Learning about Peer Mentoring

What the Peer Mentee Should Know

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What the Peer Mentee Should Know

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What is peer mentoring?

The Kidney Connection: A Patient Peer Mentoring Program pairs a mentee with a mentor.

You may be wondering, what is this program all about? What is a peer mentor? What is a peer mentee? How would joining the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program help me?

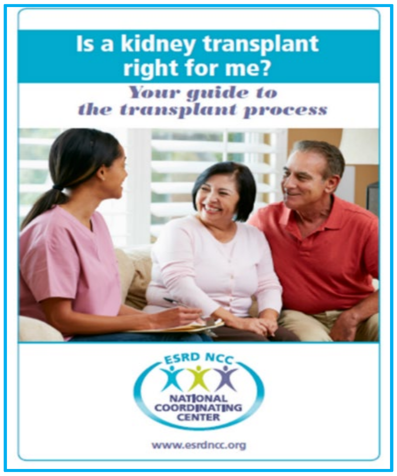
Let's start with some basic definitions.

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 with a peer. The peer mentor may also share resources with a peer. Examples of resources that your peer might share about dialysis and kidney disease are:

- A booklet
- A pamphlet
- A brochure
- A website



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

If you decide to join the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program, you would be a peer mentee.

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 certain area.

A mentee is interested in learning from someone who has experienced something similar to what he or she is going through. A mentee seeks the wisdom and experience of someone who knows what the mentee is going through.

What is peer mentoring?

Peer mentoring takes place between the peer mentor and the peer mentee. You, the peer mentee, would meet with the peer mentor. You may be new to kidney disease. You may be thinking about a change in treatment. This change could be going from treatment at a facility to treatment at home. You may want more information about treatment choices.

The peer mentor shares his or her experiences. The peer mentor also offers educational resources.

How would joining the Kidney Connection: A Patient Peer Mentoring Program help me?

You may face many challenges as a person with kidney disease. Family and friends can help you to solve these challenges. A peer mentor can support you by sharing experiences with you and giving you information on treatment choices. A peer mentor would be someone who has gone through a similar kidney experience.

As you meet with your mentor, over time you will begin to form a connection. The experiences you share may help you make important decisions. You may also strengthen the communication you have with members of your care team.

Being a part of the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program may help you to:

- Connect with a peer who has found ways to thrive.
- Set personal goals and talk about them with your mentor.
- Take a more active role in your plan of care.
- Enjoy social support.
- Increase your knowledge about your treatment choices.

What does a peer mentor do?

A peer mentor has agreed to share personal experiences about kidney treatment. He or she supports peer mentees by helping them see they are not alone in facing the challenges of kidney disease. A peer mentor:

- Offers positive role modeling.
- Shares information on treatment choices.
- Helps peers to understand the benefits of being involved in their care.
- Encourages communication with the healthcare team.

What can peer mentors and peer mentees not do?

Here are two important situations when you should ask for help from the healthcare team.

Peer mentors and peer mentees
CANNOT have counseling sessions.

Peer mentors are NOT counselors. You should talk with the healthcare team if the peer mentor wants to talk about how you feel. You should also reach out to the healthcare team if any talks make you feel uncomfortable.

Peer mentees are not counselors either. You should not ask the peer mentor if he or she feels anxious, upset, or sad. This is the job of the healthcare team.

Peer mentors and peer mentees
CANNOT give each other medical advice.

You and the peer mentor can talk about your experiences. You can talk about different treatment choices. But the peer mentor cannot tell you which treatment option to choose. And you cannot give each other medical advice. You should always ask the healthcare team for any and all medical advice.

Who can be a mentee?

To join the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program, you must:

- Have chronic kidney disease.
- Be getting some type of treatment for kidney failure. This could be hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, or a kidney transplant.
- Be an adult. You must be over 18 years of age.
- Be able to give consent.
- Complete a confidentiality agreement and consent form.
- Be able to understand English without the help of another person. Or you can be fluent in or a native speaker of the mentor’s native language.
- Be willing to commit for the length of the program. For example, you must be willing to complete surveys and other forms. You will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

A person being treated at a dialysis facility must sign a consent form before protected health information (PHI) can be shared. The information can be shared only for the person's care. This information is protected under HIPAA. Your facility can receive serious penalties if HIPAA rules are not followed.

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

Why is HIPAA important?

Your facility will share only the protected health information (PHI) that your peer mentor needs. This may include:

- Your name
- The shift you get dialysis

Your mentor must guard your protected health information (PHI). He or she should only use this information in the role of a peer mentor. He or she must protect your privacy.

