



## Q & A for Peer Mentors

### Q: What is a Peer Mentor?

**A:** A Peer Mentor is a patient who agrees to help empower other patients to move forward and cope with their lives after being diagnosed with ESRD. They help close the gap in communication between patients and facility staff in helping to ensure that the staff understands their fellow patients' concerns, issues and needs. It helps patients to know that they can talk to someone who has been through the same experiences and can fully understand their concerns.

### Q: What do I do if a fellow patient asks me for medical advice?

**A:** Share your personal experiences, but NEVER provide technical medical information. Medical treatments or a diet that works for you may be dangerous to another patient with a difference combination of medical conditions.

For medical questions, refer to a doctor

For questions about diet, refer to a dietitian

For questions about dealing with the issues of dialysis, refer to a social worker.

### Q: What do I do if a fellow patient comes to me with a complaint about a staff person or another patient?

**A:** Patients, especially new patients, can benefit from knowing that there is someone who understands what it means to being on dialysis and they might approach you with their questions or concerns. If a patient comes to you with a complaint, you should encourage them to utilize the facility's grievance procedure if the problem cannot be resolved in an informal way. Suggesting to the patient that they bring the issue to the social worker's attention is usually the first step in this process. If they don't feel they can do this, they may ask that you help them take this first step.

### Q: Who can I tell if a patient comes to me with a complaint?

**A:** Remember that all health care personnel are required to observe confidentiality of patient information and Patient Representatives are expected to follow the same standards of confidentiality: **ALWAYS get the patient's permission before approaching a staff member with a patient concern.** NEVER repeat personal information that you may learn in your role as a Peer Mentor.