

RETURNING HOME

**My Guide to
Community
Reentry**

**A Transition Guide by
the National Resource
Center on Justice-
Involved Women**

October 2024



About the Center for Effective Public Policy (CEPP)

C ≡ P P

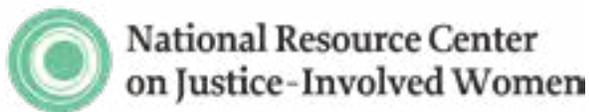
Center for
Effective
Public Policy

**Working toward a world
where all justice is
community justice**

For over 40 years, CEPP has helped practitioners, policymakers, and communities reimagine a justice system that works for all through training, resources, and team-building.

Learn more about our work at cepp.com.

About the National Resource Center on Justice-Involved Women (NRCJIW)



**Addressing the needs of
women involved in the
justice system**

The NRCJIW inspires change by equipping agencies, advocates, and justice-involved women with information and technical assistance that promotes the use of gender-responsive and trauma-informed policies and practices.

Learn more about our work at cjinvolvedwomen.org.

Table of Contents

About This Resource Guide	1
Section I: Getting Started—What I Need and What I Have	2
Part 1: How I Feel About Returning to the Community.....	2
Part 2: My Strengths	5
Part 3: Reconnecting with Family and Friends.....	15
Section II: My Reentry Plan.....	17
Section III: Personal Well-Being.....	21
Part 1: Responding to Stress	22
Part 2: Assessing Your Well-Being	27
Part 3: Reentry Routine	34
Part 4: My Mentor	38
Section IV: Family.....	45
Part 1: Community of Support	45
Part 2: Reflecting on Your Impact	49
Part 3: Building Relationships with Children.....	51
Part 4: Building Communication Skills.....	56
Section V: Housing	64
Section VI: Employment and Education	71
Section VII: Conclusion	82



About This Resource Guide

Preparing to return home presents many challenges for women who have been incarcerated. Nationally, about 1 in 8 of all people released from state prisons, and more than 1 in 6 jail releases, are women, according to the [Prison Policy Initiative](#). Though every state in the U.S. has different post-release requirements, most women released from prison or jail will likely experience some level of community supervision. Supervision typically entails several rules and restrictions that can be difficult for women to manage. Nearly twenty percent of women return to jail for [technical violations](#). This means that many women are not committing new crimes, but they struggle to meet various requirements. Meeting supervision requirements is only one aspect of the many complex issues women face when returning home. Women must be connected to critical services to obtain stability across several areas, including housing, employment, mental health, substance use, and healthcare.

This guide addresses the significant barriers and challenges to successful reintegration and offers step-by-step guidance for key reentry areas (e.g., housing security, childcare, and employment). It was developed with the needs of BIPOC women—those most at risk for incarceration and reincarceration—at the forefront. The framework and topics for this guide were informed by the collective brilliance of formerly incarcerated scholars, practitioners, justice professionals, and students from the Center for Justice at Columbia University and CEPP’s [Opportunity Scholars](#).

We hope you will find the activities and information in this guide helpful in creating a plan to ease your transition home. Please distribute this guide to peer mentors, staff, and, most importantly, incarcerated women preparing to transition to the community.

Section I: Getting Started— What I Need and What I Have

This section will look closely at the barriers and challenges you anticipate when returning home. We will also introduce some activities to help you zero in on your strengths and what you will need to succeed.

Part 1: How I Feel About Returning to the Community

It is not unusual to feel many different emotions as you prepare to return home. You can feel excited and confident about some things and worried about others.



Activity 1: Identifying My Feelings

Picture returning home. How does that make you feel? Check all that apply:

- Excited
- Happy
- Wonderful
- Calm
- Determined
- Optimistic
- Confident
- Overwhelmed
- Scared
- Worried
- Frustrated
- Alone
- Angry
- Other: _____

Part 2: My Strengths

As you prepare to transition to the community, you may be experiencing many concerns. Fortunately, you have strengths that can help you address these concerns before or during your transition to the community. Below are three activities that can help you identify your strengths. Don't hesitate to ask your family, friends, or anyone who knows you to help you complete these activities.



Activity 1: Strengths Assessment

Strengths can be personal and internal. Think of things like skills, characteristics, talents, hobbies, interests, and knowledge. Strengths can also be external, including resources like family, friends, and access to community and professional services. Once we know our strengths, we can implement them when we feel challenged or face difficult situations.

1. Read the strength and description. If you have the strength, place a ✓ in the box that says "What I Have." If you would like to develop the strength, place a ✓ in the box that says "What I Want to Work On."

Strength	Description	What I Have (✓)	What I Want to Work On (✓)
Hope	I believe that I can make positive things happen.		
Kindness	I help others and go out of my way to cheer them up; I like to make people happy.		
Humor	I use humor to make people's day better.		
Forgiving	I accept that people are not perfect and try not to hold grudges.		
Wise	When things get tough, I try to remind myself what is important in life.		
Courage	I try to do or say what is important, even when I'm afraid, uncertain, or intimidated.		
Fair	I admit when I'm wrong and try to treat people equally.		
Think Before Acting	I try to think through and make decisions after considering the facts or pros and cons.		
Thoughtful	I avoid unnecessary risks and think before I speak.		
Like to Discover	I like to try new things and explore possibilities.		
Like to Learn	I like to learn new things.		
Creative	I like coming up with new ideas and ways of doing things.		
Kind to Myself	When I don't meet my expectations, I can forgive myself and recommit to new goals.		
Respect	I treat people in the same way I like to be treated.		

Strength	Description	What I Have (✓)	What I Want to Work On (✓)
Honest	I tell people the truth, keep promises, and tell them what is important to me.		
Physically Active	I try to work out or do some physical exercise regularly.		
Spiritual	I keep my faith even during hard times.		
Have Hobbies	I enjoy my free time and do activities such as listening to music, writing, cooking, reading, drawing, etc.		
Enjoy Sports	I belong to a sports team or watch sports.		
Curious	I find the world very interesting and like being involved in new things.		
Flexible Thinking	I can look critically at my beliefs to determine if they are helpful and true.		
Perspective Taking	I see things from different viewpoints and like to consider other people's perspectives.		
Persistent	I keep doing what I consider important, even when things get difficult or fail.		
Leadership	I like to take charge and help people work together to get things done.		
Initiator	I like to get things done and anticipate what should happen next.		
Problem Solver	I see problems as challenges instead of threats. I try to think of options to solve issues and pick the best one.		
Confident	I am usually confident that I can solve problems even when things get overwhelming.		
Enthusiastic	I get excited about starting new projects and stay positive until they are finished.		
Team Player	I am good at working with a group.		
Capacity for Love	I like to express love for others and to receive love.		
Focused	When I start something, I stay committed until I am finished.		
Know Myself	I am usually aware of what I am feeling and thinking.		
Know My Triggers	I know the events, people, and things that can trigger strong emotional reactions.		
Manage Emotions	I can usually manage negative emotions like anger, frustration, sadness, and worry.		

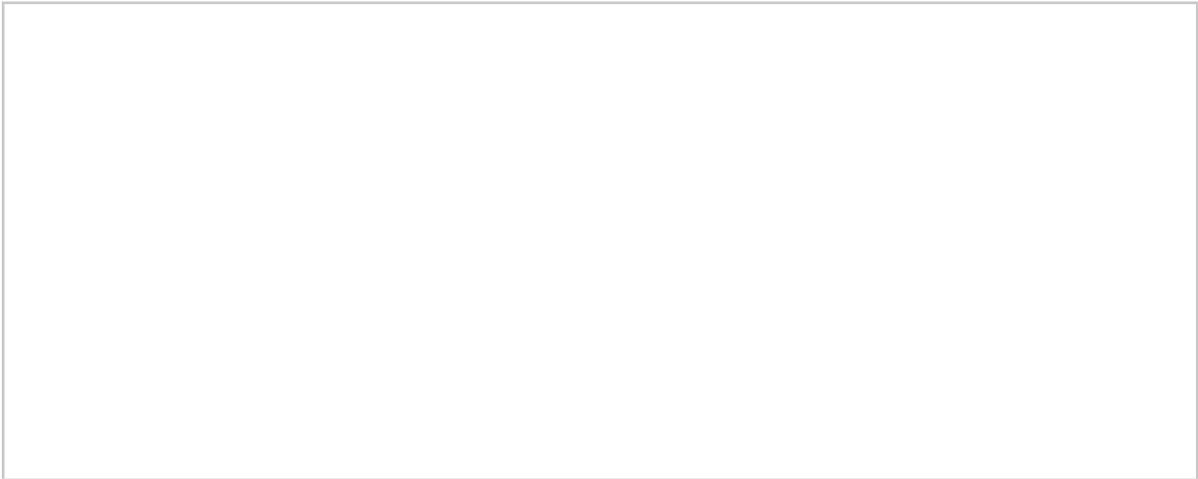
Strength	Description	What I Have (✓)	What I Want to Work On (✓)
Supported by Family	I have family who support me and who I trust will have my best interests at heart.		
Supported by Friends	I have friends and neighbors who support me and who I trust will have my best interests at heart.		
Safe	I feel emotionally and physically safe.		
Valued by Others	There are family members and friends who value my friendship.		
Social Confidence	I am liked and valued by others when I put time and energy into a relationship.		
Good Friend	I can be a good friend.		
Connect with Others	I can fit into different situations and sense what other people are feeling.		
Set Goals	I like to set goals and plan for the future.		

