

Tips, Strategies, and Talking Points for Recruitment and Retention



This guidance document provides support for facilities and program staff in recruiting and retaining program participants including an easy-to-access list of criteria for patient participation, considerations for pairing mentors and mentees, and language to help staff identify mentor leaders, introduce and draw patients to the program, and ensure that participants make the most of their *Peer Up!* program experience.

Criteria for Participation/Identifying Participants

All mentors and mentees should meet the following criteria:

- Receives in-center treatment at the facility for ESRD
- Is 18 years of age or older
- Can understand and sign informed consent
- Can comprehend English without the aid of a support person

Mentors must also meet the following criteria:

- Has been on dialysis for at least one year
- Demonstrates a relatively positive attitude toward treatment
- Shows a willingness to share personal information about themselves either openly or on a one-to-one level
- Can follow their plan of care
- Likes to talk to people and share stories
- Likes to help others
- Will successfully complete training

Mentees must also meet the following criteria:

- Shows willingness to receive help and support
- Could benefit from spending time with a peer mentor

- Is new to dialysis and/or the facility or is going through some health changes and would like to talk to another person who knows what dialysis is like
- Likes to learn new information
- Sometimes finds self-care difficult
- Is willing to set aside time to meet with another person, in person or by phone

Considerations for Pairing

- In some cases, patients who have been on dialysis for a comparable length of time (less than six months, more than six months but less than two years, more than two years but less than five years, more than five years) may have more to share.
- Timing and transportation
 - » If possible, participants should be matched based on treatment time so that they can meet before or after treatment at the dialysis facility.
 - » Pairings should take into account the flexibility of scheduling related to transportation.

- Comfort level of communicating with others
 - » Participants with similar levels of comfort communicating with others might encourage mutual levels of contribution and participation. For instance, consider pairing a highly apprehensive mentee with a more “reserved” mentor.
 - » Program managers/coordinators should meet with individuals that seek to serve as mentors but indicate a high level of communication apprehension. These individuals may benefit more participating as mentees.



- Additional factors to consider when pairing mentors and mentees may include gender, hobbies, age, socioeconomic status, and other interests obtained from the application.
- Program managers/coordinators should consult with the facility staff that have the most interaction with the patients (i.e., patient care technicians, social workers, dietitians, or nurses) to review the suggested pairings as they know the patient population best.

Recruitment and Retention Language

- The *Peer Up!* program is an extension of the patient-centered approach to care.

- *Peer Up!* program participants are paired together to share their experiences and knowledge, discuss topics related to self-management and support, and develop problem-solving skills. In each pair, one patient will serve as the mentor and the other as the mentee.
- Staff can assist by identifying and nominating patients who may benefit from participation in the *Peer Up!* program, either as a mentor or mentee.
- The effectiveness of the *Peer Up!* program depends on staff to provide continual feedback on the compatibility of mentor and mentee pairs and the overall benefits of the program for each.