

GETTING THROUGH THE MICHIGAN PAROLE PROCESS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE'S
MICHIGAN CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM
AND MI-CURE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Penny Ryder and Kay Perry wrote the original version of this booklet to help individuals navigate their way through the parole process. These two women and the organizations they represent (AFSC and MI-CURE, respectively) have spent many years trying to improve the parole system in Michigan. In their shared experience of advocacy and policy work on parole, they found they could be most effective by teaching individuals how to fend for themselves instead of trying to advocate on each individual's behalf. This booklet explains the parole process, what individuals can do to position themselves for a positive parole board action, and what individuals should consider after the parole board's decision. It also includes a list of helpful resources for those who want to understand the process more fully or need additional help getting through the process.

Since the 1st Edition of this booklet, we have continued to update the content to reflect current policies, procedures, and trends. We emphasize those issues that you have control over: doing good time, making the most of available programs, preparing for your release, developing and maintaining good habits while you are incarcerated, and developing an institutional record that shows you are able and willing to live according to rules.

While the policy directives and operating procedures are vital to the process, as is advice on how to present yourself during the interview, there is really no substitute for actually doing the right thing during your incarceration and developing your own solid character. There is no silver bullet to gaining a parole, but there is one for staying out when we are released: spend your time in prison doing what is right and abide by the rules. Practice it over and over during the time you are incarcerated, until it becomes second nature. At that point, you will have made good on your time and reduced your chances of returning to doing what is wrong.

American Friends Service Committee
Michigan Criminal Justice Program
Summer 2016
6th Edition

I. LEADING UP TO THE PAROLE PROCESS

The facts and circumstances surrounding the offense for which you are incarcerated, as well as your institutional conduct, are the most significant factors the Parole Board will consider when considering whether to release you on parole. **If you have not already begun, it is vital that you begin to make your prison stay a positive experience right now.** This will not only enhance your chances for parole, it will also make your time in prison productive and, in the long run, better your chances for success upon release. At some point in the future, you will look back upon the time you've spent in prison and you will either find it was a horrible waste of time or a productive experience. The choice is truly yours to make and it is a choice you will have to make every day.

It is worth asking yourself how you want to go about living your life. If your plan is to rely on the same principles that led you to prison, there is a reasonable likelihood that those principles will lead you back to prison. Challenge yourself to grow intellectually and broaden your own humanity. **Find others who are interested in making the most of their time in prison and work with them.** Consider starting a book club where you everyone reads a book and then gets together to discuss it on some regular basis. Literature, philosophy, poetry, and serious fiction are all examples of books that push the reader to expand his or her horizons. Such books often explore the human condition and can help us understand why we behave the way we do and may offer prospects for change. Propose a reading group to the facility special activities coordinator, in order to reserve a quiet place where you can keep the group focused on the topic.

Along with the types of books mentioned above, there are many really good self-help books generally available in the facility libraries, such as Stephen Covey's *"The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,"* Melody Beattie's *"Codependent No More,"* and M. Scott Peck's *"The Road Less Travelled,"* to name a few. At the end of this booklet we have included a short list of recommended reading, but if you have suggestions to add to this list please write to us and tell us about the book that we should add to the list (and what you learned from the book).

Obviously, another thing you need to do is **avoid misconducts**. That doesn't mean quit getting caught. It means stop doing things that will get you in trouble if you are caught. Think about things before you do them. If you find yourself considering conduct that violates a prison rule, first ask yourself the following:

- If I get caught doing this and end up in the hole, or with a misconduct on my record, will it have been worth it?
- If I get caught for violating this rule, how would I explain it to my family?
- Why should the Parole Board believe that I will be a law-abiding citizen out in the world when I don't even follow the rules in prison?

Continuing to engage in conduct that violates rules will not only have a negative impact on your chances of being released on parole, it will also continue to reinforce bad habits. The Board

wants to see that you've developed the habit of following rules and controlling your behavior. The best way to convince them of that is to actually develop that habit.

Another factor is completing your R&GC recommendations (substance abuse, VPP, SOP, etc.). If you are not in your recommended programs, submit kites to the proper staff to be placed on a waiting list. You should keep copies of these kites, along with any responses you receive. Once you are admitted into the program, it is important that you approach it with an open mind and participate in the program with the intention of getting something out of it more than just the certificate. **You need to find a way to digest the information in such a way that you can learn the valuable lessons in it.** If the exercises are unclear, speak to the program facilitator and try to gain a better understanding of what is being asked of you and what the purpose of the exercise is. Much of the material is helpful, but only if you find a way to apply it to your own life. Some people in there will offer you the tools to improve yourself—it is important to be thankful for the opportunity, to accept the help, then to make the most of it.

Many of you will be on waiting lists in order to get into recommended programs such as SOP, VPP, or substance abuse counselling. How quickly you move up that list is not within your (or our) control—it's simply a matter of the department having enough psychologists or other staff to run enough of these groups. **Be patient.** While you wait, engage in any programs that are available to you, complete your GED if you need to, and do whatever you can to engage in activities that will prepare you to get the most out of the program once you do make it to the top of the waiting list. It is also incredibly important that you remain (or get to) a low enough security level to be able to participate in the recommended program. Most groups are being held in Level I and II facilities. If you're sitting up in a level V facility, there is a good probability that your recommended program is not offered in that security level. Improved conduct will get your security level lowered so that you can participate.

Work and school are also important. Not only do work or school opportunities offer chances to obtain an education, develop a good work ethic and earn some money, they also result in reports submitted by your teachers and supervisors. These are most likely the staff members who spend the most time with you during your incarceration and it helps if they have good things to say about you. It is important that you apply yourself earnestly in these endeavors and give them reason to say something good about you. **If your work reports are not excellent, you need take it more seriously and put more effort into your work.**

Finally, if there are other programs available that are not R&GC recommendations, you should try to involve yourself in those as well. Any programs offered are probably better ways to spend your time than sitting around eating Little Debbie's or playing cards all day. If there are problems with a program, then it is incumbent upon you to pitch in and try to improve it. Speak to the facilitator (do it on the side—don't call them out on it in front of the group) and suggest ways to make it better. Perhaps this will benefit the program, or maybe you'll learn why it is being conducted the way it is.

All documentation from these activities should be organized in a file so you can locate them easily. It may be needed for completing your PER, for correcting your parole guideline score sheet, or for correcting information at your parole interview. Be sure to keep it all together in a

convenient place. If you have support in the free world, you may want to send copies of these documents to that person for safekeeping and also to help your support network understand your progress, work ethic, and program completion.

II. PREPARING FOR THE PAROLE OR LIFER INTERVIEW

In addition to your institutional conduct, other things you need to consider well before the process is initiated are things such as correcting inaccuracies in your Pre-Sentence Investigation Report (PSI), developing a realistic parole plan, tending to outstanding warrants, and lining up support services in the world.

The PSI is generally taken as gospel by the Parole Board. It is, therefore, important to get inaccurate information corrected. This may require use of a post conviction motion to correct the PSI or motion for relief from judgment. Check with the legal writer program to determine what recourse, if any, exists in your case. Don't wait until a parole board interview or public hearing to contest the information therein. Waiting until a parole interview or public hearing to contest the factual inaccuracies might be seen as you being in denial about your role in the offense that brought you to prison or you not taking responsibility for your role in the offense.

