

# 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 ...*

