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 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.