Check Outstanding Warrants

If you suspect you have outstanding warrants, submit a kite to the Records Coordinator at your facility to confirm their status. Work with the Records Coordinator to resolve the charges as soon as possible. These warrants cannot be removed from your MDOC file without documentation from the originating court. You will not be paroled until they are cleared up.

Get Involved in Pre-Release Programming

Involve yourself in a pre-release program if one is available at your institution.

Save As Much Money As Possible

You will need it when you are paroled. This is especially important if you are planning on a commercial placement.

Own Your Shortcomings

Be honest about your own human weaknesses. What recommendations have psychologists or supervisors made in your case? Have you had prior parole or probation experience? If so, and you failed, what steps can you take to avoid making the same mistakes in the future? In what ways might your transition to the free world be difficult? How will you address these difficulties?

Arrange for Treatment

If you have a history of substance abuse, make arrangements for programming in the free world. Arrangements should include written commitment to accept you into the program or to serve as your sponsor. Such programming might include any or all of the following: in-patient or outpatient treatment, Narcotics Anonymous, or Alcoholics Anonymous.

If you need in-patient treatment in order to remain successful upon parole, it is incredibly important to be honest with the Parole Board and your loved ones about this need. It will not be counted against you. It not only demonstrates that you understand your own shortcomings, but that you are taking responsibility for yourself so you do not harm yourself or others.

If you are serving on a sex offense, make arrangements for programming in the free world. Arrangements should include a written commitment to accept you into the program or to serve as your sponsor. Programming might include the following: Individual and Group Therapy, Sex Addicts Anonymous, or Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous.

Sex offender therapy (SOP/SOT) may be one of your parole requirements and you may have to attend MDOC-approved therapy. We know of many released prisoners who have found this therapy helpful.

Get Offers in Writing

If you have a job offer, get it in writing. If you are planning to attend a vocational or educational program, ensure that you will be accepted into the program. Get the acceptance in writing.

Check Your Home Placement

If you have a home placement, be sure it is adequate. If you are serving on a sex offense where the victim was a minor, you should not plan on living in a household with children present. You will not be allowed to live there, so make other more realistic plans. Sex offenders may not be allowed to live in a home with internet access.

If your family background has been difficult, and you plan to live with a family member, be prepared to explain what will be different this time. Parole is very difficult. Finding a job and supporting yourself will be tough work. Do not overburden yourself with family responsibilities.

Stay Busy!

The pace in the free world can be hectic. The transition will be easier if you keep active. Stay mentally and physically active at least 8 hours per day. For example, read a book or write a letter during

count time instead of napping.

If you know that you will be receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (**SSDI**) (very few prisoners are eligible), be prepared to explain how you will remain busy enough to avoid drugs, alcohol, or other problems that may have contributed to your criminal behavior.

**Address Your Relapse
Prevention Plan**

If you have problems with substance abuse or are serving on an assaultive or sex offense, be certain that you have addressed all elements of your Relapse Prevention Plan. Relapse Prevention Plans are discussed extensively later in this booklet.

III. YOUR PER AND PAROLE GUIDELINE SCORE SHEET

The Parole Eligibility Report (PER) and Parole Guideline Score Sheet are important documents in the parole process. The PER is used to complete the Parole Guideline Score Sheet, and the Parole Guideline Score Sheet determines whether you are high-, average-, or low-probability for parole.

If you are high-probability for parole, there is a presumption parole will be granted. If the Board denies you parole when you screen high-probability, they have to provide “substantial and compelling” reasons for departing from the guidelines in writing. If you screen average-probability they must interview you during the decision-making process. They cannot deny you parole without conducting an interview. If you screen low-probability for parole, however, the board can flop you for 12, 18, or 24¹ months without interviewing you. If you do screen low-probability, you need to stop violating the rules and start involving yourself in the programming necessary to get your life together.

We encourage you to read **P.D. 06.05.103, “Parole Eligibility/Lifer Review Reports.”** Within this policy is most of the instruction you need to make sure your PER has been completed correctly. This policy states that your PER should be completed seven months before your earliest (or next) release date. Before the PER is completed, you are allowed to review your file (Paragraph J), present letters of support, offers of employment, and other information supporting parole to the PER preparer (Paragraph K). Once you have had the opportunity to review your file, correct errors in the PER, and submit letters of support and certificates you have earned, you sign the PER. The PER preparer should provide a copy of the signed PER to you once he or she has had a chance to finalize it.

The Case Preparation Unit in the Office of the Parole Board completes the Parole Guideline Score Sheet Grid. They are located in Lansing at the MDOC’s central office (Grandview Plaza). **P.D. 06.05.100, “Parole Guidelines,”** governs the process for completing this document. While the policy states that you will be provided a copy of this document, it does not provide a deadline

¹ In some cases, the Board can – and will – issue a 60-month flop. See P.D. 06.05.104, Paragraph X.

for when you must receive it. If you are provided a copy of this document early enough and you note mistakes, you can write to the Case Preparation Unit at Grandview Plaza with a **brief** explanation (no more than two pages) of the erroneous information. Include supporting documentation in the envelope so the reader can easily verify your concerns.

In some cases, it may be necessary to grieve inaccurate information in your Parole Guidelines Scoresheet. These cases will generally be limited to those mistakes that result in you being screened as low-probability when you should be average-probability or where you are screened as average-probability when you should be high-probability. Further, we would not encourage you to file a grievance even in these situations unless you are denied parole.

IV. PREPARING FOR THE PAROLE OR LIFER INTERVIEW

The parole/lifer interview is very important. Do not treat it lightly. Do not assume it is meaningless or that a decision has already been made. A good interview can result in parole. A bad interview can lead to a flop.

First, the basics: clean yourself up, speak clearly during the interview, don't interrupt the interviewer, sit up straight, and answer the questions directly. Do not allow yourself to ramble when responding to a question and do not minimize your involvement or the offense. If you have been found guilty of prison misconduct, be sure to show the interviewer that you take the prison rules seriously and that you realize that you don't get to decide which rules you have to follow and which ones you do not have to follow. Above all, be honest and be able to discuss what you have done wrong and how you will do things differently in the future. Acknowledge your weaknesses and be prepared to explain how your support system and relapse prevention plan will be able to help you manage those weaknesses.

The reasons we often see for denying parole are "lacks remorse," "lacks empathy," "minimizes the crime/involvement," "fails to take responsibility," and "lacks insight into criminal behavior." While serving your sentence the Board wants you to think about the crime and the victims often. Think about why you chose to commit the crime and what things you could've done differently to prevent the crime from happening. It is not sufficient to say that you did what you did because you were "young and dumb." We have heard Parole Board members respond to that explanation by stating that everybody goes through adolescence, but not everyone commits crime. So you will need to dig deeper than that and provide something more meaningful.

Organize the documents you plan to take to the interview. The following are suggestions, but this is not an exhaustive list:

- If your PER or parole guideline score sheet is incomplete or inaccurate, bring documents that will fill in the gaps or correct mistakes.
- Any documents that were generated after your PER was completed: psych reports, program completion reports, therapy termination reports, positive work/school reports, GED, etc.

- A few short, thoughtful personal letters of support are more effective than a lengthy petition. Request letters from staff when appropriate. (An example letter is included with the handouts that accompany this booklet.)

