

# Tips from the HSAG: ESRD Network 15 PAC

## Mindful Patient-Staff Engagement

Effective communication and genuine engagement with patients are important factors in establishing the mutual trust that is essential to the provision of high quality healthcare and improved patient outcomes. That said, sometimes it is difficult to know how to open and maintain lines of communication with patients. Who better to advise us than the patients themselves? Consider the following tips for mindful patient-staff engagement from Network 15's Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) members.

### Show Respect and Be Sensitive to My Preferences and Feelings

*Remember to see me and treat me as a whole person and not just a “faceless” part of an assembly line; just another treatment to complete on your shift.* —PAC member, Nevada

- Take time to get to know me; it will help build my trust in you.
- Ask me how I would like to be addressed.
- Ask me what's important to me and really hear what I have to say.
- Don't judge me; respect my point of view by accepting my opinion and self-assessment.
- Validate my feelings. We all have a right to our feelings. Feelings are not right or wrong; good or bad.

### Use Two-Way Communication and Show Professionalism

*Speak to me as if I'm the only patient in the room, and when you walk over one chair, do the same for the next patient.* —PAC member, Arizona

- Sit down with me; don't stand over me. Look me in the eyes when you talk to me.
- Ask me questions and discuss issues with me. Take the time to listen to me; it will help me listen to you.
- Respond accurately and respectfully when I ask questions.
- Explain any changes in my treatment plan, including medications, and tell me what you are doing before you do it; it will educate me and involve me in my care.
- Think about what you say to me and keep me at the center of the conversation. I am interested discussing my health and my care. I am not interested in hearing about your employer, your job, the doctor, your business problems, or the clinic's financial issues. Knowing about these things is not why I come to treatment and can cause me worry/concern.

### Work with Me Collaboratively and Establish Mutual Trust

*Respect, patience, education, education, and a little more education! The more we know about the process, the more we're encouraged to have a voice, the more we're encouraged to care, the better our treatment outcomes.* —PAC member, Arizona

- Ask me how much I would like to be involved with my treatment; encourage me to be involved in self-care.
- Ask me how you can best help me, and realize to what extent I depend on you.
- Make yourself available to me; check in often and let me know who you're handing me off to when you're leaving my area.

All of these actions will engage me in my care. You can't do your best job of caring for me without involving me.