Peer support for kidney patients

What peer support is and how it could help you, your family or carers.
What is peer support?
Peer support aims to provide support for kidney patients, their families or carers by providing an opportunity to talk to an experienced kidney patient on a one-to-one basis.

Who are peer supporters?
Peer supporters are unpaid kidney patient volunteers. They have completed formal training to offer one-to-one support and have undergone a number of checks, including a criminal records check (carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service), to enable them to do this.

How can I meet a peer supporter?
Ask your kidney doctor or nurse or call the advanced kidney care team on 020 7188 7051. They will match you with a peer supporter and arrange contact.

Will I have anything in common with my supporter?
Yes: you will share your common experiences as a kidney patient. If you wish, you can ask to be put in touch with someone of a similar age or background, or someone undergoing a specific type of treatment.

Can I request peer support at any time?
Yes, as a kidney patient there may be many times when you may wish to talk to a peer supporter, such as:
- when you are first given your diagnosis
- when you are considering treatment choices
- any time that you feel it may be helpful to talk to another patient.
Is peer support only available for patients?
No, it is also available for families and carers of kidney patients.

Is peer support confidential?
All discussions between yourself and the peer supporter will be treated sensitively. However, the peer supporter is obliged to speak to a kidney doctor or nurse if they feel that you or someone else is at risk of harm.

What can peer supporters not offer?
Peer supporters cannot offer advice about medical treatments. You should get medical advice from a health professional such as:

- your GP
- your kidney doctor
- your kidney nurse
- an appropriate member of the healthcare team.

Peer supporters cannot offer counselling. Professional psychological help and counselling are available through the healthcare team or by contacting the renal psychologists (contact details are on page 4).

Peer supporters cannot offer advice about benefits, finance or social care issues; please contact the renal social workers (contact details are on page 4).
Contact us
For more information about peer support please contact the advanced kidney care team, t: 020 7188 2846.

Renal psychologists
Renal social workers
 t: 020 7188 9770 / 7845
 t: 020 7188 5684

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.
 t: 020 7188 8748, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
 t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
 t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)
 e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.
 t: 020 7188 8815 e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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