

MOTIVATION & SELF MASTERY™:

Training Program for Prison Volunteers:

What it is like to go into a prison:

Most of the facilities that you will be going into are minimum security facilities. The inmates that attend our programs are getting ready to be released back into their communities in less than a year. Therefore, the focus of DOC efforts is to get them ready for successful re-entry.

A successful re-entry is one in which the individual inmate goes back into their community and becomes a contributing and functioning member of that community.

An unsuccessful re-entry is one in which the individual goes back into the community and trips up by breaking a parole, probation, or DOC rule, or commits a new crime, resulting in what is called "recidivism".

There are 700,000 people who are scheduled to be released from prisons around the country within the next three years. That is a lot of people who need supervision, educational and support services (which is what we do), job skills, and tenable living situations. The MSM program supports re-entry and re-adjustment into community standards.

The prison population has the following special factors to consider while teaching and coaching:

- many inmates have survived physical abuse
- many inmates have survived childhood sexual trauma
- over half of the inmates have a drug and/or alcohol addiction
- few inmates have formal education, and many have not graduated from high school
- some inmates have diagnosed mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, depression, anti-social personality disorder, and other personality disorders

It is incumbent upon volunteers and service providers to maintain authority and order in the classroom, while compassionately serving this population.

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Training materials for volunteers

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Rules you should follow carefully:

Some inmates are highly manipulative and will ask for favors, such as mailing a letter, obtaining personal hygiene products, using your influence to advocate on their behalf against counselors, or contacting people outside of prison.

Under no circumstances should you EVER;

- Take anything from the prisoners other than homework or program materials. Some inmates may write you a note about the impact that the program has had on them and it is ok to accept a “feedback” note.
- Offer to contact someone outside of prison for the inmate.
- Get involved in advocating for inmates against the staff. If you see something that you think is inappropriate, please maintain discretion and contact Kay Wilson as soon as possible.
- Bring your cell phone into the facility. It is a crime to bring a cell phone into a Correctional Institution, so just leave your phone in your car.
- Give food to the inmates.
- Give the inmates any objects, other than lending them a pen to use in class. Collect the pens at the end of class.

Always defer to the Correctional Officers (CO's) and the Counselors. They have authority over you while you are in the facility. Even if you disagree with their instructions, follow the instructions, then contact Kay Wilson with any questions or comments.

Maintain boundaries with the inmates. This is particularly important for male volunteers serving female inmates. Few of the female inmates have had healthy and appropriate relationships with males, so it is imperative that male volunteers act like gentlemen at all times and preserve formality. Female inmates sometimes want to hug you, and you should not hug them back. Simply tell them that you are not allowed to have close physical contact and offer to shake their hand warmly. This issue is more difficult for female volunteers serving females

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and the lines are less clear because hugging between female inmates and female staff is not prohibited, but you should really use your discretion and try to maintain formality. Female volunteers should never hug a male inmate. Get into the habit of shaking hands. Explain that hugging is not permitted, but that you appreciate their warmth, and extend your hand for a handshake.

You will be given materials from the Department of Corrections for volunteers to review and

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