



Professional Module Part 3: Helping Patients Stay on Track With Their Life Plans

Now that you understand the difference between a care plan (or plan of care) and a life plan, it's time to help your patients stay on track with their life plan goals. This resource can be used to patients' progress and optimize their quality of life.

How can I encourage patients to make progress and track it?

- Ask patients about their life plans, progress, and milestones monthly (e.g., enrolled in a course, bought supplies). You can pair this with another monthly patient activity, like a lobby day or a monthly lab draw.
- Create a binder with patients' life plans and tracking forms and place it in a central location so any team member can update it.
- Provide patients with resources on managing their life plan, like [Creating a Life Plan Worksheet](#) or the [NCC's Goal Workbook for ESRD](#).
- Create a life plan-focused bulletin board in the lobby with motivational stories and pictures. If you include specific patient details or pictures, make sure you get permission first.
- Encourage patients to sign up for the ESRD NCC Peer Mentoring program as a "mentee" (i.e., the peer that receives mentorship). If you need more information on peer mentoring, you can access many resources for the ESRD NCC's Peer Mentoring program here: [Peer Mentoring Resources for Patients](#).



How can I help patients stay on target as they work toward their goals?

- Request 15 minutes of one-on-one time with patients when they are not receiving dialysis to have a meaningful conversation about their life plan progress in a more private setting.
- When patients share success or disappointments, provide emotional support and encouragement.
- Hold team discussions routinely about the importance of patients' life plans and how their healthcare team can help. This can be part of monthly huddles, staff in-services or even Quality Assessment Process Improvement meetings.

How can I support patients when they make changes in their plans or goals?

Life doesn't always go according to plan. It's important to make updates as needed and help patients reframe these changes as opportunities, not failures.

- Ask open-ended questions to help patients clarify if updates are needed. This might include questions like, "How are you feeling about your life plan? Does it still seem to fit you? Does your life plan feel energizing or stressful?"
- Remember to document any changes in life plans or goals in the facility life plan binder.

How can the facility support patients as they reach their goals?

- With patients' permission, post their accomplishments on a bulletin board or flyers in the lobby.
- Encourage patients to sign up for the ESRD NCC Peer Mentoring program as a "mentor" (i.e., the peer that provides mentorship). In this way, the mentor could "pay it forward" and help others to set and meet personal goals.