

Peer Mentoring

Course 1: Welcome to Peer Mentoring!





Course 1



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This course has five parts:

Part 1: Introduction to Peer Mentoring.....	2
Part 2: Your Role as a Mentor.....	5
Part 3: Communication Skills.....	8
Part 4: Cultural Diversity.....	16
Part 5: Privacy and Confidentiality.....	18



Course 1



Course 1: Welcome to Peer Mentoring!

The courses in the Peer Mentor Education Program will tell you what you need to know to be a peer mentor.

After taking this first course, you will be able to:

- Explain peer mentoring.
- Describe what a peer mentor does.
- Show ways to talk with your peers that work.
- Describe how to respect cultural diversity.
- Share your understanding of keeping information private.

Course 1 has five parts:

Part 1: Introduction to Peer Mentoring

Part 2: Your Role as a Mentor

Part 3: Communication Skills

Part 4: Cultural Diversity

Part 5: Privacy and Confidentiality

Please read all five parts. You can also go back and re-read parts as you wish.

After you have finished, take the quiz about what you learned.



Course 1



Part 1: Introduction to Peer Mentoring

Let's start with some basic definitions.

A **peer** is someone facing similar life situations.

If you are a person with kidney disease, a peer would be another person with kidney disease. The other person may have a different treatment plan than you. The other person may have been receiving treatment for a longer or shorter time than you. But you are still peers because you share the common bond of kidney disease.

A **peer mentor** is someone who shares his or her experience and knowledge with a peer.

After taking the courses in this program, you will be prepared to be a peer mentor. You will be ready to share your experience with others at your dialysis facility. You will also be able to help others learn more about kidney disease and treatment choices.

A **peer mentee** is someone who is new to an experience or situation. He or she is the person who meets with the mentor.

A peer mentee could be:

- Someone who is new to kidney disease.
- A person who is thinking about a change in treatment.
- Someone who needs information in a specific area.



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What is peer mentoring?

Peer mentoring takes place between the peer mentor and the peer mentee. The peer mentor meets with a person who is new to kidney disease. The peer mentor also meets with a person who is thinking about a change in treatment. This could be going from treatment at a facility to treatment at home. The peer mentor offers educational resources. And the peer mentor shares his or her experiences.

How does peer mentoring help someone with kidney disease?

A person with kidney disease can face challenges. Support from friends and family can help the person to solve these challenges. But not everyone has the support of friends and family. This may make it hard to follow the treatment plan.

Even persons with friends and families may handle things better, if they could connect with someone in their same situation.

This is where peer mentoring comes in.

Peer mentoring may help those who do not have support from family or friends. Peer mentoring also gives extra support to those who rely on families and friends.



Benefits **peer mentees** can get out of being a part of a peer mentoring program include:

- Connection with a peer who has found ways to thrive
- Improved goal setting
- Improved management of their own care
- Social support
- More knowledge



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Who is the best person to be a peer mentor?

An ideal peer mentor is a person from any background or experience level who:

- Has a positive outlook in dealing with kidney disease.
- Likes to connect with others and can use that connection to engage and educate.
- Is comfortable helping patients take an active role in their care plans and talk with their care team.
- Is open to learning about resources on treatment choices and can share them with others.
- Is achieving his or her treatment goals.
- Would like to take a leadership role in helping others.

Why should I be a peer mentor?

Being a mentor can be rewarding. Peer mentors may get to meet new people and make new friends. They may develop new skills, share life experiences, and help peers in need.

Being a mentor may:

- Help you learn more about yourself.
- Improve your self-esteem and confidence.
- Help you feel that you are making a difference.
- Give you a better understanding of other cultures.
- Help you appreciate diversity.
- Make you feel more empowered in your own care.
- Improve your communication and leadership skills.



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Part 2: Your Role as a Mentor

We've talked about what peer mentoring is. Now let's look at what a peer mentor does.

What is my role as a peer mentor?

As a mentor, you:

- Help your peer see that he or she is not alone in facing the challenges of kidney disease.
- Present your peer with new ideas to deal with issues he or she faces as a kidney patient.
- Demonstrate positive behavior.
- Help motivate your peer to stay active in his or her care.

How to Motivate Your Peers

- *Share your experiences.*
- *Talk about treatment choices.*
- *Provide education.*
- *Discuss the benefits of being involved in your own care.*
- *Encourage communication with the healthcare team.*

How is leadership similar to peer mentoring?

Peer mentors and leaders:

- May set personal goals.
- Motivate others to achieve their goals.
- Offer guidance based on their own knowledge or experience.