Likewise, you are expected to guard information you learn about your mentor. He or she may share experiences with you. Your mentor may tell you about his or her own treatment choices. You should not share this information with anyone.

Can the peer mentor learn about my information?

You must give your consent for the peer mentor to contact you. Your contact at your dialysis facility will explain how to give this permission.

What should I expect when I meet my mentor?

The first time you meet with your mentor, you may feel excited, nervous, confused, or anxious. They are all normal emotions. This might be the first time you talk to someone else who has experienced kidney disease.

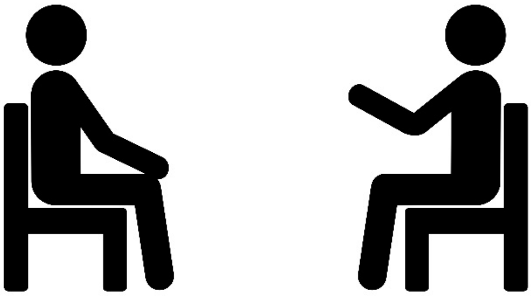
To help with your first meeting, here are a few questions to think about using when you talk with your peer mentor. Write down any other questions you might have. Take the questions with you for your first meeting.

- How did you tell your family when you first learned you had kidney disease?
- How did your family give you support?
- How did you make the decision to choose the best treatment for your lifestyle?
- What recommendations do you have for partnering with the healthcare team?
- Where did you find your strength?
- What do you know now that you wish you had known when you started dialysis?

Take your time sharing information with your mentor. Move forward at your own speed. Only discuss what you feel comfortable sharing.

A quiet location may help you feel comfortable sharing your experiences.

- If meeting in person:
  Choose a quiet spot that won’t have many interruptions.
- If meeting over the phone or Internet:
  Use a quiet place in your home.

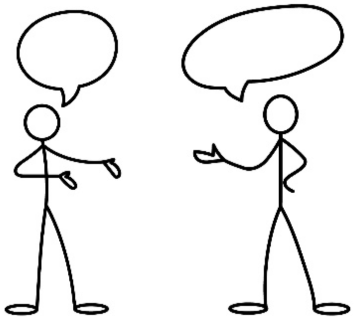


Here is a summary of what you can expect when you meet with your peer mentor. This may change, depending on the relationship you develop with the peer mentor.

First Meeting

The first time you meet, your mentor will introduce him- or herself. Your mentor will share his or her story about dialysis. He or she will also listen as you share your story.

- Share what you are comfortable sharing about yourself.
- Use this time to get to know each other.



Your mentor will ask what you would like to know more about. These are some of the areas you may want to discuss:

Engagement in treatment choices

Vascular access planning

Home hemodialysis

Being new to dialysis

Kidney transplant

Peritoneal dialysis

Second Meeting

Your mentor will be ready to talk about a topic you chose in the first meeting. For example, he or she might explain about dialysis choices. Your mentor will find out what you know about the topic.

- Make a list of questions you might have from the last meeting with your mentor.
- Ask questions during your conversation. You can continue to learn more about each other and the topic.

Third Meeting

Your mentor will check to see if you have any questions about what you talked about in the last meeting. Your mentor may also give you resources to read.

- Continue sharing stories and experiences with your mentor.
- Tell your mentor what life experiences matter and are important to you.
- Read the resources given to you after the meeting.

Fourth Meeting

The fourth time you meet will be a check in. Your mentor will ask if you have any questions about the resources that were given to you in the previous meeting.

- Share with your mentor decisions you've made or are thinking about making. Your mentor can talk with you about next steps in making a kidney treatment decision.
- Decide with your mentor the next steps for more meetings. The two of you can decide on the number of meetings and how often you meet.

What should I do if I don't connect with my peer mentor?
Everything will be done to pair you with someone with a similar kidney experience. However, there is always the chance you may not connect on a personal level with the person. It is okay if this happens. Talk to your facility social worker and ask for another opportunity to be paired with a new peer mentor.

How can I give back to this program?

After you have finished the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program, you may be interested in giving back to the program.

- Share feedback about what you enjoyed about the program.
- Provide input on what can be done to improve the program.
- Think about becoming a peer mentor, after time, to help other persons new to kidney disease.

What's next?

You have taken the first step to learn more about becoming empowered in your healthcare. Talk with your facility staff if you would like to join the Kidney Connection Patient Peer Mentoring Program. They will tell you what to do to get started. This will include giving permission for them to share your information with a peer mentor.

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