2. Make a list of your top five strengths.

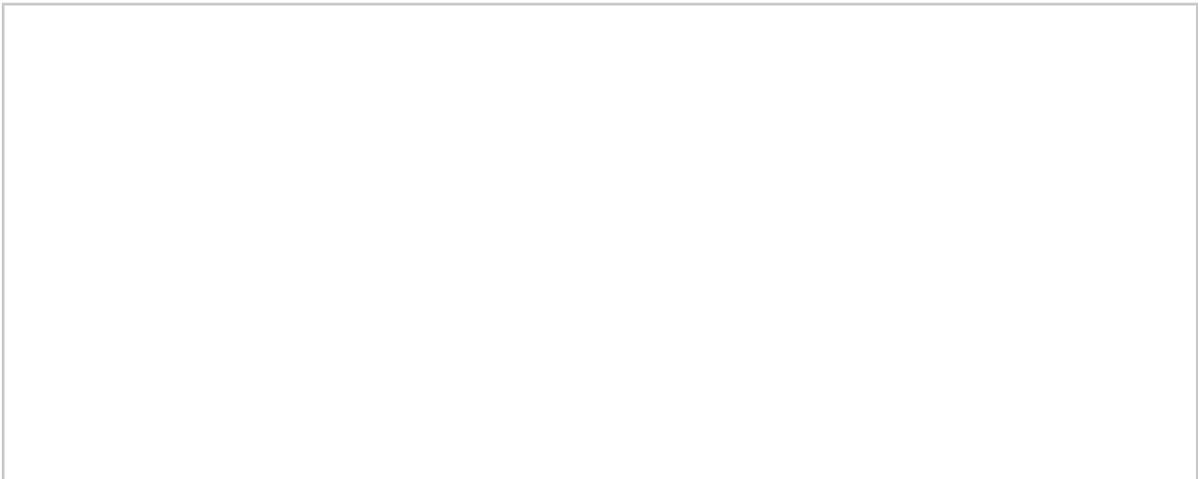
Activity 2: A Strengths Map

A positive experience is something that went well because of what you did to make it happen, something that you are proud of, or something that you enjoyed or that gave you satisfaction.

1. Describe a positive experience.



2. What strengths did you use to make the experience successful? Refer to your strengths from Activity 1 (pages 6–8).



3. Describe this positive experience to someone else, focusing on everything you did and the strength you used to accomplish it.

Activity 3: Eco-Map

The people in our lives (friends, family, service providers, and other sources of support) can keep us safe, help bring us happiness, and support our transition home. This activity is designed to help you identify who is available to you and the resources you would like to connect with in the future.

1. List people, agencies, and other resources you have, had, or want to have in your network. (If you prefer, you can write people's initials instead of full names.) Don't worry if you have lost touch with someone: you can still list people who were important to you or impacted you when you lived in the community.

People, Agencies, and Other Resources	Names
Family	
Children	
Friends	

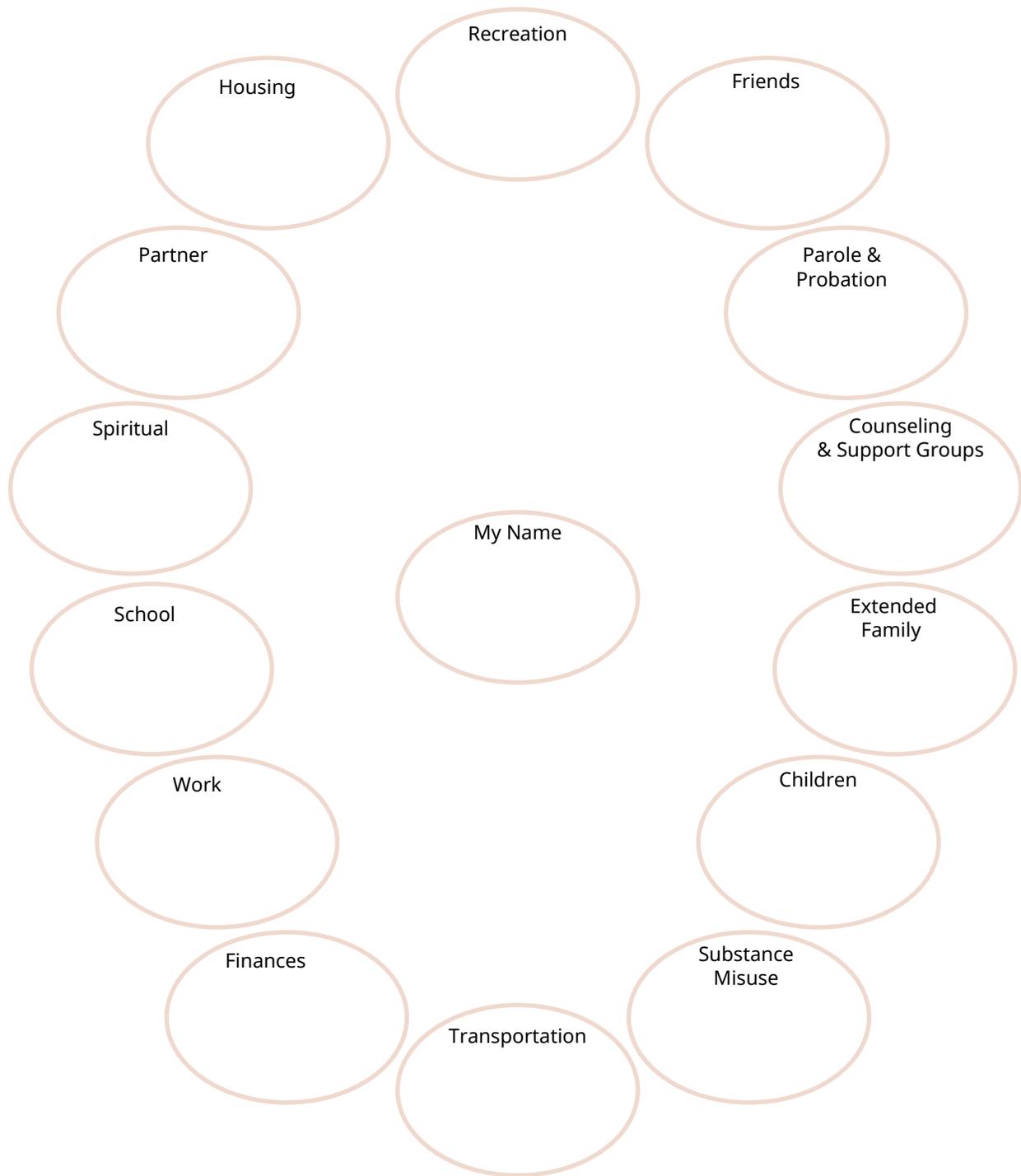
People, Agencies, and Other Resources	Names
Partner, Spouse, etc.	
Counselor	
Support Groups	
Spiritual, Church, Other Community Supports	
Probation or Parole Officer	
Medical Support (e.g., medical insurance, doctor, etc.)	
Mental Health Support (e.g., psychologist or psychiatrist)	
Help with Identification and Documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security, etc.)	
Financial Support (e.g., social assistance, food banks, etc.)	
Housing Support	
Employment	
Education	
Transportation (e.g., driver's license, car, transit)	
Computer and Cell Phone Access	
Recreation and Hobbies	

People, Agencies, and Other Resources	Names
Other Resources (you have, want, or need)	

2. Review your list above. Underline all the people, agencies, and other resources you currently have and can access upon your return. These are people or resources you feel safe with that support you and can help ensure your success in the community.

