



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Erase the Wait Mentorship Program

### Patient Mentees

#### **1. What is the mentorship program?**

The Erase the Wait Mentorship program is facilitated by Donate Life Northwest, a nonprofit committed to educating residents of Oregon and Washington about organ, eye, and tissue donation and transplant. We partner closely with all three transplant centers in Oregon to make this training available to anyone interested in exploring living kidney donation. Waitlisted kidney patients and the support partners of their choosing meet as a group to learn about treatment options including living donation, and explore creative ways to extend their networks and seek a donor. If you choose to attend and complete the training, you will be matched with a trained mentor who is either a living kidney donation recipient or living kidney donor. Mentors support you in sharing your story in the search for a donor.

#### **2. How will this program benefit me?**

By going through three trainings with fellow kidney patients and their support people, you will be able to network and learn from others in a similar situation. Past participants said that the program gave them hope and the ability to plan for the future. Additionally, mentors offer a unique perspective on the success of living donation and advice on how to navigate the process.

#### **3. I don't want to ask anyone to donate a kidney to me, why participate in this program?**

Many participants are hesitant and skeptical of the living donation process – that's completely natural! We aim to provide you with enough information about living donation so that you can decide if it is a treatment option you want to pursue. Through exercises and activities, you and your support person will learn tools for sharing your story and need for transplant without pressuring or making people in your community feel uncomfortable. By generously sharing your story, you give others the opportunity to help you.

#### **4. What is the time commitment for this program?**

Patient participants commit to attending all three training sessions on three consecutive Sundays. Each session is 5 hours in length and includes a mid-day meal. After completing the training, you will be matched with a mentor. Mentors and patients may communicate over the phone, email, or in person. We encourage monthly communication but the amount/length is up to you and your mentor.

#### **5. Why do I need to have a support person attend the trainings with me?**

We ask that all patient participants bring at least one support person to all of the trainings. Support people can be spouses, siblings, parents, grown children, friends, coworkers, neighbors, or fellow members of an organization – anyone who is interested in learning more about living donation and supporting you in the process. A lot of information is provided in the trainings and it is helpful to have someone with whom you can review and discuss the material. Most importantly, your support person may help spread your story and need for transplant beyond your immediate social circle. You will not be turned away if there is no one to accompany you. We do encourage you to make every effort to invite someone along and will brainstorm likely possibilities – you may be surprised who is willing to help.

## **6. Who are the mentors and how are they trained?**

All mentors have the personal experience of either receiving a living kidney donation or of being a living kidney donor. Some have the experience of donation between family members, friends, or even strangers. The mentors go through a comprehensive training to learn updated information on living kidney donation and strengthen skills for being effective mentors.

## **7. What kind of a relationship will I have with my mentor?**

You and your mentor will determine what kind of relationship is feasible for your time availability and comfort. Mentors do not give medical advice or act as a best friend. Mentors are available to share their personal experience with living donation and support you through the process of sharing your story and searching for a donor.

## **8. If I already have people being worked up to be my donor, is this program right for me?**

Yes, past participants shared that even if they were well along the path to having a living donor, it was still helpful to network with other kidney patients and learn from the experiences of past donors and recipients. Because there is always a possibility that the person being worked up to be your donor will not be able to donate, it is important to continue learning about avenues for finding a donor. Mentors can also support patients through the sometimes difficult process of waiting for a potential donor to be cleared.

## **9. If I have no one being worked up to be my living donor, is this program right for me?**

Yes, some participants have never looked into living donation before joining the program, others are familiar with the treatment option but have been hesitant to search for a donor. In the interactive trainings, you and your support person will learn from the experiences of others and be supported in confidently sharing your story in the search for a donor.

## **10. Is there a cost to attend this program?**

No, all costs associated with this program are covered by Donate Life Northwest and participating transplant centers. If you wish to make a voluntary contribution to help cover the costs of this program and other programs that promote organ, eye, and tissue donation through education and outreach, we ask that you do that independently by going online to [donatelifenw.org](http://donatelifenw.org) and clicking “Contribute” in the upper right.

## **11. How do I sign up?**

If you are interested, contact [livingdonation@donatelifenw.org](mailto:livingdonation@donatelifenw.org) to see if this program might be a good fit for you and if there is space in any upcoming training sessions.

To learn more visit:  
[www.donatelifenw.org/erasethewait](http://www.donatelifenw.org/erasethewait)

To register for an upcoming training email:  
[livingdonation@donatelifenw.org](mailto:livingdonation@donatelifenw.org)