

# PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## WHAT IS PEER MENTORING?

A peer mentor empowers fellow patients to move forward and cope with their lives after being diagnosed with ESRD. Peer mentoring:

- Helps patients understand the benefit of controlling their health and being involved in their care, which can result in patients living longer and healthier lives;
- Closes the gap in communication with dialysis staff in an effort to ensure that staff understand patients' concerns, issues, and priorities; and
- Provides support and increases the confidence that many new patients need.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PEER MENTORING?

- Patients may have family and friends to assist with their new diagnosis. However, it helps to have someone who has been through the same experience and has a good understanding of all that dialysis involves.
- For those who do not have friends or family to assist them, peer mentors can be essential in providing strong support.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A PEER MENTOR?

Peer mentors can have several roles, including:

- Providing information,
- Listening to concerns,
- Sharing experiences,
- Promoting positive behavior,
- Offering encouragement, and
- Relieving anxiety.

## WHO SHOULD BE A PEER MENTOR?

- Peer mentors can come from all backgrounds. Mentors should be individuals with positive outlooks on managing kidney disease.
- Individuals who are succeeding at achieving their treatment goals can provide insight to help others successfully manage kidney disease.



## WHAT OTHER GUIDELINES ARE THERE FOR PEER MENTORS?

- Peer mentors should wait for a patient's consent before approaching them as a mentor.
- Peer mentors should not provide medical advice. If a peer mentor is asked for medical advice, he/she should refer the patient to the dialysis staff or nephrologist.
- If a patient shares a complaint with a peer mentor, the patient should be encouraged to use the facility's grievance procedure. The social worker serves as a patient advocate and can help with patient complaints.
- Peer mentors should always get permission from the patient before approaching a staff member about a patient's concerns and/or sharing any information obtained in the role of a peer mentor.

## I WANT TO START A PEER MENTORING PROGRAM AT MY FACILITY. WHERE DO I BEGIN?

- Talk with your Social Worker or a facility staff member about your interest in peer mentorship and starting a program for your center.
- Your ESRD Network is available to support you in your role as a peer mentor or creating a program.
- Visit [www.esrdncc.org](http://www.esrdncc.org) or call (516) 209-5253 to connect with your local Network for more information.
- The ESRD National Coordinating Center (NCC) also has several resources available on Peer Mentorship.



## End Stage Renal Disease National Coordinating Center

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