

Why a National Program?

The current need for a family living with paralysis to learn the importance of health and wellness and how to avoid the dramatic effects of secondary conditions on employment, education, and re-integration into society has never been greater.

We know that hospital stays for the newly injured have been tragically reduced. We also know services for those living with paralysis have also been reduced or nearly vanished at the local and state levels. This situation will likely continue to grow.

The Reeve Foundation launched the PFSP to fill the gaps: to develop programs where they do not exist, to network with existing programs, and most importantly to introduce a standardized training curriculum to certify mentors. We believe a national peer mentoring program can help fill this void.



We **BELIEVE**
you should **not**
be **ALONE.**



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EMPOWERING People
through **experience**

The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation **Peer & Family Support Program's (PFSP)** mission is to provide critical emotional encouragement, as well as, local and national information and resources to people living with paralysis, and their families and caregivers. We empower people living with paralysis, including our service men and women, their families and caregivers, to achieve a healthy and full life.

The PFSP is a national peer-to-peer mentoring program that utilizes the real life experiences of those that are thriving while living with paralysis. After all, who is better equipped to help people living with paralysis than those that are living with it every day?

The PFSP's goal is to match clients with a Reeve Certified Mentor who will be of similar age, gender, level of paralysis, ethnicity, veteran status and location. This criteria will help address the unique needs of each client, further enhancing the client/mentor match, and ultimately making the mentoring experience as beneficial as possible.

PEER MENTOR

What is a Reeve Certified Peer Mentor (PM)?

The PM is part of a national peer mentor program and a member of the most diversified pool of mentors in the country. They are part of a network, connecting existing programs that are already doing great work in their communities and other individual mentors from across the country.

This nationwide reach not only allows mentors to work with clients in their local communities, but also clients from across the country. The PFSP is utilizing technology to facilitate real-time communication between clients and mentors, ensuring clients in remote areas and with special needs also receive mentoring.

The Reeve PM is someone special...a person who is thriving in their own life and can demonstrate the life skills that empower others to reach for their own goals. Someone who is intimately aware of their local resources, programs, tips & tricks, medical suppliers, employment or education, and the overall accessibility of their community.

Could you be a Reeve Certified Peer Mentor?

A Reeve PM has an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of people in our community, including our military men and women, families, caregivers and all those affected by paralysis. If you meet the following eligibility requirements, and feel you would be an effective mentor, we encourage you to contact us.

We are looking for someone who:

- Is living with paralysis or is a family/caregiver for at least a year
- Has a positive outlook and is thriving in life
- Has the desire and time to volunteer in the program
- Can maintain confidentiality
- Is knowledgeable about local community resources
- Has good interpersonal skills
- Has the ability to travel locally
- Can complete the Reeve Certification program

The Reeve Foundation supports its mentors by providing:

- Expert training and certification process
- National network of peer mentors
- A secure online community where mentors can exchange ideas, information and solutions
- A dedicated staff of Regional Coordinators
- Comprehensive information on local, state, and national resources
- Direct contact to Reeve Foundation Information Specialists
- Access to the world's largest library collection on paralysis-related materials and the national Paralysis Resource Center (PRC)



CLIENT

What is a client?

Are you living with paralysis? Are you the parent or spouse of an individual living with paralysis? Are you a family member, a friend or caregiver? If you said yes to any of these and need some help sorting through the challenges you are facing, then you might just need to contact us and set up a mentor session.

The Reeve PMs look forward to utilizing their personal knowledge and training to help clients. We recognize they will not have the answers to all of your questions, but rest assured they will listen and provide a perspective that only someone who has lived through this can. They have access to an unparalleled amount of information and resources at the local, state, and national level. Our diversified national network of mentors use a private on-line community to share their experiences and gain the perspective and insight of other peer mentors so as to better serve our clients.

Typical questions our clients ask?

- What should I expect when I move home after rehabilitation?
- How do I manage a move to another state?
- How do I search and find the right school or job opportunity?
- What secondary health conditions should I focus on and where should I go to get the best information?
- How can I cope with the strain of being a caregiver for a loved-one living with paralysis?
- How do I balance my "traditional" role as a spouse of someone living with paralysis, while making all the adjustments in our marriage and family life?
- I used to play games with my dad before his accident...can he still do that?
- How can I hang-out with friends like I used to? How can I date?
- How do Veteran Administration benefits work?

What are the benefits of talking to a Reeve PM?

- Clearer understanding of maintaining health and wellness
- Avoiding secondary conditions of living with paralysis
- Better navigation of local, state and national resources
- Honest, realistic and optimistic discussion about your future
- Understanding the science of paralysis and the progress of research
- Help you recognize what you know and don't know
- Give you peace of mind as part of a nationwide community
- Confidence building and motivation
- Tips and tricks
- The power of a positive role model

How does a client/mentor relationship work?

Well, that is up to you, the client. The client/mentor relationship is your private confidential relationship. The client determines the location, frequency, and length of meetings/calls. Topics of discussion are based on what is important to you and your level of comfort. Don't worry about getting the wrong PM...you can request a different PM with ease. We encourage you to contact us soon and schedule time with one of our mentors. They truly understand what you are going through, better than anyone else, and chances are they once had the very same questions as you.

Courtesy of Andrew Sacks/SaxPix