3. Fill in the eco-map on page 13.
 - In the center, write your first name.
 - In each circle, put the initials of people, agencies, and other resources you listed above.
 - Draw a solid line from your name to any circles where there are people, agencies, and resources you are connected with and can access when you return home. (These are the things you underlined above.)
 - Make a series of dots from your name to any circles where there are people, agencies, and other resources you do not currently have but would like to have.
 - Add a broken line for any relationships you are unsure about and where there might be some tension or conflict.

Eco-Map¹



Legend
——— Strong, positive, or important relationships
- - - - No relationship, but would like one
+ + + + Uncertain relationship, may be tension or conflict

1 Hartman, A. (1995). Diagrammatic assessment of family relationships. *Families in Society*, 76(2), 111-122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104438947805900803>

4. What did this exercise teach you about your network? Check the correct box.

- My network is larger than I thought.
- My network is smaller than I thought.
- I have some strong connections with people, agencies, and other resources in my network.

5. Complete the following sentence: As I prepare to return home, I have an urgent need to expand my network and resources in the following areas:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Part 3: Reconnecting with Family and Friends

One of the greatest rewards and challenges associated with returning to the community is reconnecting with family members and friends. Here are some tips to help you begin this process before returning home:

- Carefully consider who you want in your life. Who will support you and help you transition successfully? Avoid relationships that were destructive in the past.
- Focus on making contact and socializing with loved ones and friends. Send letters, make telephone calls, and encourage visits during the transition.
- Be open and honest about your basic survival needs.
 - Ask for transportation assistance, for example, someone to meet you at the prison gate or DOC drop-off point, or someone to help you get to appointments after you leave.
 - If you require clothing, food, housing, and financial resources, inform your family and friends and work with them to prepare for this.
 - Ask for assistance to ensure you have proper identification and documentation.

It can be difficult for family members and friends to understand what you experienced while inside. Consider finding a mentor (see Section III) so that you have someone to talk to about the impacts of incarceration and the challenges associated with returning home.



Activity 1: Building Connections

Make a commitment to get in touch with family members or friends. Describe when and how will you get in touch with them. Write down what you want your family to know about your transition needs.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their commitment and transition needs.

Section II: My Reentry Plan

The activities in Section I were designed to increase your awareness about what you have (strengths, resources, and supports) and what you want and need to make your transition home successful.

Take a moment now to create a reentry plan. Start with one area you want to improve on and set one goal. Then, use this same process and a new worksheet to tackle other areas and goals.

Consider reviewing the material in this resource guide to help you achieve your goals:

- Section I: Getting Started—What I Need and What I Want
- Section II: My Reentry Plan
- Section III: Personal Well-Being
- Section IV: Family
- Section V: Housing
- Section VI: Employment and Education



My Reentry Plan

1. The area I want to work on is...

Check one:

Personal Well-Being	Family	Housing	Employment and Education	Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Briefly describe the challenge.

2. MY GOAL: I want...

Briefly describe your goal and what would be different if you achieved it.

3. MY ACTION STEPS: I am going to...

List all the steps you will take to reach your goal. Add the date when you hope to accomplish each step. Keep the steps small.

Action Step	Target Completion Date

My Reentry Plan

1. The next area I want to work on is...

Check one:

Personal Well-Being	Family	Housing	Employment and Education	Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Briefly describe the challenge.

2. MY GOAL: I want...

Briefly describe your goal and what would be different if you achieved it.

3. MY ACTION STEPS: I am going to...

List all the steps you will take to reach your goal. Add the date when you hope to accomplish each step. Keep the steps small.

Action Step	Target Completion Date

My Reentry Plan

1. The next area I want to work on is...

Check one:

Personal Well-Being	Family	Housing	Employment and Education	Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Briefly describe the challenge.

2. MY GOAL: I want...

Briefly describe your goal and what would be different if you achieved it.

3. MY ACTION STEPS: I am going to...

List all the steps you will take to reach your goal. Add the date when you hope to accomplish each step. Keep the steps small.

Action Step	Target Completion Date

Section III: Personal Well-Being

The impacts of incarceration can be challenging for many women. Some women have described a condition known as “post-traumatic incarceration syndrome” or “post-incarceration syndrome.” This is a feeling of internal discomfort and fear that can stay with them even when they return to the community. It can result from exposure to painful and threatening prison experiences, including witnessing abuse and feeling chronically unsafe.²

The following worksheets, activities, and resources are intended to help you navigate your well-being as you transition into the community and overcome various reentry challenges. These self-guided materials are not designed to replace external supports, such as mental care resources and therapy.



² See <https://joinnia.com/post-incarceration-syndrome/#::-:text=PICS%20is%20characterized%20by%20a,productive%20members%20of%20the%20community>.

Part 1: Responding to Stress

Humans have a built-in stress response that is designed to defend against the challenges of everyday life. We may not be aware of it, but when we experience stress:

- an alert signal is sent to the brain,
- our heart rate and blood pressure increase, and
- stress hormones (adrenaline and cortisol) that make us stronger, faster, more alert, and better prepared to deal with a difficult situation are released.

Our stress response helps us remain calm and overcome the difficulty. However, when we experience high levels of chronic stress, our stress response is forced to stay on high alert. Over time, this can have a negative impact on our ability to relax. Some people describe feeling hypervigilant (constantly worried about what is happening around them), which can lead to emotions like anger, panic, and rage. Other people shut down and withdraw from the world.

The good news is that we can retrain our brain to deal with stress more effectively. The first step is to learn what triggers our stress response. Triggers can be things that happen outside of us, such as how people respond to us, a sound, or a smell. They can also be internal, including repetitive thoughts like “I can’t stand my life.” By recognizing your triggers, you can prepare to deal with them and regain composure and balance to make a good decision. (See Activity 1.)

Once you recognize your triggers, the next step is to change how you respond to them. The goal is to help your body return to relaxation. There are many strategies you can use to achieve this goal. (See Activities 2–4.)

The next step is to let people know about your triggers. One of the challenges women face as they transition to the community is talking about the impacts of incarceration. Look over the triggers that you listed in Activity 1. Are there some triggers that are difficult to recognize or manage? Think about whether talking with family, friends, or professionals about these triggers would be helpful. Talking with them may help them understand why you feel threatened and struggle to remain calm. You can also reach out to these people when things feel uncomfortable and you need support managing the situation.

Activity 1: What Are My Triggers?

The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify your triggers, which can help you manage difficult situations and return to calm more quickly. Reflect on the last few weeks. Think of situations and events when you felt upset. List your triggers in the chart below.

Then, think about how your body responded and how you felt at the time:

- Did your heart start pounding?
- Did your hands become sweaty?
- Was your face hot?

For each trigger, rate how upset the behavior made you feel on the emotional intensity scale (1 = not bothered, 3 = starting to get upset, 5 = extremely upset).

Triggers	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Example: The sound of someone slamming a door.</i>					
<i>Example: Feeling ignored, disrespected, or unheard.</i>					
<i>Example: Being yelled at or scolded.</i>					
<i>Example: Having to wait.</i>					

Activity 2: Strategies to Combat Stress

Reflect on the triggers you listed in Activity 1. What strategies have you used in the past to feel calmer and more relaxed, or to move down on the emotional intensity scale?

Activity 3: Breathing

We can use many strategies to return to a state of calm. Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because breathing deeply sends a message to our brain to calm down and relax.

Practice taking a deep breath (count 1-2-3-4) and slowly exhaling (1-2-3-4) whenever you feel a change in your body or a strong emotion, when you struggle to interrupt negative thoughts, or when you want to fight, run, or shut down.

Take a moment to practice using this skill right now. How did it feel?

We don't always make the best decisions when we're upset. Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. You can use deep breathing anywhere, anytime. No one can tell when you are practicing this skill.

Activity 4: Record a Calming Statement

Another strategy that can help us relax is using calming statements or strategies. A calming statement is something that we say to ourselves to interrupt negative thoughts, triggers, or feelings. For example, if we are frustrated, we can say to ourselves, "Stay calm. Only 15 minutes left."

Record a calming statement for each situation.

1. Problem with family and/or friends

2. Problem at work/with coworkers

3. Triggered by parole or probation officer

Part 2: Assessing Your Well-Being

There are several life areas that affect your overall health and well-being and that can impact your reentry journey. It's not uncommon for you to be doing well in some areas and to be struggling in others.

This part of the resource guide introduces you to two ways of assessing your well-being: looking at SEEDS and using a wellness wheel. Each way helps you build awareness, acknowledge areas of strength, and initiate conversations with yourself and others about goal setting. You can use the results of your assessments to help you prioritize areas to focus on during your first six months. You can also use the assessments later on because how you're doing can change over time.