Remember that the Parole Board considers criminal behavior, institutional adjustment, readiness for release, and personal history when making parole decisions. Any documents you take should relate to these factors and should not duplicate any material covered in the PER or guideline score sheet.

Documents should offer concrete evidence. For example, a job offer is relevant. A letter from a relative stating you should be able to get a job easily is **not** relevant. A letter from a work supervisor commending your job performance **may** be relevant, but only if good work performance is not described in your PER.

Talk with other prisoners who have been interviewed by the Parole Board. Find out what questions were asked. If you had a previous interview, think about the questions asked at that interview. If you were a Parole Board Member responsible for the decision, what questions would you ask yourself? Practice answering questions. Ask a friend to play the role of a Parole Board Member and practice interviewing. Ask your friend to critique your performance. Practice to improve your answers, your body language, your diction, etc. Keep practicing.

Carefully consider whether to ask someone to represent you at the parole interview. It is not mandatory you have a representative. A well-chosen representative could help; a poorly chosen representative may hurt. If you decide to have a representative, select a person who knows you well, remains calm under stress, and does not deny your guilt or make excuses for you. The representative is there to offer support, not to carry the interview. Share your parole plan and your Relapse Prevention Plan with your representative. You are responsible for letting your representative know where and when your interview will be. Generally, interviews involving representatives are scheduled on the morning of the first day of interviews at your facility.

V. HOW FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN HELP

Your family and friends should not minimize the offense or make excuses for what you did. They should offer support and encourage you to participate in as much programming as possible while in prison. It can also be very helpful if they're able to send in self-help and educational materials (which must be purchased from and sent by approved vendors). Some other things that might be helpful include:

- **Helping with Parole Planning:** Family and friends can assist you with parole planning by providing contacts in the free world for any resources you will need upon release. They should provide only the name and address—you should write the letter yourself, make the contact and any arrangements after that.
- **Letters of Support:** They may write a letter of support on your behalf, noting any positive changes they've seen in you over your years of incarceration. These letters should be specific and detail what changes they have witnessed in you and what caused those changes to take

place. However, it will not be helpful to have multiple letters describing what a great person you are and that you should be given a second chance. Rather, if someone is willing to house you for six months as long as you do your part (household chores, seek or maintain employment, enroll in school, etc.), a good letter should detail the terms and conditions of the agreement about your housing. Likewise, if someone is willing to help you with transportation, meet with you weekly to discuss your parole, help you open a savings/checking account, or any other supportive services, the letter should describe what they are willing to provide and what you are going to do in order to help them in return. These letters should be sent to you for review before they are sent to the Parole Board. While reviewing these letters, make sure they are no longer than one single-spaced, typed page. You will also want to make sure that they represent a well-thought out parole plan: when possible, make sure you have housing, employment and/or schooling, and transportation covered in these letters. If you see any minimizing language in the letter—any excuse-making for what you did, passing blame to any others, or even language about how you were “hanging out with the wrong crowd,” etc.—you need to strike it and ask them to re-write the letter without that language. Once the letters are finalized, ask your friends and family members to send copies to the Office of the Parole Board (addressed “Dear Parole Board” with your name and number in the subject line of the letter).

- **Family Issues:** Being released from prison can be a jolting experience and you need to prepare yourself to work with those around you while you re-adjust to the free world. If your family members are willing to work on any past family issues from the past, it is important that you work together to develop a plan to address those issues. If the circumstances of your crime are a reflection of family problems, try to work on those problems before being released. You and your family should continue working on things after you are released.

VI. MAKING THE MOST OF THE INTERVIEW

Nothing you’ve experienced so far in the criminal justice system prepares you for the parole interview. From the time you were arrested until you were convicted, you were probably advised to say nothing about the offense. During your incarceration, you may have found little reason to talk about your offense or the victims.

The rules for parole interviews are just the opposite. It is important that you take responsibility for your actions. It is also important to express your sincere remorse and regret for the harm you caused the victim(s), the victims’ family and friends, your family and friends, and the community at large.

Even though your preparation for the interview has been extensive, the actual interview will be short. Be brief, clear, and precise.

- Do not minimize the seriousness of your offense. **Own what you did.**
- **Do not blame others for your behavior** at the time of the offense or your institutional record. As to misconducts, be prepared to tell the Parole Board what you were thinking

when you violated the prison rules. Why did you think it was okay for you to break the rules? Also, be prepared to tell them what you learned from it.

- Work to **remain calm**. Do not react angrily to parole board members, regardless of their behavior or questioning. Always remain polite.
- **Listen carefully to the questions asked**. Take your time to answer each question thoughtfully. Give complete answers, but do not ramble or give long-winded answers.
- Where possible, focus on your accomplishments and your plans to avoid future problems.
- **Be honest and realistic**. For example, do not say that your family needs you to support them when you never supported them prior to your incarceration. Do not state that you must get home to care for an ailing family member. The parole board may not look positively on too many burdens weighing you down.
- You will be given an opportunity, after questioning, to make a statement. Think about what you want to say. **Prepare yourself** to speak about the following, *briefly and concisely*:
 - How you feel about the crime and victims today.
 - What you have accomplished since going to prison.
 - How you have prepared for your release.
 - How you are different today.
 - Why you would be a good community member.
 - Do not say you have done enough time.

VII. PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR LIFERS AND COMMUTATIONS

Here's the deal: the public hearing matters. It matters big-time. We have heard former Chair Sampson talk in detail about what she (and the entire Board) expects from people who make it this far in the process. You have probably already figured out for yourself what this section will address, but reminders are always helpful. Reminders and gentle guidance are especially helpful when you are approaching something so huge and you may have not had the time or energy, due to nervousness, anxiety, or intellectual fatigue, to take a step back and think about all of this from a more neutral perspective.

What to expect in the hearing room: You will be brought into a hearing room at either Cotton or MTU (or, if you are really sick, DWH). A Parole Board member, an Assistant Attorney General (AAG), and a transcriptionist will be seated at a long table at the front of the room. In years past there were times when two or even three members of the Parole Board would conduct these hearings, but over the past few years there has typically only been one representative from the Parole Board.

On the other side of the room will be seating for the public: anyone who supports your release, as well as those who oppose your release. If your attorney is planning on attending, he or she will be seated in this area, as will any one who shows up from the prosecutor's office. There is typically someone there from the probation/parole department who will report on any home placement investigation/evaluation they have conducted.

You will be brought into the room in leg irons, handcuffs and belly chains. You will sit with your back to the public, directly in front of the Parole Board member, the AAG, and the transcriptionist. All of the “security” devices will be left on your body for the entire proceedings.

You may have a mini-microphone clipped to your blues for recording purposes.

How it runs: The Parole Board member running the hearing will introduce the process and the people sitting at the table. She or he will also swear you in. Then the AAG will go over the laws governing the hearing, followed by his or her questioning regarding the offense. You should know ahead of time that the current Attorney General (Bill Schuette) has ordered a blanket objection for all commutations and paroles that make it to public hearing, so don’t take it personally when they object to your release. Be aware that most of the AAG’s questioning will be focused on your criminal offenses (not limited to the offense for which you are currently serving time for) and some of that questioning will be harsh—especially where they sense that you are not being forthright in your responses.

