™ (Toxic Abusive Relationships) and founded STAR Network and TAR Anon®. Co-author of the New York Times best seller *Take Your Oxygen First* and former Chief Compassion Officer in the UnitedHealth system.

Rosemary Laird, MD, MHSA

Chief Medical Officer · Founder, Navigating Aging Needs

Clinical Associate Professor of Geriatrics at the Florida State University School of Medicine and an expert in Alzheimer's care. American Geriatrics Society Geriatrician of the Year and co-author of *Take Your Oxygen First*.

George Rapier III, MD

Co-Founder · Founder and Chairman, WellMed Charitable Foundation

Internal medicine physician for four decades who founded WellMed, a physician-led network serving hundreds of thousands of seniors across Texas and Florida. Modern Physician's Physician Entrepreneur of the Year.

Carol Zernial, MA

Executive Director, WellMed Charitable Foundation · Co-Chair, RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council

Gerontologist with more than 30 years in aging who oversees Caregiver SOS and the Caregiver Teleconnection. Past Chair of the National Council on Aging and one of Next Avenue's Top 50 Influencers in Aging.