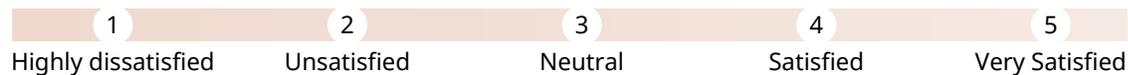


Activity 1: Essential SEEDS

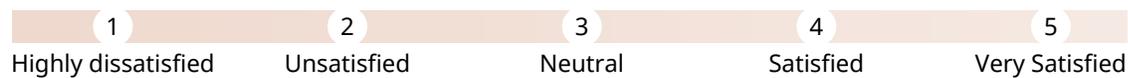
Dr. John Arden says there are five essential elements for a healthy lifestyle: **s**ocial connections, **e**xercise, **e**ducation, **d**iet, and **s**leep, better known as SEEDS.³

Fill in the circle to indicate your level of satisfaction in each area.

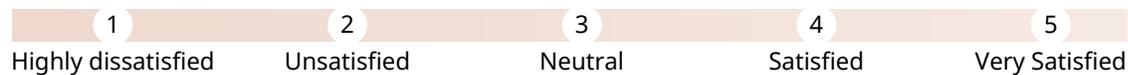
Social Connections (*I am working to build and reconnect with the people who are important to me.*)



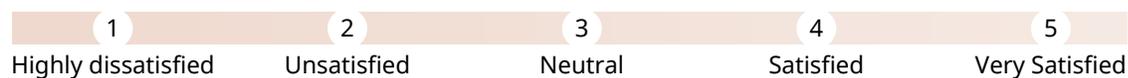
Exercise (*I do something every day to take care of my body.*)



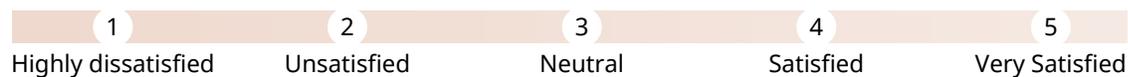
Education (*I am constantly trying new things to build on my strengths and grow personally.*)



Diet (*I eat nutritious foods.*)



Sleep (*I get 8 hours of sleep each night.*)



³ Arden, J. (2014). *The brain Bible: How to stay vital, productive, and happy for a lifetime*. McGraw Hill.

Activity 2: Commit to SEEDS

Write down some action steps/commitment statements for the areas you circled in Activity 1. Think about how you can use your strengths and resources to help. Look back at your strengths assessment (pages 6–8) and eco-map (page 13).

1. What social connections do you want to make throughout the day/week? For example, you might write, “I want to talk to my children every day.”

Commitment statements help us reflect on the areas in our lives that we want to enhance. They help us anchor to a goal and hold ourselves accountable for that goal.

2. What skill do you want to learn or continue to develop? What’s your plan for building on your strengths?

3. What kind of exercise will you do each day? How long will you exercise?

4. What foods would be good for you to eat more of? Less of?

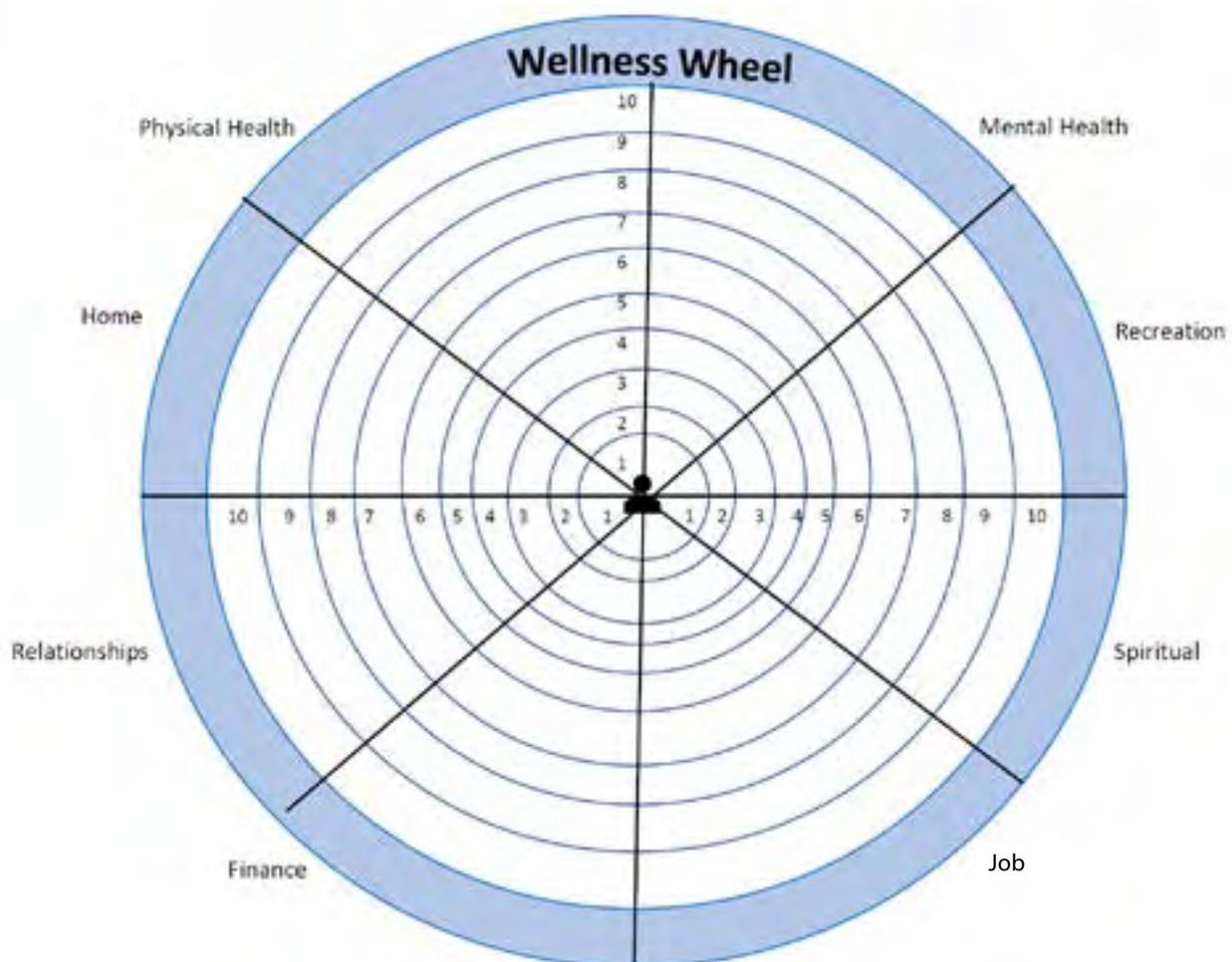
5. How many hours of sleep will you get every night? How will you know that you're getting enough rest?

Activity 3: Wellness Wheel

The wellness wheel is a tool used to assess your well-being across several life domains. There are many wellness wheel varieties.⁴ The wellness wheel below shows eight areas that are important to your well-being.

This self-assessment tool is merely a way to build awareness, acknowledge areas of strength, and initiate conversations with yourself or others about goal setting. The wheel is a source of feedback, and it can change over time. You can use the wheel results to help you prioritize areas you want to focus on during your first six months.

1. Using a color of your choice, rate how you're doing in each area (1 = unsatisfied; 10 = highly satisfied). As an example, if you rate your physical health as 10, color in all 10 sections. If you rate your physical health as 6, color in 6 sections.