As a mentor, you share your life experiences. You also relate on a personal level to your peer. Both of these actions may empower your peer to better manage his or her life after being diagnosed with kidney disease. You can do this by:

- Speaking with your peer about your kidney disease journey.
- Encouraging your peer to develop skills to manage his or her own care.
- Sharing information and resources to help support your peer with healthcare choices.

If you are a peer mentor, your facility may reach out to you to participate in other activities, such as lobby days. It is up to you if you wish to participate. It will not affect your peer mentoring participation if you choose not to participate.



Course 1



How do I work with the healthcare team?

As a peer mentor, you share your own experiences. But you cannot do certain things on your own. At times, you need to refer questions or issues to your peer's healthcare team. The team can answer your peer's questions. The team can also talk to your peer about situations that are beyond your role as a mentor.

When should I ask the facility staff for help?

Peer mentors are not counselors

A person with kidney disease may feel anxious, upset, or sad. When these feelings are intense, though, it is important for the person to talk to a professional who is trained to help. If your peer wants to talk about being depressed or anxious, ask him or her to speak to the healthcare team. You will show it is a good thing to get help. You will also let your peer know that you care.

Along these same lines, peer mentors should not ask counseling questions. Examples of counseling questions include:

- “How does this problem typically make you feel?”
- “Overall, how would you describe your mood?”
- “How would you like to improve your life to be happier and more satisfied?”

Peer mentors cannot give medical advice

You can talk about your experience. But always tell your peer to talk to the treatment team for medical advice. Telling your peer how you decided on a treatment is helpful. Telling your peer to talk to facility staff is acceptable. Telling your peer which treatment to choose is not acceptable.



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Where can I go for support?

You will have support from the healthcare team at your facility and your End Stage Renal Disease Network. Here are examples of when to reach out for help.

- If your peer wants to talk with someone about feelings of depression or anxiety.
- If your peer asks for medical advice.
- If your peer talks about something that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- If you do not understand educational materials you are sharing with your peer.
- If a topic comes up that you are not sure how to address.

The Network works with dialysis facilities to improve care.

You are not alone as a peer mentor. We're here to help you succeed!

Tips for Success



- Know your role as a peer mentor.
- Keep your conversations focused on topics related to your role.
- Remember, you are there to help a peer get information about important kidney treatment choices. By acting within your role, you are helping your peer.
- Always respect what your peer wants. Your peer's actions do not reflect on you or what you are trying to do.



Part 3: Communication Skills

Communication is the exchange of thoughts or information. It's a two-way process that leads to mutual understanding.

Communicating well is a crucial part of peer mentoring. It helps you form solid and trusting relationships with your peer.

How can I be a good communicator?

Words and other ways to communicate can help you build relationships. Your tone of voice can be friendly. Your facial expressions, like a smile, can show you are receptive to what your peer says. Making eye contact can show you are paying attention.

You can use techniques to help you communicate well as a peer mentor. They also encourage conversation. And they help your peer understand and remember the discussion.

- Use open-ended questions when starting conversations. Open-ended questions start with “what,” “how,” or “why.” They encourage your peer to say more than “yes” or “no.”
- Start and end the conversation with a short review of what you are talking about that day.
- Take time to stop and make sure that your peer understands everything being discussed.
- Ask your peer to repeat what he or she is taking away from your discussion. This is a powerful tool that will tell you what your peer has learned.

Ways to Communicate

- *Words*
- *Tone of voice*
- *Body language*
- *Gestures*
- *Facial expressions*
- *Attentiveness*





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How do I set the stage for good conversation?

Where and when you and your peer talk has a big effect on how well you can communicate. You can also use body language to help your peer feel comfortable. Here are some tips:

- Try to sit in a good position to make eye contact. Sit at the same level as your peer. Don't sit in a position from which you're looking down at your peer.
- Ask if it is a good time to talk with your peer. If your peer says that it isn't a good time, ask to set up another time.
- Ask if your peer is comfortable talking with you while on dialysis. If not, ask if there is a better place and time to sit and talk.
- Outline what you wish to talk with him or her about that day and be prepared to listen.





Course 1



How can I practice active listening?

When you practice “active listening,” you make an effort to hear what your peer is saying. You also try to understand the full message.

You must pay close attention to the other person. Try to respond to the person speaking in a way that encourages him or her to keep talking. This lets the other person know that you are listening and that you want to hear more.

Use these five key active listening techniques. They will help you create a safe and trusting environment. Your peer will feel that you are hearing what he or she says and will feel comfortable sharing.

1. Pay attention

Be open to the exchange. Try not to get distracted. Give the speaker your undivided attention. Don’t glance at your phone or tablet. Don’t speak to others during your conversation with a peer. Use your own body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and gestures to show that you are paying close attention.