What to expect from the AAG: Questions will normally focus on the following:

- All details of the crime, whether broad or minute.
- Your explanation of the crime.
- What you might have been thinking at the time of the crime.
- What you feel for the victim of the crime.
- Explanations of your entire institutional conduct. And by entire, we mean *entire*. You may even be asked about tickets from way back, like as far back as 1970’s.

Some examples of specific questions you should consider include:

- Why did you commit this crime?
- Why did you think you could get away with it?
- You claim you regret the pain and suffering you caused the family. Why, then, didn’t you take responsibility for the crime instead of forcing the family to go through the trauma of a trial?
- Why were you carrying a gun in the first place?
- It states here you have been in a gang since age 15. I am disturbed by the fact you continued gang activities while in prison. Why didn’t you stop when you came to prison?
- You have 12 misconducts. If you can’t follow prison rules, how will you follow parole rules?
- How have you changed?

- You have no job skills. What are you going to do when you need money and you can't get a job?
- You mentioned a relapse prevention plan. What is your relapse prevention plan? (They do not want you to give them a copy of it—they want you to be able to speak about the plan.)
- Why do you think the Parole Board should grant you a parole?
- Why should we feel safer with you in society than by keeping you in prison?

The AAG may tend to ramble on and use flawed logic to try to trip you up. You might end up sitting there thinking, “what is wrong with him?” or “where is this coming from?” or “that’s not how it went down at all; not at all. And, that is not what I said.” It is critical that you keep your composure and don’t lose your temper.

Remember, the work you have hopefully been doing while inside is unique to any self-reflective work that humans are capable of. You have been growing, changing, and becoming the best person you can be under the most difficult of circumstances and the AAG probably has little understanding of that process. You have grown as a person without easy access to higher education and good therapy. Some of you have done it with little or no support from people in the free world. Some of you have been down so long that your loved ones have passed on and you have lived through deep loss and lonely circumstances. Still you have worked on transforming yourself into a better person, very different from the one that committed the offense years earlier.

In order to best prepare yourself for the line of questioning that will come at you from the AAG, make sure you study your Pre-Sentence Investigation report inside and out. If you have a co-defendant, make sure you have as much understanding of your co-defendant’s version of events as possible.

The Board expects you to admit full responsibility for the crime you committed. They expect honesty and forthrightness, and they expect you to feel empathy for the victim(s). Please understand the definition of victim is not just the person you killed or harmed. Everyone connected to that victim, the person’s family, community, and friends, are all victims.

Once the AAG is done questioning you, the Parole Board member(s) will question you. This questioning may revolve more around your personal growth while in prison, your institutional record, your placement plans upon release, your program and work reports, and the crime. You should look at your entire misconduct history again and be ready to answer questions regarding your institutional record. **Be honest and open, and do not minimize the prison rule infractions.** Breaking a rule, regardless of its severity, can be seen as a pattern of behavior that disregards the importance of following the rules. It is important that you show that you understand the importance of following rules and that you do not get to decide which ones are important and which ones are not.

Further, we understand that officers sometimes write bogus tickets and prisoners are not believed and still get found guilty. However, if you sit there in a public hearing and blame others for negative institutional conduct, it is not going to sound good.

Try to completely avoid blaming language within the context of the public hearing. Some people might be partly to blame for where you are now, but it does not serve you well to dwell on those events or people during the public hearing.

When the Board Member(s) are done questioning you, the public will have a turn to testify before the panel. The people in attendance who are there in opposition to your release will be able to testify first. If you have a highly publicized case the prosecuting attorney may show up and testify in opposition to your release. Family members of the victim(s) may show up to testify. People may state terrible things about you, but please understand that while the Board listens to the opposing testimonies, they are not the only thing the Parole Board considers. You were given a public hearing because the Board is interested in your case and potential release. Opposition to you being paroled doesn't necessarily mean you won't be paroled. Maintain your composure, remain calm, and respond with compassion toward the feelings of those who oppose your release.

After the opposition speaks, people who are there in support of your release will be given a chance to testify on your behalf. It is critical that your loved ones do not minimize your involvement in the commission of the crime. Your support group should be able to clearly articulate your release plan and the kind of support network you will have once released to the community.

If you have an attorney, make sure the attorney is able to speak very clearly to the facts of the case. Your attorney can speak during the support of release time and can also clear up any of the misinformation the AAG may have created or articulated during the earlier questioning. You should strategize with your attorney before the hearing. It is really important that you and all of your supporters (attorney included) are on the same page. You should have discussed your ideas and speculations about the proceedings with your support group before the hearing.

Some other important things to focus on:

- The week before the hearing try to exercise daily (walks are good), eat a well balanced diet, and get plenty of sleep.
- Remember body language counts. Look the Board members and AAG in the eyes. Hold your head high. Sit upright. Speak clearly. Speak with confidence.
- Understand that empathy goes a long way.
- Make sure you have said out loud many times before the hearing the details of the crime. Many people have never spoken out loud what they did that landed them in prison, it is really important that you are able to effectively articulate what happened. Being

uncomfortable with talking about the crime can be interpreted as minimization, so prepare yourself well.

- Focus on telling them the story of the person you have become.
- The AAG or PB member may use language you are not very familiar with. Some examples: Please explain your ***relapse prevention plan***; or please describe your ***support system upon release***. You may have not had access to the programs that help you develop a relapse prevention plan or your support system. We encourage you to work with a therapist or counselor in the prison to develop a relapse prevention plan and a support plan. You should spend time lining up work, education, living arrangements, and therapy in the free world. You should be able to articulate all of this to the panel.

Please note: AFSC staff and volunteers may be attending some public hearings throughout the next many months. So, if some strangers show up to the hearing, it may be us.

VIII. IF PAROLE IS APPROVED

Until your actual release, you will still be in prison. Respect the people around you who are not looking forward to a pending release. Staying quiet about your parole is a wise decision.

If you are going to a private home placement, notify the people who live there that a parole agent will be visiting.

Remain ticket-free. Your parole **can** be revoked.

Follow through on your post-release arrangements. Getting out is only the first step in making the transition to the free world. Work hard on your rehabilitation, training, and employment.

Remember that parole is only a conditional release. You are responsible for following your parole conditions and reporting to your parole agent. A parole violation could get you sent back to prison.

The Board may require you to complete some sort of programming or placement in the world before you are released on parole. Some of these programs may be frustrating or restrictive, but it is important that you participate and complete them—everything you’ve worked for rides in the balance.

For more information, see our pamphlet, “Thoughts on Getting Out.”