⁴ SAMHSA. (2016). *Creating a healthier life: A step-by-step guide to wellness*. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma16-4958.pdf>

2. What is one area of strength from your wellness wheel?

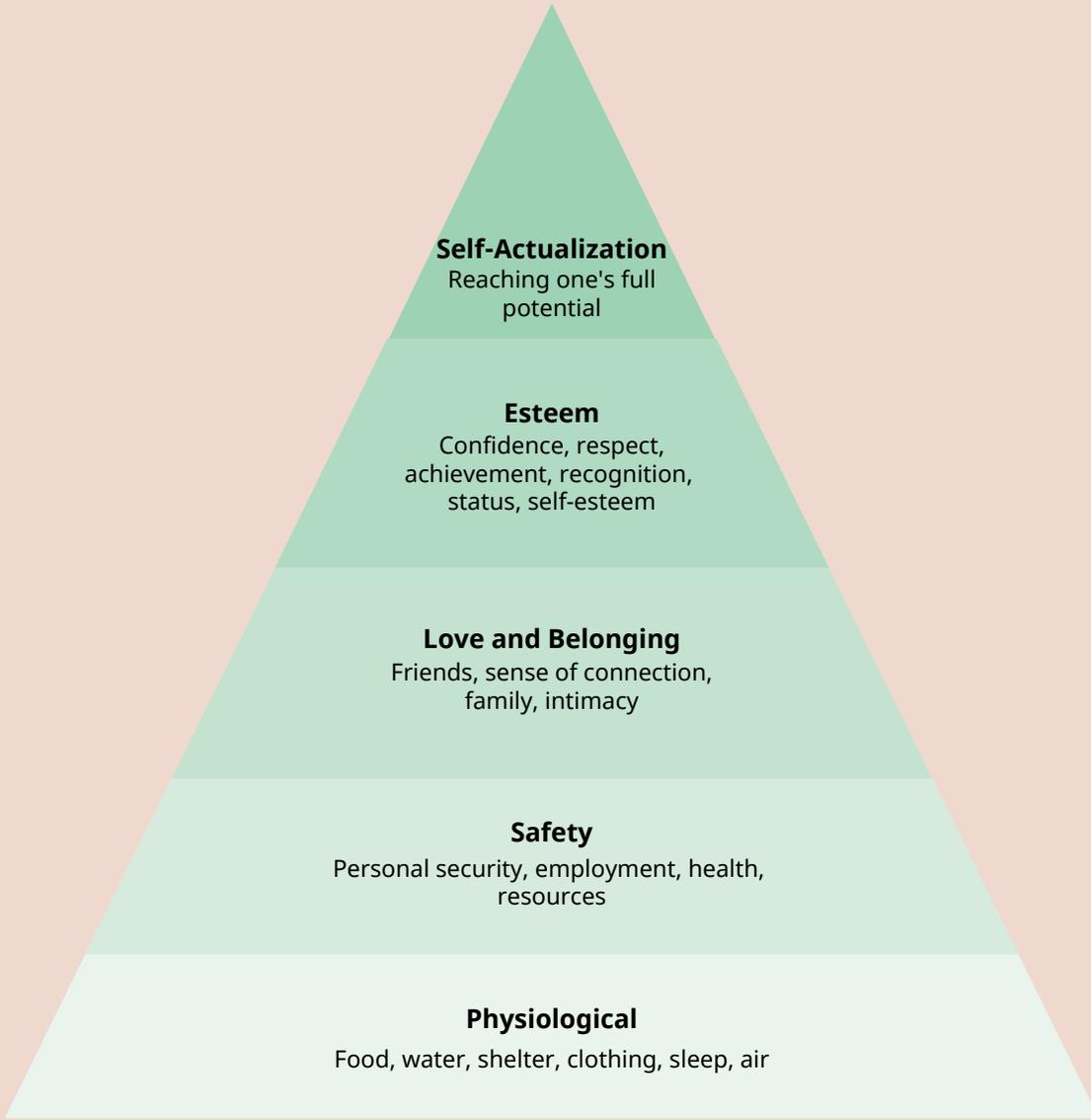
3. Identify one opportunity for growth from your wellness wheel.

4. Commitment statements help us reflect on the areas in our lives that we want to enhance. They help us anchor to a goal and hold ourselves accountable for that goal. Reflect on your response to Question 3 and your reentry plan (pages 18–20). Write a commitment statement that will help you work on this area.

I commit to...

Did You Know...

Your needs are related to a psychology theory called Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.⁵ The first level of needs—physiological—is the most important. Once you address that level, you can attend to the next levels: safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. **Self-actualization** is the point where all of a person’s needs are met and they can focus on personal growth.



⁵ Susie. (2024). *The evolution and future of humanistic psychology: A deep dive*. FACTY Health. <https://facy.com/mind/humanistic-psychology-and-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/>

Part 3: Reentry Routine

Every prison has a schedule that the Department of Corrections dictates. In this new journey, you have the power and choice to decide how you want to spend your time. Building a routine can help you manage your newfound freedom, stay committed to your goals, and balance competing expectations/priorities.



Activity 1: Build Your Daily Routine

Complete the daily schedule planner below. Think about the activities that you want and need to accomplish within a day (e.g., call the probation office, attend a fitness class, contact a rental property to inquire about the units available). Include ideas from Activity 2: Commit to SEEDS (pages 29–30) and Activity 3: Wellness Wheel (pages 31–32).

There are many free printable scheduling templates online. You can also find planners in retail stores.

Time	
6:00 a.m.	
7:00 a.m.	
8:00 a.m.	
9:00 a.m.	
10:00 a.m.	
11:00 a.m.	

Time	
12:00 p.m.	
1:00 p.m.	
2:00 p.m.	
3:00 p.m.	
4:00 p.m.	
5:00 p.m.	
6:00 p.m.	
7:00 p.m.	

Time	
8:00 p.m.	
9:00 p.m.	
10:00 p.m.	
11:00 p.m.	
12:00 a.m.	

Part 4: My Mentor

One of the most effective strategies women transitioning to the community adopt is to identify a mentor who can provide guidance, support, and direction. A mentor can be a friend, family member, religious leader, or someone else you admire in the community.



Activity 1: Finding the Right Mentor

Identifying the right mentor is an important decision. Review the list of attributes and characteristics below. Check **six** qualities that are most important to you when considering a mentor.

- Shared life experience (formerly incarcerated)
- Faith-based
- Local
- Provides constructive feedback
- Challenges me
- Mainly listens rather than advises
- Is a connector/has many connections
- Advocates for me
- Meets only virtually
- Shared race and/or ethnicity
- Meets in person
- More seasoned/older
- Is willing to be an active mentor for at least 12 months
- Can help me with one goal or life area
- Committed to assisting me in several life areas
- Compassionate, kind, gentle
- Direct
- Similar morals and values
- Has an existing relationship with me
- Open
- Innovative/suggests nontraditional avenues
- Shared gender

Activity 2: Contacting Mentors

Look at your eco-map (page 13). List the name and contact information of two people who meet your mentor criteria. If someone is outside of your current network, list their name and make a plan to contact them and ask them to be a mentee.



Name:

Phone:

Email:

Notes:



Name:

Phone:

Email:

Notes:

Activity 3: Mentee/Mentor Contract

Your mentorship experience can be informal with a close acquaintance or formal with someone outside your immediate network. Consider completing the Mentee/Mentor Contract for more formal relationships. Informal mentors may require less structure, and it may be enough to verbally review the questions in the contract.

How to Be a Good Mentee

- Initiate the first meeting.
- Communicate your needs.
- Pull out your reentry plan.
- Be prepared for meetings (e.g., be on time, provide updates on your progress).
- Review your goals and communicate them to your mentor.
- Set objectives for each meeting. What do you want to accomplish?
- Be honest.
- Be open-minded and willing to accept constructive feedback.
- Ask questions.

Mentee/Mentor Contract

PURPOSE

Healthy and successful coaching relationships require a commitment from both parties to reach your goals. It's helpful for the prospective mentee and mentor to have a conversation with one another to discuss, establish, and communicate expectations. Consider completing this contract together. Feel free to return to this document over your journey together and update it as needed.

NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. What type of mentor am I looking for?
 - Professional
 - Personal
 - Spiritual
 - Fitness
 - Mental health/well-being
 - Other: _____
2. What do we hope to gain from this experience?

GETTING STARTED: MEETINGS

3. What day and time will we meet, and for how long? (Communicate times that you are unavailable because of work, school, meetings with probation officer, tending to children, etc.)
4. How often will we meet (once a week, monthly, as needed)?
5. How will we meet (in person, by phone, by video conference)?
6. What is the fastest way to let each other know if we cannot meet at our scheduled time?

FEEDBACK

7. How do we feel about giving and receiving feedback? What is the best way to communicate feedback? How do we create a safe and respectful space to share feedback with one another?

ACKNOWLEDGING THE WINS

8. What milestones are important to celebrate together?
9. How will we celebrate?

By signing this contract, you are committing to the written agreement.

Mentee

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Mentor

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Other Resources to Build a Community of Support and Increase Well-Being

The following resources can help you build a support network and improve your well-being.