2. Show that you’re listening

Encourage your peer to continue talking. Use verbal comments, like “yes” and “okay.” Wait to respond until you’ve listened fully to your peer’s thoughts. Ask for more information if you don’t understand what your peer has said. Clarify what your peer is saying and confirm your understanding. Try not to interrupt while your peer is speaking, so that you can fully hear his or her point of view.



Course 1



3. Provide feedback

Reword what you hear to show you understand what your peer says. “What I’m hearing is...” and “Sounds like you are saying...” are two good ways to give feedback and to show that you are listening and that you understand.

4. Don’t judge

Keep an open mind about what you hear. Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions. Try not to interrupt with counter arguments. Don’t judge what the person is saying or his or her point of view. Do not react in a negative way. Remain positive through your gestures and communication.

5. Respond appropriately

Promote an environment of respect and understanding. Share information or experiences that relate to what your peer is talking about. Stop to ask if your peer has questions. Make sure that your peer understands the information. Use an “I” statement to state an opinion or share an experience. Make it clear that you are sharing your opinion and not forcing it on your peer.



Course 1



How can I practice active listening if I use a phone or electronic device?

You use the same five active listening techniques if you are speaking with your peer via telephone or electronic means.

Using a phone to speak with your peer:

Focus solely on your conversation with your peer. Do not multi-task just because your peer cannot see you, as your peer could sense your lack of attention.

Be especially careful to make sure your peer has finished speaking before you start. Pause briefly after your peer has stopped speaking.

Be aware of your tone of voice. Use a friendly tone to make your peer feel comfortable and accepted.

Use a headset instead of putting your phone on speaker.



Using an electronic device, such as a tablet or phone, for video calls: Use the same active listening principles as in person.

Maintain eye contact and use body language to show you are paying attention.

Be sure to sit in a quiet room to focus on your peer.

Avoid distractions such as a television set or a barking dog. Send a message that you are listening.



Course 1



Let's practice mentoring!



Scene 1. Joanne is a peer mentor in her facility. Joanne is matched with Sarah. She wants information on the home dialysis referral process. Sarah has personal issues and appears to have tears in her eyes when Joanne approaches her.

Joanne approaches Sarah and introduces herself. Joanne then answers her phone. She takes a call from her sister. They make plans to meet later. Joanne then begins to speak to Sarah again. When Sarah says she feels overwhelmed, Joanne interrupts Sarah. Joanne tells her she knows exactly how Sarah feels. Joanne begins to tell Sarah her own story about when she began dialysis.

What do you think about Joanne's meeting with Sarah?

- Was Joanne a good communicator?
- Did Joanne use active listening techniques?
- Did Joanne promote an environment of trust?

Joanne's actions could shut down the conversation:

- Joanne did not communicate well.
- She was distracted.
- She interrupted Sarah.
- She did not use active listening techniques.
- Joanne cannot know how Sarah feels even if she had a similar experience.

The scene could have gone better if Joanne had:

- Put her phone on silent before meeting Sarah.
- Given Sarah her undivided attention.
- Listened to Sarah without interruption.
- Used statements to clarify what Sarah was saying and to show she understood.
- Suggested Sarah talk with the social worker.

"It sounds like you are saying you are overwhelmed."

1. Pay attention

2. Show you're listening

3. Provide feedback

4. Don't judge

5. Respond appropriately



Course 1



Scene 2. Mike is a mentor at his facility. Mike was paired with John. John asked for information about the steps to plan for a vascular access. Mike puts his phone on silent and prepares materials to review with John.

Mike approaches John and introduces himself. Mike tells John about his role as a mentor and asks if it is a good time to talk.

John says that it is. He tells Mike that he recently became a father. He receives dialysis. John also has his regular responsibilities. John has many questions.

Mike goes over resources with John.

- Mike asks John several times if he has any questions.
- Mike allows time for John to respond.
- Mike agrees to follow up with John later that week in case he has more questions.

What do you think of Mike's approach with John?

- What communication techniques did Mike follow or not follow?
- Did Mike use active listening techniques?
- Did Mike promote an environment of trust?

Mike's meeting with John is a great example of good peer mentoring! He used active listening techniques. He also gave John his full attention.

As a mentor, you act as a role model to empower your peer to adopt self-management skills. As Mike did here:

- Listen to your peer.
- Give your undivided attention.
- Follow up with your peer on the information you shared.



Celebrate each success you have in talking with your peer. With each interaction, you are making a difference!





Course 1



Tips for Success



- Be aware of other ways than just words to communicate. These include tone of voice and body language.
- Set the stage for a good conversation.
- Use the five active listening skills
 - Pay attention
 - Show that you're listening
 - Provide feedback
 - Don't judge
 - Respond appropriately



Course 1



Part 4: Cultural Diversity

America is known as a “melting pot.” People from many different cultures live and work together. As a mentor, you will need to be open to talking with people from cultures that are different from yours.