IX. IF PAROLE IS DENIED

Was the denial appropriate? Be honest with yourself. The continuance may be warranted under the following circumstances:

- If your parole guideline score is not in the high probability range, you must work to improve it. You can do this by avoiding misconduct tickets and improving your program and work performance.
- If you have not completed all R&GC recommendations, kite for services. We realize that many of you are waiting on SOP or VPP. While there is nothing we can do to help you jump places in the waiting list line, it is important that you remain misconduct-free and get to a level I or level II facility (where most of these groups are offered).
- If you have a history of substance abuse and/or sex offenses and your parole plan does not include any follow-up programming, work to locate such programming before your next interview.
- If your proposed home placement is not adequate, work to located an alternate placement, or request a commercial placement.
- If you have never been gainfully employed in your life, and you still do no have a GED and/or vocational training, get busy. Complete your GED and/or request placement in a vocational training program. Then work at it.
- If you did not complete your R&GC recommendations because the programming was not available, request transfer to an institution where the programming you need is offered.
- If your parole was denied, yet all R&GC recommendations are complete, your parole guideline score is in the high probability range, all program reports are positive, *and* your parole plan is reasonable, write to us with the following documents:
 - Pre-Sentence Investigation Report
 - PER
 - Parole Guideline Score Sheet
 - Program Termination Reports
 - COMPAS test results
 - Parole Board decision
 - A summary of your parole plans
 - A summary of the Parole Board interview

Stay busy. Focus on positive activities. Associate with positive people. Try to remain optimistic. Do not give up. Continue to take advantage of all available programming. Think about the parole interview. What went well and what might have been better? Decide how you might do a better job in the next interview.

Grievances: According to Policy Directive 06.05.100, Paragraph G, “Decisions by the Parole Board, including the scoring weights and ranges utilized in developing parole guideline scores, are not grievable. However, a prisoner may challenge the calculation of his/her parole guideline score, including the accuracy of the information used in calculating the score, by filing a grievance pursuant to PD 03.02.130....”

APPENDICES: IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION

POLICIES, DOM'S, AND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to go to the library and read the relevant Policy Directives, Administrative Rules, and Director's Office Memoranda for the parole process. Listed below is a non-exhaustive list of those for 2016 (the DOM's will certainly change, others may be updated):

- Policy Directives 06.01.110 through 06.06.120 all relate to parole in some form or fashion, but you should especially make sure you review and understand PDs 06.05.100 (Parole Guidelines), 06.05.103 (PER/Lifer Reports), 06.05.104 (Parole Process), and 06.05.130 (Community Resources).
- The current DOMs that relate to parole are 2016-13, 2016-14, 2016-15, and 2016-27 (note that the names of these DOMs will change yearly, if they are carried over to the following year).
- Administrative Rules R 791.7715 and R 791.7716.

HELPFUL ADDRESSES

Parole Board: Grandview Plaza, P.O. Box 30003, Lansing, MI 48909

State Senators and Representatives: State Capitol, Lansing, MI 48909

MDOC Director: Grandview Plaza, P.O. Box 30003, Lansing, MI 48909

Legislative Corrections Ombudsman: P.O. Box 30036, 124 W. Allegan, Lansing, MI 48909

American Friends Service Committee: 124 Pearl St., Suite 607, Ypsilanti, MI 48197

MI-CURE: P.O. Box 2736, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2736

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some booklets and pamphlets we have on hand that we'll send out upon request:

- **Thoughts On Getting Out** – A few things to consider if you are about to be released from prison, or if you love someone who is about to be released.
- **Advocating With the Incarcerated in Michigan** – A collection of lessons we've learned about advocating within the MDOC.
- **To the Imprisoned Sex Offender**
- **To the Family Member or Friend of a Sex Offender**
- **Advocating with the Incarcerated Sex Offender**

RECOMMENDED BOOKS: The following list of recommended books may be available in your library or on Inter-Library Loan (if your facility participates in the ILL).

Title	Author
Go Tell It on the Mountain	James Baldwin
The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sex Abuse	Ellen Bass & Laura Davis
How Can I Stop? (sex offenders)	Laren Bays & Robert Freeman-Longo
Co-Dependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself	Melody Beattie
Beyond Co-Dependency: And Getting Better All the Time	Melody Beattie
It Will Never Happen to Me (children of alcoholics)	Claudia Black
Broken Boys/Mending Men: Recovery from Childhood Sexual Abuse	Stephen Grubman-Black
Creating Love	John Bradshaw
Family Secrets: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You	John Bradshaw
Healing the Shame that Blinds You	John Bradshaw
Why I Love Black Women	Michael Eric Dyson
Obsessive Love: When It Hurts Too Much to Let Go	Susan Forward
Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them	Susan Forward
Toxic People: 10 Ways of Dealing with People Who Make Your Life Miserable	Lillian Glass
Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples	Harville Hendrix
Keeping the Love You Find: A Guide for Singles	Harville Hendrix
Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery	Bell Hooks
I'll Quit Tomorrow: A Practical Guide to Alcoholism Treatment	Vernon Johnson
Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man	Sam Keen
The Gendered Society	Michael Kimmel
The History of Masculinity	Michael Kimmel
How to Forgive When You Can't Forget	Charles Klein
Listening to Prozac (depression and medication)	Pete Kramer
The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing Patterns of Intimate Relationships	Harriet Lerner
The Dance of Intimacy: A Woman's Guide to Courageous Acts of Change	Harriet Lerner
The Dance of Deception: Pretending & Truth-Telling in Women's Lives	Harriet Lerner
When Anger Hurts (family issues)	Matthew & Judith McKay
Makes Me Wanna Holler	Eric Payne
The Road Less Traveled: Psychology of Love, Traditional Values, and Spiritual Growth	M. Scott Peck
Unfinished Business (Women & Depression)	Maggie Scarf
Intimate Partners: Patterns in Love & Marriage	Maggie Scarf

**PREPARING
FOR YOUR
FREEDOM**

INTRODUCTION

Returning to the community after being in prison can be a very challenging experience. A bit of planning and a little work can make it easier.

CRITICAL DOCUMENTS

It is important to have your birth certificate and social security card when you leave prison. If you do not already have them, there is no need to wait to get these. Start the process as soon as possible.

For a copy of your birth certificate you will need to contact the Michigan Department of Community Health, Capitol View Building, 201 Townsend St., Lansing, MI 48913. Explain that you are incarcerated and preparing for your release and would like to fill out an application for a copy of your birth certificate.

If you have never had a Social Security Card, or if you have lost your card, you will need to contact Social Security to obtain one. You can write to Social Security Administration at: Social Security Administration, Office of Public Inquiries, Windsor Park Building, 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235. Again, you should explain that you are currently incarcerated, preparing for your release, and where you plan on going when you are released (state and county).

PLANNING AHEAD

Prior to your release, read your parole conditions. Read them carefully, so you can understand what is expected of you. If you have difficulty reading and can get a trusted friend to read them to you, consider doing that. Determine whether you will need assistance in meeting any of those conditions. If so, make a note of the assistance you will need.

If your crime was a sex offense and you are required to participate in counseling in the community, the parole agent will refer you to a counselor that has a contract with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). If you have a history of substance abuse, the parole agent may refer you to a substance abuse treatment program that has a contract with the MDOC. If you have a substance abuse history and the agent does not make a referral for treatment, you may want to request one.

Read the brochure "Thoughts on Getting Out." It will give you some idea of the challenges others have faced when leaving prison. Your experience will not be unique. Most people find the transition challenging for one or more reasons. Don't panic. Don't give up on yourself. Take it easy. Think about the additional services you may need and seek help as needed.

One of the first things you must do when released is to meet with your parole agent. It is important that you do that within the specified time frame. You will

continue to meet with that agent on the schedule he or she establishes. Do NOT miss an appointment.

GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED WHEN YOU ARE RELEASED

For years, MI – CURE published a list of agencies and organizations (for each county in Michigan) that may be helpful to someone leaving prison. We are no longer publishing that list for several reasons:

- It is very difficult to maintain as the addresses change frequently, new agencies are established, and some go out of business.
- More often than not, the agencies will not respond to someone who is in prison. That is understandable, because they do not know when the person will be released and what services they will be able to provide during that time.
- There is a more comprehensive and a current list being maintained by the United Way. The area covered by those lists includes 70% of Michigan's population.
- The United Way list can be readily accessed when someone arrives in the community – simply by dialing 2-1-1 at any time of the day and any day of the week. If the 2-1-1 Call Service is not available in your community, call the closest United Way office.

We have included a list of typical needs below. In most cases, the United Way list can help you locate agencies and organizations that will help with those needs. Again, you simply dial 2-1-1 to discuss your needs with a trained helper.

- You will need to get a state ID. You cannot gain employment or access many services without it. There are agencies in many communities that help with that task.
- If you have chronic health problems, you will need to locate free or affordable health care fairly soon.
- If you have a history of substance abuse, we strongly recommend attending AA or NA on a regular basis. Even if you were incarcerated for a long time and did not abuse substances while in the system, the challenges of transitioning to freedom sometimes lead to using again. As a precautionary measure, get involved in AA or NA as soon as possible – as in the second day after your release.
- You may need help with housing, food, and clothing.
- Some counties offer a very affordable health insurance plan.
- Transportation is often an issue.
- There may be agencies in your community that help with employment and/or employment skills development.
- Other helpful services may include childcare, legal assistance, education and training, ADA support, etc.

You are likely to find assistance with all these and more by calling 2-1-1. If there is no 2-1-1 Call Service in your community, contact the nearest United Way office for assistance. You can locate them in the phone directory or on the Internet at <http://www.uwmich.org>.

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

People often ask us about higher educational opportunities once being released from prison. There are no special grants or resources offered specifically to returning citizens. However, it is possible for you to get a college education.

The best method would be to first go to your local Community College (see attached list). Keep in mind that you should get all your basic living arrangements in order. You will need identification, housing, etc. in order to even apply for higher education. We recommend first going to a community college in order to get reoriented. If you plan on working toward a four-year degree, it will be easy to transfer once you get the hang of things.

When you get to the community college, you should go to the Admissions Office and ask for an application for admission. It will most likely be a short form that you can fill out and turn in while at the office, or it may be an online form that you will be able to complete while there. Next you should visit the Financial Aid Office and ask to speak with someone about applying for grants. You should be eligible for the Pell Grant. The Pell Grant is a post secondary educational grant usually given to lower income students. The most you are able to obtain with this grant is going to be about \$5000. While this will cover most of your costs in a community college (tuition, books, and supplies), you will also have a good likelihood of being eligible for "work-study." Work-study is generally available for those who qualify for the Pell Grant, and it provides funding so you will be able to work at the school for up to 25 hours per week, usually earning between \$8-9/hour. Be sure to check the "work-study" box on the form you will fill out for the Pell Grant (the form is called the "FAFSA").

Another option for funding higher education is to get student loans or scholarships. As noted earlier, there are no resources specific for returning citizens; however, your local community college will have lists of the scholarships and possible loan options for you to look through and apply for. Again, this will either be at the Admissions Office or Financial Aid Office.

Please be aware that you may get turned down for the Pell Grant, student loans, scholarships, or even admittance to the college. We encourage you to keep trying.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MICHIGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Alpena Community College
665 Johnson Street
Alpena, MI 49707-1495
989.356.9021
www.alpenacc.edu

Bay de Noc Community College
2001 North Lincoln Rd
Escanaba, MI 49829
906.786.5802
www.baycollege.edu

Delta College
1961 Delta Rd
University Center, MI 48710
989.686.9000
www.delta.edu

Glen Oaks Community College
E-4946 Jackson Rd
Ironwood, MI 49938
906.932.4231
www.gogebic.edu

Grand Rapids Community College
143 Bostwick Ave
NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3295
616.234. GRCC
www.grcc.edu

Henry Ford Community College
5101 Evergreen Rd
Dearborn, MI 48128
800.585.HFCC
www.hfcc.edu

Jackson Community College
2111 Emmons Rd
Jackson, MI 49201-8399
517.787.0800
www.jccmi.edu

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
202 North Rose St
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269.373.7800
www.kvcc.edu

Kellogg Community College
450 North Ave
Battle Creek, MI 49017
269.965.3931
www.kellogg.edu

Kirtland Community College
10775 N St. Helen Rd
Roscommon, MI 48653
989.275.5000
www.kirtland.edu

Land Michigan College
2755 E Napier Ave
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
800.252.1562
www.lakemichigancollege.edu

Lansing Community College
P.O. Box 40010
Lansing, MI 48901-7210
517-483-1957
www.lcc.edu

Macomb Community College
14500 E 12 Mile Rd
Warren, MI 48088
586.445.7999
www.macomb.edu

Mid Michigan Community College
1375 S Clare Ave
Harrison, MI 48625
989.386.6622
www.midmich.edu

Monroe County Community College
1555 S Raisinville Rd
Monroe, MI 48161
734.242.7300
www.monroeccc.edu

Montcalm Community College
2800 College Dr
Sidney, MI 48885
989.328.2111
www.montcalm.edu

Mott Community College
1401 E Court St
Flint, MI 48503
810.762.0200
www.mcc.edu

St. Clair County Community College
323 Erie St, PO Box 5015
Port Huron, MI 48061-5015
810-984-3881
www.sc4.edu

Schoolcraft College
18600 Haggery Rd
Livonia, MI 48152
734.462.4400
www.schoolcraft.edu

Southwestern Michigan College
33890 U.S. Highway 12
Niles, MI 49120
800-456-8675
www.swmich.edu

Muskegon Community College
221 S Quarterline Rd
Muskegon, MI 49442
231.773.9131
www.muskegoncc.edu

North Central Michigan College
1515 Howard St
Petoskey, MI 49770
888.298.6605
www.ncmich.edu

Northwestern Michigan College
1701 E Front St
Traverse City, MI 49686
800.748.6605
www.nmc.edu

Oakland Community College
2480 Opdyke Rd
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304
248.341.2000
www.oaklandcc.edu

Washtenaw Community College
4800 E Huron River Dr
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1610
734.973.3300
www.wccnet.edu

Wayne County Community College
801 W Ford Street
Detroit, MI 48226
313.496.2600
www.wcccd.edu

West Shore Community College
3000 N Stiles Rd
Scottville, MI 49454
231.845.6211
www.westshore.edu

2-1-1 CALL CENTER COVERAGE

The following counties are currently served by the 2-1-1 Call Center:

Alger	Grand Traverse	Macomb
Allegan	Hillsdale	Marquette
Arenac	Houghton	Menominee
Baraga	Ingham	Midland
Barry	Iron	Monroe
Bay	Jackson	Montcalm
Berrien	Kalamazoo	Muskegon
Calhoun	Kalkaska	Oakland
Chippewa	Kent	Ontonagon
Clinton	Keweenaw	Ottawa
Delta	Lapeer	Saginaw
Dickinson	Leelanau	Schoolcraft
Eaton	Livingston	Washtenaw
Genesee	Luce	Wayne
Gogebic	Mackinac	

Visit Michigan 2-1-1 Call Centers

UPCAP 2-1-1

CALL 2-1-1

Heart of West Michigan United Way 2-1-1

Gryphon Place 2-1-1

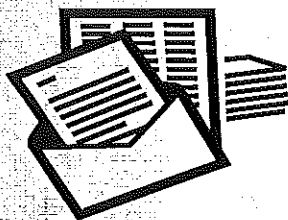
Hands On Battle Creek 2-1-1

Central Michigan 2-1-1

United Way for Southeastern Michigan

2-1-1 Northeast Michigan

Cover Letter Tips



Here are a few tips to make your résumé more effective:

- A tailored cover letter may be used to accompany a résumé.
- Address the letter to the contact person or to the Human Resources Director.
- Use standard business letter format.
- Use a font size of 10 to 14 points.
- Use non-decorative typefaces. Choose one typeface and stick to it.
- Cover letters should be individually typed and signed.
- Use terms and phrases that are meaningful to the employer.
- Minimize jargon, abbreviations, and contractions and be concise.
- Check your letter for errors and grammatical correctness.
- Pay special attention to the job description as it provides specific cover letter instructions.