1. Groups/communities with people with similar life experiences
 - **Women Transcending Collective Leadership Institute** (WTCLI; <https://centerforjustice.columbia.edu/content/women-transcending>) is the Center for Justice at Columbia University’s fellowship program. WTCLI is composed of formerly incarcerated and directly impacted women who seek to expand their leadership skills to end mass incarceration and contribute to the women’s justice movement. Women nationwide are selected to participate in workshops on the movement, healing practices, and research.
 - The **National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls** (<https://www.nationalcouncil.us/>) is a group of women with current and previous justice histories working to end mass incarceration of women and girls. The Council focuses on issues such as reimagining communities, clemency, political education, and the law. It offers an intensive fellowship opportunity for women interested in organizing.
 - **Essie Justice Group** (<https://essiejusticegroup.org/>) is a collective of formerly incarcerated women and/or women with incarcerated loved ones seeking social change and healing. Essie Justice Group leads Essie Sisterhood, a membership body whose goal is to “break isolation, heal, and build collective power as advocates.” Participants are considered by completing a nomination form.
2. National Resources
 - **The National Reentry Resource Center** (<https://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org>) helps people connect with potential service providers in their communities and offers a helpline to assist those preparing for or in the process of reentry.
 - **Help for Felons: Reentry Programs for Ex-Offenders by State** (<https://helpforfelons.org/reentry-programs-ex-offenders-state/>) includes a list of reentry programs by state.
 - **National Resource Center on Domestic Violence** (<https://nrcdv.org>) provides resources for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
3. Wellness Resources
 - **BuddyHelp** (<https://buddyhelp.org>) offers online emotional support and therapy. You can connect with a trained, nonjudgmental volunteer listener who can help you navigate challenging moments for free. Additionally, BuddyHelp offers “affordable” access to board-certified counselors if you’re seeking more individualized, in-depth assistance.
 - **Postgraduate Center for Mental Health** (<https://www.pgcmh.org/>) is dedicated to serving the housing and mental health needs of individuals and families in New York City through “innovative, effective, and efficient” strategies.
 - **Eventbrite** (<https://www.eventbrite.com>) allows users to search for different kinds of events—many of them free—including professional development activities, cultural events, and fitness classes.

Section IV: Family

Reestablishing relationships with family and children can be a major reentry challenge. You may have lost access to your children or had limited visits and contact while incarcerated. You may also be concerned about how your children and other family members will respond to you when you return home. In this section, we encourage you to reflect on your current relationships and consider ways to rebuild them.

Part 1: Community of Support

Incarceration impacts the entire family. After being gone for several months or years, many women expressed concerns about connecting with their family, especially their children. The following worksheets are designed to help you reestablish ties with family members.



Activity 1: Using What You Know

Reflect on the programs, courses, or self-help classes you participated in while incarcerated or in the community. What communication, problem solving, and other skills did you learn to help you feel more confident in the role of parent, intimate partner, and family member? List strategies that you think will be helpful to reconnect with your family.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin grey border, intended for the user to write their reflections and strategies for reconnecting with their family.

Activity 2: Applying Strategies

Complete the chart below.

Look closely at your eco-map (page 13). Who are you most interested in reestablishing a relationship with?	What do you think will be the largest challenge?	Write down one strategy from Activity 1 (page 46) or from your strengths assessment (pages 6-8) that you could use to rebuild this relationship.
<i>Example: Sister- JK</i>	<i>She's angry that I'm incarcerated because she's had to take care of my kids.</i>	<i>I have to listen to her and let her blow off steam. I have to negotiate a plan to spend time with my kids when I get home.</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

<p>Look closely at your eco-map (page 13). Who are you most interested in reestablishing a relationship with?</p>	<p>What do you think will be the largest challenge?</p>	<p>Write down one strategy from Activity 1 (page 46) or from your strengths assessment (pages 6-8) that you could use to rebuild this relationship.</p>
<p>4.</p>		
<p>5.</p>		
<p>6.</p>		

Part 2: Reflecting on Your Impact

The first step to healing and repairing a relationship is acknowledging that you did something—whether intentionally or unintentionally—that impacted someone else. Before initiating potentially difficult conversations with family and children about your impact, ask yourself if you are in a good emotional and mental space to have these conversations. If you're not, consider returning to Section III: Personal Well-Being. If you are, proceed.



Activity 1: Impact of Incarceration

Ask yourself the questions below and write your responses in the spaces provided.

1. How did your incarceration impact **you**?

2. How do you think your incarceration impacted **your children**?

3. How do you think your incarceration impacted **other family members**?

Part 3: Building Relationships with Children

Rebuilding a relationship with your child(ren) can be challenging, especially if you've been incarcerated for a while. As you prepare to reenter the community, you may have anxiety about reconnecting with your child(ren). You may wonder, what do we talk about? Are they upset with me?

Every child is unique and may have different needs and require different approaches.

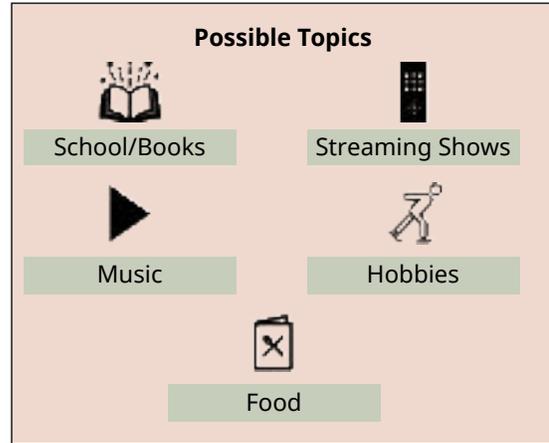
Rebuilding and maintaining a relationship with your child(ren) takes intentional effort. To foster a healthy dynamic, encourage your child(ren) to talk with you and try to use a balanced parenting approach (not too strict; not too permissive).



Activity 1: Conversation Starters

If you're not sure how to begin talking with your child(ren), reflect on their interests. What topics might they be interested in discussing with you? If you have more than one child, develop topics for each child.

Remember, starting a conversation is a process. The more you work at the relationship, the easier it will be to have free-flowing conversations.



Child's Name	Topics

Activity 2: Listening Attentively

Repairing or developing a relationship with your child(ren) often starts by asking questions and listening attentively to their responses. Hearing honest feedback from your child(ren) may be difficult, but it can make you more aware of specific areas that need to change and shows that you are interested in their feelings and opinions.

Healthy Conversation Tips

- Express concern.
- Acknowledge you heard your child(ren).
- Affirm their thoughts and feelings.
- Ask clarifying questions, when needed.

Note: This activity will be especially helpful if you have children above the age of 10, who can remember, process, and internalize the impact of your absence.

1. Ask your child(ren) the questions below. Write their responses. If you have more than one child, consider having a one-on-one conversation with each child.
 - a. I have been away for _____. Tell me some good things that happened to you while I was away.

- b. What was the toughest part of me being gone?

- c. How did my absence impact you?

d. What would help you feel safe and comfortable with me? What can I do to improve our relationship?

2. Summarize what your child(ren) shared with you.

Activity 3: Parenting Styles

Parents need to use a balanced approach when interacting with their children. Psychologists Diana Baumrind, John Martin, and Eleanor Maccoby identified four types of parenting styles that range from authoritarian to balanced.⁶

Authoritarian	Permissive	Neglectful	Balanced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict and demanding • Offers children little to no support or guidance • Tends to disregard children's feelings or emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgiving and tolerant • Fails to enforce rules • Believes that children will learn from their mistakes and provides guidance and support only in serious situations • More like a friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distant, disengaged, and uninvolved • Offers children no support or guidance • Rules are not outlined for children • Lacks concern for children's needs, wants, desires, or goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, firm, demonstrates love, shows respect, disciplines appropriately • Communicates reasonable expectations while allowing children to express their emotions and feelings
Examples			
<i>A parent punishes their child for receiving a B rather than an A on a test.</i>	<i>A parent allows their child to decide their curfew time.</i>	<i>A parent who is home does not assist with preparing meals, cleaning the house, or supporting their child.</i>	<i>A parent expects their child to let them know where they are going and who they are with when they leave the house because they are concerned about their child's safety.</i>

Throughout our lifetime, and depending on the situation, we may shift into different parenting styles. For example, some people reported adopting a more authoritarian or neglectful parenting style when they are stressed or highly overwhelmed. In contrast, some parents may adopt a permissive style when they are released from prison because their primary goal is to reconnect with the child. Research says we should lean toward a balanced style. A balanced parenting style relies heavily on communication.

How can you maintain a balanced approach when interacting with your child?

⁶ Pierce, R. (2023, November 4). *What are the 4 types of parenting styles and which one is right for you?* <https://findmykids.org/blog/en/parenting-styles>

Part 4: Building Communication Skills

Effective communication involves truly listening to others, understanding their point of view, and sharing your own thoughts in an effective way. Improving your communication skills will help you strengthen your relationships with family.



