

## COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

"The greatest strength of this program was actually meeting with my family to discuss the expectations of each other upon release and also working out a release plan with them." *Inmate*

"This program not only spoke to the issues of the released prisoner - but also gave my wife and I valuable insight to improve our own relationship." *Family member*

"I look forward to life - I never had one! This program is a cornerstone for a new life - especially because of family attending - allowing us to work and plan our life together." *Inmate*

"If you want to keep it, you've got to learn how to keep it alive. This program opened new ways to keep communion relative and alive." *Family member*

"I wish this program was available 20 years ago when my husband was released. I know I would not be here with my son today if it was." *Family member*

"This is the best class I've ever taken for a family when you're getting released." *Inmate*

## CLASSROOM SESSIONS

"Preparing for Release<sup>®</sup>" has four sessions:

- Sessions 1 & 3 with the prisoner.
- Sessions 2 & 4 with the prisoner and one family member or adult from the home to which he/she is being released.

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Building lasting relationships.
- Safe and unsafe boundaries.
- Effective communication.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Identifying your fears and expectations.
- Identifying necessary resources.
- Community Corrections requirements and assistance

At the end of Session Four, each participating family will have developed a "Family Re-entry Agreement". This will serve as a contract identifying and prioritizing the entire family's needs so that they can be addressed when the prisoner arrives home.

## PREPARING FOR RELEASE

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# PREPARING FOR RELEASE

*Preparing Incarcerated  
Men, Women, and Their  
Families for the  
Transition Home*

By

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## SEPARATION AFFECTS FAMILIES

“Preparing for Release<sup>®</sup>” is a four-session program written specifically to address the concerns of both the prisoner and the support person in his/her life outside the correctional facility. Through a series of guided discussions, both expectations and fears are addressed in the relative “safety” of the classroom.

Although lengthy and repeated separations can be hard on families, they can also bring them closer together. Release is an opportunity for family members to celebrate positive changes, share new experiences and ideas, and to appreciate each other even more than when they were together previously.

*“I was surprised to find out that my mother was worried about the same things I was: finding a job, staying off drugs, finding a permanent place to live, re-offending and about how our family and friends would treat me once I got out. Being able to talk to her about it now was a huge relief.”*  
Inmate at Cedar Creek Correctional Center, Littlerock, WA.

## WHY PREPARE FOR RELEASE?

- All changes cause stress and this is a big change for everyone involved.
- Everyone is involved: the prisoner, spouse or significant other, children, their caregivers, other friends and relatives. Even pets are affected.
- “Preparing for Release<sup>®</sup>” will make everyone more relaxed. The entire family will have a better idea what to expect.
- A prisoner’s feelings may be very intense both immediately before going home and for quite awhile afterwards. The joy may be powerful and exciting, but disappointment and fear might be also.
- It will take several weeks and maybe even months for the entire family to adjust to having a prisoner home.
- “Preparing for Release<sup>®</sup>” provides an opportunity for self-discovery and growth for each family member.

*“IF YOU WANT THINGS TO BE DIFFERENT, PERHAPS THE ANSWER IS TO BECOME DIFFERENT YOURSELF.”*  
Norman Vincent Peale

## PRISONERS HAVE ADDITIONAL CONCERNS WHEN THEY RETURN TO THEIR FAMILY

Some of these concerns are:

- Getting a job.
- Staying clean and sober.
- Building positive new relationships.
- Often their role was not healthy prior to arrest and incarceration. What is the new role going to be?
- Fear of failing is huge!
- Trust will have to be completely re-built and will take time.
- What are the expectations of each family member and how can those be prioritized?

Expectations keep us stuck in “what should happen.” When we let go of expectations, we are free to live authentically, honestly and with new possibilities. “Preparing for Release<sup>®</sup>” provides a safe place to release unrealistic expectations while maintaining healthy boundaries and goals.