While your résumé is a summary of your credentials, your cover letter can be an effective marketing tool. Your aim is to demonstrate why your education, work experience, skills, and background uniquely qualify you for the position you're applying for.

A cover letter should contain three main sections:

FIRST PARAGRAPH

- Identify the position for which you are applying.
- State how you learned of the position and why you are interested in the position or organization.

SECOND PARAGRAPH

- Summarize why you are a strong candidate for the position.
- Target the job description and specifically discuss how your skills relate to the job requirements.
- Highlight one or two of your accomplishments or abilities that show you are an excellent candidate for the position.
- Detail positive characteristics and past experiences that illustrate how your qualifications will benefit the organization.

CLOSING PARAGRAPH

- Thank the person for considering your résumé and offer to provide additional information.
- Include your phone number and when you can be reached.

See sample cover letter!



Michigan Civil Service Commission, Career Services
400 South Pine Street • P.O. Box 30002 • Lansing, MI 48909
800-788-1766 (voice) • 517-373-3030 (voice)

Detroit Regional Office • Cadillac Place
3042 West Grand Boulevard • Suite 4-400 • Detroit, MI 48202
313-456-4400 (voice)

If you have a hearing impairment, call the Michigan Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-649-3777

www.michigan.gov/mdcs

1908 Anystreet
Lansing, MI 48909
August 1, 2xxx

Mary Smith
Recruiter
Department of ABC
123 Main Street
Anytown, MI 55555

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am writing in response to your posting on the State of Michigan Vacancy Posting site for the Human Resources Analyst position. I believe my qualifications make me an excellent candidate for the position.

I possess more than seven years of human resources experience in recruitment and staffing, benefits administration, and workforce planning. Throughout my career I have demonstrated the ability to establish excellent client relationships and to develop and implement innovative solutions to address a wide variety of human resources challenges. I have excellent organizational abilities and strong decision-making skills.

Enclosed is my résumé for your review. I would appreciate the chance to meet with you to discuss the ways in which I can help the Department of ABC achieve its goals and objectives. I can be reached at the phone numbers listed on my résumé.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Iwant A. Job

Iwant A. Job

Enclosure

Functional Format

YOUR NAME

Address, City, State, Zip Code

Home and Cell Phones

E-mail

Job Title You Desire

More than (# years paid and unpaid) work experience, in target area, contributing to an (achievement/result/high ranking in industry/top 5% of performance reviews). Add accomplishments, strengths, proficiencies, characteristics, education, brief testimonial — anything that supports your target job title.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A TOP SKILL (Pertinent to objective and job requirements)

- An achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*
- A second achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*

A SECOND TOP SKILL (Pertinent to objective and job requirements)

- An achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*
- A second achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*

A THIRD TOP SKILL (Pertinent to objective and job requirements)

- An achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*
- A second achievement illustrating this skill, and the location/employer of this skill*

A FOURTH SKILL (Optional — must relate to objective and job requirements)

- Detailed as above

A UNIQUE AREA OF PROFICIENCY (Pertinent to objective and job requirements)

- An achievement testifying to this proficiency, including the location/employer*
- A list of equipment, processes, software, or terms you know that reflect your familiarity with this area of proficiency
- A list of training experiences that document your qualifications and proficiency

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

[dates]	Job Title	Employer, Location
[dates]	Job Title	Employer, Location
[dates]	Job Title	Employer, Location
[dates]	Job Title	Employer, Location

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Degrees, credentials, clearances, licenses, classes, seminars, training

* Omit locations/employers if your work history is obviously lacking in lockstep upward mobility

Dear Friend,

Welcome back to the free world! Even if you are familiar with the community you're coming home to, some things might have changed since the last time you were there. We hope the information here will help you find your way through your new situation.

There are two things you should do before you leave prison. First, locate your birth certificate. If you do not have a copy, you can request one from:

Vital Records Requests
P.O. Box 30721
Lansing, MI 48909

You must provide them with: your name, your date of birth, your city of birth, your county of birth, and your parents names, including your mother's maiden name. There is a charge of \$15 for a copy of your birth certificate.

Also, determine if you are eligible for Social Security benefits. Neither the fact that you will be an ex-con nor the fact that you are a Vietnam veteran makes you eligible for Social Security benefits. Generally, you are eligible only if you are 62 or older, or are physically disabled. If you believe you are eligible contact the Social Security Administration at a local branch office (address listed on the enclosure).

When you arrive in your community after your release, report to the parole office immediately. Prior to your release you will be told who your parole officer is and how to contact him/her. You may wish to write that contact in the space below.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

You will need to visit a Secretary of State to get your driver's license or state ID card. If you do not know of the nearest location, you can contact them at: (888) 767-6424. You may apply for a Bridge Card, which will allow you to purchase groceries, but you will need to apply for this card through the Dept. of Human Services. They can be reached at (855) 275-6424.

This information is provided as courtesy by:

MI-CURE
P.O. Box 2736
Kalamazoo, MI 49003

American Friends Service Committee
1414 Hill Street
Ann Arbor, MI 49003

Feel free to make copies and share the, with others.

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MI – CURE
PO Box 2736
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2736
(616) 383 – 0028

and

American Friends Service Committee
1414 Hill Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
(734) 761 – 8283

Things to do (continued)...

- Delay major decisions where possible. Your plans may well change.
- Tell your doctor you are on parole. Ask that s/he avoid giving you medications which will test positive for substance abuse.
- Look for a support group or a counselor if the need arises.
- Especially if you've left a noisy environment, remember that you don't need to yell to be heard.
- Exercise patience with one another. Listen carefully. Ask for clarification if you are not certain you have understood.
- Remember that the adjustment problems are temporary. As difficult as it is, don't give up!

Things not to do...

- Parole officers have extremely large caseloads. They are unable to provide much assistance for individual parolees. Do not expect a great deal of assistance from the parole officer.
- As a loved one, do not assume you know what the released prisoner wants. S/he is capable of making decisions and should be encouraged to do so.
- Do not underestimate the challenge of finding employment. It is possible, and the released prisoner will eventually find work. However, it is likely to take time, and will require patience and encouragement from all involved.
- If you are a loved one, do not be over-protective. The released prisoner is an adult, knows the rules and must manage affairs accordingly.
- Don't try to make up for lost time by rushing into a demanding job, significant financial obligations or serious relationships.