Activity 1: Understanding Others

Empathy is the ability to understand and experience someone else's feelings and adopt their point of view. Empathy doesn't require you to always agree with the person but, instead, to work to understand their thoughts and feelings. As you practice empathizing with others, you model a skill you want them to use when interacting with you.

To help you build your ability to empathize, review each situation and write how you think the person feels and what you can say to let them know you understand.

Situation	How do you think the person feels?	How can you let them know you understand?
<i>Example: Your partner had a very long day at work and missed the bus to get home.</i>	<i>Tired Overwhelmed Frustrated</i>	<i>It looks like you had a really long day. You must be exhausted.</i>
<i>Your child comes home from school and tells you he failed his math test.</i>	<i>Sad Disappointed Upset</i>	<i>You are really disappointed that you didn't pass your math test.</i>
Your mother has been cooking and cleaning all day for your birthday dinner and you can't make it home because your boss wants you to work an extra shift.	<i>Disappointed Frustrated</i>	
Your partner lost their wallet when they were rushing to get to work.		
Your child can't go on a school trip because you don't have the money to pay for it.		
Your child has graduated from high school.		
Your mother tells you she can no longer watch the kids because she needs to return to work.		

Activity 2: Active Listening

In order to empathize, you have to listen closely and work to understand what your family member is trying to tell you. You can practice active listening by using the following steps:

1. Affirm the feelings and thoughts your family member is trying to convey to you.
2. Try not to be defensive. You can't change what happened, but you can set the direction for going forward.
3. Summarize what you heard.
4. Ask them to help you develop a plan to go forward.

Review the sample scenario and response. Then, write how you would respond to Scenarios 1 and 2.

Scenario: You notice that your child appears distant and angry upon your return. She eventually tells you she was forced to take the bus home right after school while you were away. You know how much your child loves to participate in after-school activities.

Example Response: I can see that you are upset and that it was tough for you when I was away. You didn't get to do a lot of things you like. How can we make up for that now?

Scenario 1: Your child seems to be spending more time outside the house and away from you. When you ask him to come home, he gets angry and storms out.

Response:

Scenario 2: Your little sister seems to be avoiding you. When you enter a room, she leaves. She's also spending more time outside the house. When you ask to speak with her, she ignores you.

Response:

Activity 3: Communication Quiz

Everyone relies on different communication styles. With an **aggressive communication style**, we get angry and demand what we want without considering how this might impact people around us. With a more **passive style**, we struggle to express our views, or we might agree with someone even though inside we are thinking something else. Lastly, **assertive communication** is when we hold our ground and tell people what we want calmly and respectfully.

1. Take the communication quiz below.

Description	Check all statements that apply to you.	Communication Style
a. I often find it difficult to express what I think and feel.		Passive
b. I don't hesitate to speak my mind regardless of how I come across.		Aggressive
c. I often agree with someone and then regret it later.		Passive
d. I try to respect others by listening to their concerns and putting myself in their shoes.		Assertive
e. I think it's important to advocate for myself. At the same time, I try to respect the person I'm talking with.		Assertive
f. I think it's important to advocate for myself; it's not my problem if the other person is hurt by what I say.		Aggressive
g. I tend to shy away from conflict and often deny if I'm having a problem with someone.		Passive
h. I think about what I'm going to say in advance. This helps me stay calm when I'm telling someone my concerns.		Assertive
i. When I'm upset, I find it difficult to maintain eye contact and I tend to speak softly.		Passive
j. When I feel threatened, I can't control my anger.		Aggressive
k. When my rights aren't respected, I let people know what they're doing wrong, and I tell them to fix it.		Aggressive
l. When my rights aren't respected, I try to express how this impacts me and work with others to resolve this.		Assertive

2. What communication style do you rely on most of the time?

3. Is there a time when you used your communication style with your family or child(ren) and it didn't have the results you wanted? Describe the situation below.

Assertive communication is the **healthiest and most balanced** style. It allows you to speak up and be heard in relationships with family, friends, or coworkers. It is a way of getting your needs met while remaining aware of the feelings and needs of others.

Becoming more assertive will help you state your needs clearly, appropriately, effectively, and respectfully. It will provide you with the tools to face difficult situations without self-doubt while earning others' respect.

Activity 4: Practicing Assertive Communication

Picture the last time you were concerned about how someone was treating you. Take a moment to rehearse what you could say to the person using an assertive communication style.

Finish the sentence to describe the person's behavior that upset you.

When you...

Finish the sentence to describe how their behavior made you feel.

I felt...

Finish the sentence to explain what you would like the person to do differently.

I would prefer if you...

Finish the sentence to offer something in return/compromise.

If you are willing to...

then I am willing to...

Activity 5: Problem Solve Together

Collaborative problem solving involves working with at least one other person to overcome a challenge. Collaborative problem solving might help you come up with a better solution than when problem solving on your own. And, by listening to different opinions and allowing the people who are important to you to be involved in solutions, you may have a better understanding of an issue and be able to build stronger and better relationships.

Reflect on an issue, such as setting expectations for household chores. Complete the chart below with a family member.

State the problem.	
Offer solutions. <i>Each person provides one solution to the problem.</i>	
Explore the positive and negative consequences of each proposed solution.	
Positive:	Positive:
Negative:	Negative:
Determine the best solution. <i>Work together to determine the best solution.</i>	

Section V: Housing

One of the greatest challenges returning citizens face is finding **safe and stable housing**. This section provides information and resources if you are concerned about finding housing.

Review the material below to learn more about housing resources and some ways to connect with others to share space successfully.



Activity 1: My Housing Options

When it comes to housing after you leave, you may:

- be planning to return to your home,
- be planning to live with family or friends,
- have found assisted housing, or
- still be looking for housing.

Reflect on your housing options. Where will you live when you return to the community? What is your ultimate housing goal? Describe what you hope to achieve in terms of housing before you transition to the community.

Housing Information

Make sure you understand the range of housing programs available in your community and the needs that they meet. The following are some possibilities:

- Family reunification affordable housing
- Rapid rehousing
- Transitional housing
- Supportive housing (combines affordable housing and supportive services)
- Boarding houses
- Halfway houses
- Homeless shelters
- Rescue missions
- Residential drug treatment programs
- Government assistance

Ask your reentry counselor or your community of support for assistance connecting with resources that can help you find housing, for example:

- Religious organizations
- County department of social services
- Salvation Army
- Veterans housing assistance
- YMCA/YWCA

In addition, the following are sources of information:

- Parole or probation officer
- Local library
- Housing Help (<https://www.usa.gov/housing-help>)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Exchange: Homelessness Assistance Programs (<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/>)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): Rental Assistance (https://www.hud.gov/topics/rental_assistance)
- Help for Felons: Reentry Programs for Felons and Ex-Offenders (<https://helpforfelons.org/reentry-programs-ex-offenders-state/>)

Renting

Renting can be a challenge, particularly when you are first released. Here are some tips if you are preparing for an interview with a landlord or completing an application:

- If you have a good rental history, describe that to the landlord.
- If possible, try to get a letter of recommendation from a previous landlord.
- Mention if you are working and where. If you have pay stubs, show them to the landlord.
- Highlight past work experience and, if possible, get a letter of recommendation from your employer.

-
- Let the landlord know if you are doing volunteer work, in school, or taking classes.
 - Show your credit report/score to the landlord if it is good.
 - If you have savings, you can show your bank statements. If possible, save enough money to cover the first two or three months of rent.
 - If possible, get recommendation letters from authority figures (e.g., probation or parole officer).
 - Review the laws regarding criminal record checks for rental properties in your area. Have a copy readily available when visiting different properties. If a criminal record check is still required in your area and you're interested in a property, be prepared to answer questions about your history. Be honest about your convictions. Be prepared to advocate for yourself, explain how you've evolved and what you can bring to the community, and why you would be a good tenant.

Activity 2: My Housing Resources

1. Review the list above and look back at your eco-map from Section 1 (page 13). In the left column, list people and organizations (e.g., family members, friends, housing agencies, church/places of worship, or other supports) that you think will be most helpful in offering you housing, information about housing, or support in finding housing. In the right column, describe how you will reach out and connect with each person or organization. Add this information to your reentry plan (pages 18–20).

People/Organizations	Way to Reach Out

Activity 3: My Housing Budget

It can be difficult to know how much to spend on rent and what you have in your budget for housing. Reflect on the income you anticipate upon release. Check all potential sources below:

Potential Source of Income	Estimate per month
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment opportunities	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial support from family or friends	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Social assistance or welfare	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Child support	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Income due to disability	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Income due to age	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	\$
Total	\$

Activity 4: Building Connections with My Family and Friends

Make a commitment to get in touch with family members and friends. When and how will you get in touch with them? What do you want your family and friends to know about your housing and transition needs?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the activity prompt.

