**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 esrd.ipro.org or call (516) 209-5578 to connect with the Network for more information.

For more information, or to file a grievance, please contact us:
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