How can I be sensitive to cultural diversity?

To respect cultural differences:

- Understand that people have different backgrounds. They also have different cultural influences.
- Realize that a person’s values may be related to his or her culture.
- Create a non-judgmental environment. Do not assume that someone’s culture or ethnic group is based on how he or she looks. Do not jump to conclusions based on someone’s culture.
- Accept that everyone has the right to his or her own values and thoughts.
- Acknowledge that differences are something to be celebrated.
- Honor the boundaries of your role. Do not discuss your peer’s financial status or how he or she pays for medical care. Do not talk about your views on race, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or politics.



Course 1



Let's practice mentoring!



Scene 3. You are talking with Richard about kidney transplant as a treatment choice. He tells you that he does not want a transplant because it is against his religious beliefs.

What do you do?

- A. Ask Richard what his religion is so you can talk with him about his beliefs.
- B. Explain that this is not a matter of religion. It is about what he needs to do in order to live a long, healthy life.
- C. Talk about other treatment options. Share materials on these choices.

The correct answer is C!

Be understanding. A person's religious beliefs are part of his or her value system. You cannot change anyone's values or deny their beliefs. The best choice is to honor Richard's beliefs. You can talk about other treatment options. You can also give Richard materials on these choices.

Tips for Success



- Accept people for who they are. Do not try to change what they believe or choose.
- Avoid making judgments about others.
- Keep an open mind to differences.
- Do not discuss issues that are part of someone's core values.
- Do not discuss issues that involve religion, politics, or money.



Course 1



Part 5: Privacy and Confidentiality

A person being treated at a dialysis facility must sign a consent form before the facility can share protected health information (PHI). The facility can share this information only for the person's care. This information is protected under HIPAA.

What is HIPAA?

- It is a 1996 federal law.
- It protects the privacy of patient health information.
- It requires patients to sign formal consent forms to have their information shared. Patient health information can be shared for healthcare purposes only.
- It sets rules for storing and sharing health information.

HIPAA
Health
Insurance
Portability and
Accountability
Act

How does HIPAA apply to mentoring?

Your facility will share only the protected health information (PHI) that you need as a peer mentor. The facility will have the permission of the mentee to share the information.

This may include:

- Patient name
- The shift when he or she gets dialysis



Course 1



What am I allowed to do with this information?

You must guard any information you get about a peer. You should only use this information in your role as a peer mentor. You must protect the privacy of your peer. Your facility can receive serious penalties if HIPAA rules are violated.

Here are rules you must follow.

- Share what you know about a peer **only** with someone who is authorized. This would include the care team at the facility where your peer is being treated.
- Do **NOT** share protected health information (PHI) with anyone else. Even if you are sharing your day with others, you cannot tell them the name of a peer that you are mentoring.
- Do **NOT** share protected health information (PHI) with other patients, with family and friends of patients, or with your family and friends.
- **NEVER** leave written protected health information (PHI) anywhere that another person can see it. Keep this information inside a folder, so no one else can read it.
- Do **NOT** ask for more protected health information (PHI) than you need to help with your peer's kidney treatment choices.

A dark grey rectangular banner with a white border and a shadow effect, containing the word 'Privacy' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Privacy



Course 1



Let's practice mentoring!



Scene 4: Joe, a peer mentor, is reviewing different types of vascular access with Sam. Sam mentions how hard it is to park at his surgeon's office, which is in Joe's neighborhood. They discover Sam lives around the corner from Joe. Sam's kids go to the same school as Joe's kids.

At the next parent-teacher conference, Joe notices one of Sam's children is in his son's class. Joe tells the teacher that Sam gets dialysis.

Was it okay for Joe to share this information?

No!

This is a violation of privacy.

Joe shared protected health information (PHI) when he told the teacher that Sam is receiving dialysis. Sharing this information is not necessary for Sam's health care. Sam did not give permission for anyone to share this information with the teacher.

As a peer mentor, talk about protected health information (PHI) only with the healthcare team that you are supporting.

Tips for Success



- Keep all information you know about a peer private.
- Stop your peer if he or she begins to share protected health information (PHI) that you do not need.
- Do NOT discuss general health issues or problems. Direct questions or conversations about health issues to the healthcare team.
- Do NOT talk about confidential issues.
- Do NOT ask questions about your peer's past or personal history.



Course 1



Next Steps in the Training Program

Congratulations on completing the first course in the **Peer Mentor Education Program!**

Next, **please complete the Course 1 Review Quiz.**

Then you may begin working on Course 2.

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