



# Community Re-entry

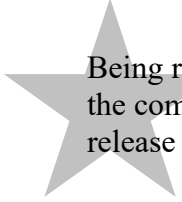
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Developed by Carleton University, Criminal Justice Decision Making Laboratory  
& Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services  
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# Preparing for Release

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Being released is an important event, however, preparation is key for a successful re-entry into the community. The purpose of this workbook is to get you to start thinking about your plans for release and next steps.

When planning, it's important to think about what has worked and what hasn't in the past, so you can adjust for the future.

To start off, think back to what has worked well in the past to help you stay out?

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What were previous challenges you faced when released?

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# Preparing for Release

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As your release date draws closer, you may be feeling a lot of mixed emotions. Let's think about some of them.

Rate how prepared you are for this release:

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Rate how **nervous** you are for this release:

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Now think about your friends and family and how they might be feeling about your upcoming release.

Rate how **nervous** you think they might be feeling about this release:

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Rate how **excited** you think they might be feeling about this release:

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What is the first thing you want to do upon release?

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Rate whether this will keep you out or put you back in jail:

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

# Shorter- and Longer-Term Priorities

There may be many things you want to do right after being released and it is easy to get overwhelmed with all of your choices. Learning how to separate things that are important to deal with right away and things that can be done later can help you organize what you need to do and when you should do it.

**Shorter-term** priorities are important to focus on right away. These are your most urgent concerns. This will often involve meeting your basic needs. For example: finding somewhere to live, finding a job.

**Longer-term** priorities are important to focus on later and consist of goals that you may want to achieve in a longer span of time. For example: getting a better paying job, going back to school to gain new skills.

First, list the things you need and want to get done after your release.

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Now, separate the things you have listed above into shorter-term and longer-term priorities.

## Shorter-Term Concerns

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## Longer-Term Goals

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# Institutional Resources

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There are some resources available in custody that can help you. Some of these resources are more practical and can help you with your basic needs such as food and affordable housing. Other resources may be more focused on your well-being such as connections with religious groups or support groups.

It is helpful to know what resources are available in custody to help you while you prepare for release.

- Mental Health: Can request to be seen by the mental health nurse or social worker on a short-term basis. Online sessions with a psychiatrist may also be possible.
- Treatment: Some treatment referrals can be made and brief workbooks on a variety of topics are available to work through. There may also be group sessions on a variety of topics.
- Spiritual: The chaplain has access to multi-faith resources and spiritual care providers in the community. They can also provide prayer and guidance.
- Aboriginal Spirituality: The Native Institutional Liaison Officer can be seen by request for Smudging/Teachings. Other services can also be requested.
- Identification: The social worker can help you get a birth certificate. You will need \$35 for an Ontario birth certificate. You also need someone who has known you for at least two years and belongs to a specific profession (e.g., health professional, lawyer, teacher) to be a guarantor.
- Telephone: You have been issued a \$20 telephone card for important calls. Wherever possible, you should make collect calls.

# Community Resources

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There are many resources available in the community that can help you. Again, some of these resources are more practical and can help you with your basic needs such as food and affordable housing. Other resources may be more focused on your well-being such as religious groups or support groups.

**Community resources can include:**

church groups                      health care                      self-help groups  
social assistance                      food bank                      Ontario Disability Support Program

Can you think of any others?

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Have you tried any of these in the past? Which ones?

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How have they worked?

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How will you know when you need help? For example: when you start considering crime to meet your needs.

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# Managing Expectations

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Now that you've started thinking about preparing for release and the resources available to you, let's talk about expectations.

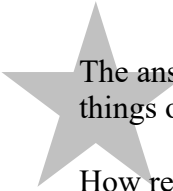
Although there are several things you can do to prepare for successful re-entry, you must also consider the possibility that your release may not go as planned. While having confidence is great, you must also be realistic. In other words, you need to have a practical idea of what *can* be achieved. For example, wanting to quit drinking is a good step towards a successful release. However, deciding to do it while spending time with active drinkers - and with no help or support - would not be a realistic approach. Being overconfident can lead to problems, as you may overlook the seriousness of some of the barriers you may face.

Consider who is to blame if you return to jail?

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Consider who deserves credit if you succeed on release?

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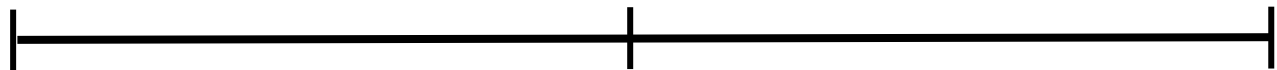
 The answer to the above two questions should be YOU! Even though you may have to deal with things out of your control, you get to decide how to handle them.

