Kidney Connection: A Patient Peer Mentoring Program

Talking Points for Turning Down a Mentor or Mentee Applicant

Be prepared, honest, kind, and clear.

• Ensure the conversation takes place when the applicant has the time to talk and there is privacy.
• Make eye contact.
• Provide at least one specific reason why being a peer mentor or mentee is not currently an option for the applicant.
• Help the applicant understand and accept the news by highlighting that he or she may have many strengths, just not strengths that lend themselves to the program at this time.

Focus on options for the future.

• Be clear and concise about the required peer mentor or mentee qualifications that are set at the national level.
• From the specific qualifications, review where there are gaps.
  – If the gaps are modifiable, address the needed changes. Be specific. Provide examples, if possible.
  – If the gaps are not modifiable, thank him or her for their interest and explore if there are other ways for the patient to be involved in patient engagement activities.

Maintain trust and respect.

• Assure the applicant that the decision is for the best for everyone. When possible, provide concrete reasons.
• Focus on options for engagement or advocacy (e.g., counseling, support groups, sharing resources, or other volunteer options that may be better suited for the applicant).
  – If possible, have a list of other volunteer options, support groups, or counseling opportunities available.

Recognize the cycle of acceptance and communicate appropriately through each stage.

• Be available for follow-up questions from the applicant.
  – After thinking about the conversation, the applicant may have additional questions, want additional suggestions, or request information about what he or she needs to do.
• React to questions and comments with empathy.
  – For example:
    • I hear what you are saying/asking and want to help you, would you be willing to …
    • I understand that you would like to … and I want to help you with …
    • You have much to offer, let’s try to find a way …
    • It can be empowering to give back, let’s see how else …