Section VI: Employment and Education

Two of the most important factors that contribute to success in the community are employment and education. Ideally, you will find a job or education program that you like and that will allow you to earn more than a living wage. This section addresses challenges in identifying and advancing employment and education opportunities.



Activity 1: Summarize Your Strengths and Abilities

1. Review your strengths assessment (pages 6–8). Below, list all the strengths and skills that you feel an employer would value or that would be valuable when pursuing education opportunities.

2. Focus on employment. List all the jobs that you have held, including those you had while incarcerated.

Job	Number of Months

-
3. Think of your work history and your jobs before you were incarcerated and while inside. If you have had more than five jobs, pick the five that you found most interesting and would like to apply for in the community. Describe the duties, skills, and strengths that you developed in each job.

Example

My role: *Facility cleaner*

Duties, skills, and strengths:

- *Knowledge of various cleaning products and when to use them*
- *Ability to clean and disinfect different surfaces*
- *Physical strength*
- *Ability to manage time efficiently and work well independently*
- *Ability to handle basic maintenance, building repairs, and other janitorial work*
- *Basic math skills*

My role: _____

Duties, skills, and strengths:

My role: _____

Duties, skills, and strengths:

My role: _____

Duties, skills, and strengths:

My role: _____

Duties, skills, and strengths:

My role: _____

Duties, skills, and strengths:

-
4. Focus on your education. Note your highest grade or degree achieved. If possible, contact every high school or college you attended and request an official copy of your transcript. Make copies to share with potential employers, education programs, or colleges.

--

5. List all trainings, vocational programs, volunteer work, and other activities that have provided you with job skills (e.g., reading classes, computer workshops, job skills courses, cooking safety classes, apprenticeships, community volunteering). Collect certificates and awards from training, volunteer work, and other activities in which you have participated. You can share these documents with prospective employers and education organizations.

-
6. Think of two or three people whom you have worked for or who have supervised you in some way. Ask them if they would be willing to provide a letter of recommendation or serve as a reference. List their names and contact information below.

Name: Contact information:
Name: Contact information:
Name: Contact information:

Give yourself a pat on the back. You can use all the information above to describe your skills and successes when completing the attached résumé template for jobs or when applying for an education program.

Activity 2: Create a Résumé

Fill out this form to create a draft of your résumé. Then, transfer the information to the next page, which will be your completed résumé. You can provide the completed résumé to potential employers.

Name

Contact Information

(List your email address and phone number.)

Strengths and Skills

(List all the strengths and skills you noted earlier in your strengths assessment [pages 6–8] and Activity 1, Question 3 [pages 73–74]).

Work Experience

(List the titles and locations of your jobs, starting with the most recent. For each job, list the time frame you worked there (e.g., January–June 2024) and 3–4 of your responsibilities.)

Education and Certificates

(List the highest grade you achieved or any degrees or certificates you have. List the years, starting with the most recent.)

<<NAME>>

<<Email>>

<<Phone Number>>

Strengths and Skills

Work Experience

Education and Certifications

Activity 3: My Employment Plan

Before searching for a job, consider what you want to do.

1. Reflect on your work history and your dreams for the future. What are you interested in doing? List your ideas below. Put an * beside that ideas that interest you the most.

2. Review your top choices and determine if you have the educational background, vocational certificates, etc., to apply for that job right now. For example, if you want to work as an electrician or in another trade, you must complete some college courses and an apprenticeship.
3. Once you identify one or more career choices, **update or complete** a new My Reentry Plan worksheet (pages 18–20).

Work with your case manager or reentry counselor, or contact someone in the community, to access O*NET (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/onet>). O*NET describes occupations in terms of the knowledge, skills, and abilities you need to apply for a job successfully. Another helpful source of information is CareerOneStop (<https://www.careeronestop.org>). It includes a range of career, training, and job search resources.

Activity 4: My Job Search Network

There may be people in your current network who can help you in your job search.

1. List people you feel comfortable asking about job leads. Don't restrict yourself. Start with family and friends, and then expand your network. Think of teachers, coaches, past employers, neighbors, counselors, church members, and anyone else you have contact with. Revisit your eco-map (page 13) for ideas.

2. Reach out to your contacts and share your interests and strengths. Ask them if they have any recommendations or job leads.

Job Search Resources

You might find the following resources helpful:

- Family, friends, neighbors, and community members may be able to provide you with job leads.
- Hope for Prisoners (<https://hopeforprisoners.org/>) assists with reentry by providing people who were incarcerated long-term support and services as they work to reclaim their lives, families, and standing in the community.
- Jobs for Humanity (<http://www.jobsforhumanity.com/about-us/>) works to connect returning citizens to employers.
- Reach out to the job bank in your local community to help you identify available jobs, and apply directly to the employer.
- Many community colleges have resources for career planning, placement, résumé development, career counseling, and other helpful employment topics.
- When possible, use social media sites in your job search. Identify businesses that align with your job preferences and search their websites. Many businesses have a social media presence, and they will often post a job or mention that they are hiring.

Activity 5: Prepare for an Interview

Below are some standard questions asked during job interviews. Pretend you are applying for a specific job and consider how you would answer each question. Once you have your response, consider asking a family member, friend, or mentor to conduct a mock interview with you. They will play the role of the interviewer and ask you the questions below.

Tip

Write your response to common interview questions on a note card using bullets. Using bullets will help you collect main points until you remember your responses fully.

Tell me about yourself and your qualifications.

- Provide a concise and direct answer. Include your background, key achievements, and why you think you're suited for the position.

What interests you about this job?

- Before the interview, study the job description carefully and compare its requirements to your skills and experience. In your answer, focus on a few job responsibilities that you would particularly enjoy and have experience handling.

What are your greatest strengths?

- Start by sharing one or two strengths that are essential for the job. Provide an example of each and relate them to the job.

What are your greatest weaknesses?

- Share an actual weakness and then provide context. Be prepared to describe how you overcame or are working to overcome it.

What are your goals for the future? Where do you think you'll be in five years?

- It is not unusual to be asked about your future goals during the interview. This question helps employers determine whether you're likely to stay with the job in the long term. This question is also used to gauge your ambition, expectations for your career, and ability to plan. The best way to handle this question is to examine your current plans and how this role could help you reach your long-term goals.

Section VII: Conclusion

This resource guide was designed to help you prepare for your transition to the community and to face some of the major challenges that you might encounter. We encourage you to use the information in this guide and to continue practicing the skills and strategies. We also hope that you will continue to add new tools and resources to your strengths assessment and eco-map.

Once you complete your existing goals on your reentry plan, add new ones.

Our greatest wish is that your reentry experience will be smooth and filled with happiness and success. Please feel free to share your wisdom and any of the materials in this resource guide with women you meet along the way.



Acknowledgments

This guide was funded by the Racial Justice Giving Initiative from Qualcomm, an innovative technology company that enhances opportunities to build connections and the capacity for communication around the world. We would also like to thank the Cassett Foundation for contributing to this project. Thank you to the Center for Justice at Columbia University. We are grateful to the justice-impacted women, especially **Pam Neely, Victoria Scott, and Linda Small**, who participated in focus groups and helped us identify the major targets of this resource guide and those who offered their experience and expertise to revise and edit this content.

This guide was developed by CEPP's National Resource Center on Justice-Involved Women (NRCJIW), led by CEPP Program Associate **Keilah Joyner** and CEPP Senior Advisor **Dr. Marilyn Van Dieten**. Thank you to Debbie Smith and Tom Dart for their work on copyediting and design.

Photo Credits

Cover: iStock.com/Delmaine Donson; page 2: Dragana Gordic/Shutterstock.com; page 5: Sabrina Bracker/Shutterstock.com; page 15: iStock.com/SolStock; page 17: Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com; page 21: iStock.com/FG Trade; page 27: iStock.com/FangXiaNuo; page 34: SeventyFour/Shutterstock.com; page 38: Bricolage/Shutterstock.com; page 45: SeventyFour/Shutterstock.com; page 49: iStock.com/herkisi; page 51: AJR_photo/Shutterstock.com; page 56: fizkes/Shutterstock.com; page 64: Trzykropy/Shutterstock.com; page 71: AnnaStills/Shutterstock.com; page 82: iStock.com/andreswd

C ≡ P P

Center for
Effective
Public Policy