How ready do you feel compared to previous releases?

Less ready

Same

More ready



Next, let's look at how you feel about your ability to succeed on release. Compared to previous releases from jail, how do you see yourself now? Are you more confident? Better prepared? Feeling more realistic? Write down your reasons in the box below.

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# Managing Barriers to Success

No matter how much you prepare for your release, you are likely to face some barriers during your re-entry. Although you may not be able to avoid some barriers, you can figure out which ones are more likely for you and make a plan for what to do if they come up during your release.

First, think back to the times where things were going well when you were in the community.

Why do you think it was going well? What were you doing?

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Draw a line anywhere on the scale below to show how difficult it will be to get back to that time.



Not difficult at all

Very difficult

Which of the following might *lower* your chances for success? Circle the ones that might apply to you and add any others you can think of.

addictions

negative moods

friends/family that are bad influences

not reaching goals

loss of motivation

not having a job

How will you know if you start to slip? For example: stop showing up to things, increase drinking habits.

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What can keep you from slipping? For example: a positive relationship, staying sober, a job.

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# Managing Barriers to Success

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Do you have any probation orders? Circle one.

Yes

No

Not sure

If you know what your conditions are, write them below.

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Rate how well following your probation orders has gone in the past.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

Use the space below to provide any details about following your past probation orders.

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# Managing Barriers to Success

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Check all the things that you might consider doing on probation.

Be more open with your PO

Avoid old haunts

Seek counselling

Go to church

Avoid old friends

Have PO help with writing a resume

Have PO help with finding a job

Have PO talk to your partner

What do you expect from your PO?

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What can you do to improve your time with probation?

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# Developing Social Supports

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The people you surround yourself with often can have an influence on your success or failure in the community. Whether they are friends, family, or coworkers, the people you spend the most time with often affect your beliefs, behaviours and actions. This makes it important to choose who you spend time with carefully. Try to surround yourself with people who are encouraging, positive, and who do not support crime as a lifestyle. These people are your social supports.

With this information, let's reflect on some of the people in your life.

Who in the community have you burned in the past?

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Who in the community can and will help you?

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Who in the community should you approach?

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Who in the community should you avoid?

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# Additional Factors for Success

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There are other factors to consider when planning for a successful re-entry that may influence your behaviours. Two of these factors include your mood and spare time. Understanding how these factors influence your behaviours can help you prepare for them.

## 1) Mood

It should come as no surprise that your moods can affect how you act. Let's explore this further, check all boxes that apply to you and fill in the spaces with your own answers.

When feeling down I...

- avoid others
- misuse substances
- want to hurt others
- focus on the negatives
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

When feeling good I...

- take credit for doing well
- work harder
- set new goals
- see myself succeeding
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 2) Spare Time and Boredom

During your time in the community, you will have times where you have nothing to do. Although spare time is great for relaxing, it's very possible that you'll become bored.

Often, when people are bored, they are more likely to participate in activities that are riskier. These activities can include something like speeding while driving or doing drugs.

In this box, list what happens when you are bored. What do you tend to do?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Great! In this box, list some activities you can do in your spare time to avoid boredom. For example: going to the gym, picking up a hobby.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now that you've reflected on some of the behaviours that are influenced by your mood, you know what to look out for when you are feeling a certain way. For example: if you tend to avoid others when you are feeling down, you can make sure that your social supports are aware of this habit and have a plan in place if you need to reach out to them during this time.

# Summary

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**Here's a quick summary of what you have learned about community re-entry:**

- 1) Preparation is key to a successful release.
- 2) Shorter-term priorities involve the most pressing concerns we have, where longer-term priorities involve the goals we want to achieve. Separating the two helps us figure out what needs to get done first.
- 3) There are many kinds of resources available in the community that can help.
- 4) It's important to make sure that you are being realistic about what can be expected when released. Confidence is great, but overconfidence can lead to problems.
- 5) There are many possible barriers to a successful release. Knowing what they may be and finding supports to help you when you face them are important in overcoming them.
- 6) The people we spend the most time with influence our attitudes and actions. It's important to surround yourself with people who are there to support you and not a criminal lifestyle.
- 7) Factors such as mood and boredom can influence our behaviours and are important to consider when planning for success.