

Kidney Concerns

News for Kidney Patients and Their Families

Spring 2017

Informed, Empowered, Engaged

In this issue...

In previous issues of Kidney Concerns, we have presented a lot of information to help us adjust to the physical changes we face living with kidney disease. We have not said a lot about the mental and emotional changes that we may experience.

The truth is, even with the best of intentions we will probably experience losses in our lives as a consequence of kidney failure. And these losses can lead to depression and other mental health issues. If we don't have adequate coping techniques, these losses can send us into a downward spiral. And climbing out of that downward spiral can be long, hard, and exhausting.

Some possible signs of depression

- Prolonged sadness or unexplained crying spells
- Significant changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Irritability, anger, worry, agitation, anxiety
- Pessimism, indifference
- Loss of energy, persistent lethargy
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness
- Inability to concentrate, indecisiveness
- Inability to take pleasure in former interests, social withdrawal
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide

In this issue, we are presenting some tools that you can use to help adjust to the changes you may experience living with kidney disease. My hope and prayer is that each and every one of you will reach out and find help when you see signs of depression in yourself or in your loved ones. And if your first try is not successful, try something else. Keep reaching out! The consequences of ignoring these issues can be devastating.

Maggie Carey,

Consumer Committee Chair



**Midwest
Kidney Network**

Identifying and Treating Depression in Dialysis Patients

Depression is a common problem for patients with a chronic disease. For patients to thrive on dialysis, it is important to identify the symptoms of depression and provide the needed treatment.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) now requires all dialysis facilities to screen patients for the symptoms of depression and provide treatment where necessary. Your dialysis facility can choose from two different tools.

The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) consists of 21 items of emotional, behavioral, and somatic symptoms that takes 5-10 minutes to complete. The second tool is the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9). The PHQ-9 consists of 9 questions. Both of these surveys have been shown to be accurate in identifying various levels of depression.

Whichever of the two surveys your facility chooses to use, it is important that you complete the survey. Even if you don't feel depressed, there may be some hidden concerns. When depression is identified, it can be treated. When it is treated, you can feel better.

The risk
of depression is
generally 10-25% for
women and 5-12% for men.
However, people with a
chronic illness face a much
higher risk -- between 25-33%.

National Alliance
on Mental Illness, 2014.

Feeling S.A.D.?

As seasons change and daylight hours decrease, you may notice a change in your mood and sense of wellbeing. Weather conditions prevalent in the Midwest include cold temperatures, cloudy days, and decreased sunlight. These weather conditions may leave one vulnerable to a host of symptoms. Are you experiencing any of the following?

Low Mood	Irritability
Change in Appetite	Depleted Energy/Fatigue
Carb Craving	Increased Need for Sleep
Wanting to be alone	Difficulty Concentrating

While these symptoms may be characteristic of a malady commonly referred to as Seasonal Affective Disorder (S.A.D.), they may also point to a diagnosis of other medical conditions. Therefore, it is imperative that you contact your physician. Ask your physician for advice on following a healthy diet, exercise, and increasing light in your home. Your physician can determine what treatment regimen you should follow.

Your experiences can help others.

We are looking for people like you.

Midwest Kidney Network's Consumer Committee consists of fifteen kidney patients from our five-state area: **Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin**. Committee members have personal experience with kidney failure and a desire to contribute to the welfare of other individuals experiencing the same.

As a member of the Consumer Committee, you ensure that the patient voice shapes our quality improvement projects and educational resources. If you would like more details about serving on this important committee, please call us at **1-800-973-3773**.

Reaching out

If you've been experiencing symptoms of depression it's important to establish a support network as well as speak with your healthcare team. Your dialysis social worker is a great resource.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Minnesota suggests that patients should ask their doctor the following questions.

- What are the potential risks and benefits of medication?
- What side effects should concern me?
- What type of therapy do you recommend and why?
- When should I think about discontinuing the medication?
- What else can I do to help myself recover more quickly?

**Do not let what you
cannot do interfere
with what you can do.**
John Wooden

Resources

Kidney School Learning Modules

These 16 online modules cover a variety of topics. Module 5 addresses how to cope with kidney disease. Visit kidneyschool.org and select "Learning Modules."

Renal Support Groups - American Association of Kidney Patients

AAKP provides a list of kidney support groups by city and state.

Visit <https://aakp.org/support-groups/> or call 1-800-749-AAKP (2257)



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

For general information on mental health and to locate treatment services in your area, call the (SAMHSA) Treatment Referral Help line at 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

National Suicide Prevention Line

Trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call 1-800-273-8255 or visit suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Midwest Kidney Network

We have assembled a list of mental health resources for kidney patients and their families on our website.

Visit midwestkidneynetwork.org/living-well/mental-health or call **1-800-973-3773**.

Midwest Kidney Network
1360 Energy Park Drive
Suite 200
St. Paul, MN 55108

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 26469

Informed, Empowered, Engaged

Peer Mentoring

A Peer Mentor is a kidney patient who has been able to adjust to life on dialysis and is willing to help other patients who are struggling.

Peer mentors have real life experience with the problems other patients may be facing. They provide emotional support and help patients navigate a complex system.

They do not offer medical advice, but they can be a great help to people starting dialysis or people having trouble adjusting.

If your unit has a mentoring program, get involved in it. If they do not have a program, talk to them about starting one.



Peer Mentoring Resources

- For help finding a peer mentor, contact the National Kidney Foundation at nkfpeers@kidney.org or call 1-855-NKF-PEER (653-7337.)
- For peer mentoring program tools developed by the Midwest Kidney Network Consumer Committee, visit us online at midwestkidneynetwork.org or call **1-800-973-3773**.