Please share this brochure with others.

Feel free to make copies.

Additional copies available from:

MI-CURE
PO BOX 2736
KALAMAZOO MI 49003-2736
(A grassroots organization working to reduce crime through criminal justice reform)

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAM
1414 HILL STREET
ANN ARBOR MI 48104
(A prisoner advocacy organization)

Fall, 1998

NOTE: This brochure is provided by the above named organizations to help those in need. Use of this brochure by other organizations for fundraising or solicitation of any sort is not authorized.

THOUGHTS ON GETTING OUT

**A FEW THINGS TO
THINK ABOUT IF
YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE
RELEASED FROM PRISON,
OR IF YOU LOVE
SOMEONE WHO IS
ABOUT TO BE RELEASED**

Things to remember about the prisoner's situation...

- S/he has been allowed to make very few decisions since entering the prison system, and has had very little, if any, positive reinforcement while in prison.
- The environment in most prisons is very crowded, noisy and without privacy.
- While freedom is coveted, the responsibilities can be frightening... particularly when you do not believe in yourself.
- Landmarks in the released prisoner's home environment will have changed. This may cause shock, stress and/or confusion.

All of you have changed in ways not understood by one another.

Things to remember about the free world loved one's situation...

- These people have suffered along with the prisoner.
- They have been forced to be more independent. That independence will not disappear simply because the prisoner comes home.
- Important changes have taken place in their lives. Children have grown older. The free parent has been sole head of household. S/he has discovered new strengths. The family has learned to manage without the absent prisoner.
- They stuck by the prisoner because they wanted to... because they loved him/her.

Things to remember when the prisoner comes home...

- S/he will probably experience depression with resulting low energy. Do not confuse this with laziness. Allow time for healing.
- S/he may have difficulty making decisions -- even small ones. Keep in mind, s/he has not been allowed to make decisions for some time.
- The plans and promises s/he developed prior to release will not happen immediately. The temporary depression and indecision will interfere.
- S/he may experience flashbacks...triggered by common events at unexpected times.
- S/he may wish to avoid crowded and/or noisy situations such as stores, theaters, etc. Remember, s/he may not have experienced peace or quiet since entering the system.
- S/he may crave some food items or may wish to avoid others. Remember, s/he had no control over menu selection or preparation.
- His/her interests may have changed completely!
- S/he may have medical or dental care problems which require attention.
- S/he may have difficulty being intimate initially. Don't take this personally.
- Many released prisoners report the feeling that "everyone" knows they are "ex-cons" -- as if it were stamped on the forehead. Of course, that isn't true, but until the feeling goes away, s/he may feel uncomfortable in public places.
- The adjustment may take some time, but it is a temporary situation. Be patient!
- Driving, especially in heavy traffic, may be difficult. Drivers training may be helpful. Even crossing busy streets may be difficult because of an inability to judge speed and distance.
- Communication in the free world will be different than the strained communication in a visiting room or monitored phone call. Spontaneous dialogue can lead to misunderstanding and hurt feelings if one responds without forethought.

Things to do...

- Remember that the prisoner must work to ensure parole success.
- While the loved one is still incarcerated, encourage him/her to take advantage of any counseling, parenting classes, substance abuse programming, life skill classes, etc. which are available.
- Prior to release, encourage your prisoner loved one to take advantage of any pre-parole planning which is available.
- Allow the prisoner to plan his/her first few days of freedom.
- Allow time for the released prisoner to wind down. The differences between prison and the free world are monumental. It takes time to adjust.
- Initially, avoid situations where there are hundreds of choices, for example large super markets, restaurants with large menus, etc.
- Follow **ALL** parole rules literally. This includes contacting the parole officer immediately and regularly. If in doubt, ask.
- Remember that substance abuse is the major cause of parole failure. Avoid situations where that may be a problem. Use AA, NA or one-on-one counseling if necessary.
- It is the released prisoner's responsibility to avoid any situations which might lead to a new offense. For example those convicted of CSC offenses should avoid being alone with potential victims; all former prisoners should avoid situations where guns or drugs are present.
- Try to understand the losses the prisoner may have experienced. S/he may well require a complete change of lifestyle. Undoubtedly, there has been considerable loss of self-esteem.
- Take a class in decision making or read a self-help book on the subject.

Parole Planning

Instructions:

1. Do an honest and thorough evaluation of your strengths and needs at the time you entered prison
2. Check whether it was an existing strength or something you needed. Use the "Other" rows for success factors that are not listed here.
3. For each success factor you need(ed) to develop, outline an action plan to achieve it
NOTE: If you have been in the system for a while, you may already have achieved a number of success factors. Check each anyway and explain what you did to achieve it
4. When listing progress, include the name of the program, a book read, a seminar attended, a class completed, personal observation, etc. Be specific and include pertinent dates.
5. In the case of important documents, don't assume someone is holding them for you. Confirm it.

Obtaining Your State ID Card, MI Driver's License and Establishing Your U.S. Citizenship

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		State ID Card	You will need a minimum of five documents in order to establish your Social Security number (or letter of ineligibility), your legal presence, identity verification and proof of Michigan residency. See attached "Applying for a license or ID?" for specifics.	
		MI Driver's License	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn to drive (consider taking a class.) 2. Study for written test. 3. Visit www.michigan.gov/sos/ for information on how to take your road test and obtain your license. 	
		U.S. Citizenship Established	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you are a naturalized citizen, your birth certificate, U.S. passport, FS-240 "Consular Report of Birth Abroad," N-600 "Certificate of Citizenship" or Naturalization Certificate may be used as proof of citizenship. Confirm it is available. 2. If you are not a citizen of the U.S., under section 791.234b of the Michigan Corrections Code, deportation proceedings will start or continue if parole is granted. You will need an attorney if you wish to contest your deportation. 	

Improving Your Education and Getting Your GED

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		English Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take English as a Second Language Course if available in prison. 2. Join organizations where you have an opportunity to use the language. 3. Ask the librarian for books or MP3 language lessons. 4. Watch television. 5. Interact with others as much as possible. 6. Correspond with others in English. 7. _____ 8. _____ 	
		High School Diploma or GED	Take advantage of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED courses. _____ _____ _____	
		Reading and Math Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If it is interfering with gaining a GED, ask for a tutor. 2. Ask the librarian or school principal for additional materials. 3. Purchase books in basic math or reading from a vendor. 4. Play games that require math or language skills (e.g. cribbage or Scrabble). 5. _____ 6. _____ 	

Improving Your Employment Skills

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Computer Literacy	1. Take computer classes, if available. NOTE: There may be parole stipulations that limit computer use. 2. Learn to use the keyboard. 3. _____ 4. _____	
		Vocational and Occupational Skills	Take advantage of any vocational programming that is consistent with your aptitude. (It is important to complete any programming you begin.) _____ _____	
		Employability Skills	1. Work hard at every job opportunity. (Every job offers helpful skills.) 2. Be willing to change jobs when you have mastered the current one, in order to learn new skills. 3. Consult with the principal or librarian for books on job skills. 4. Talk with friends or family in the free world about their job experiences. 5. _____ 6. _____	

Building Work Experience

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Work Ethic	1. Work hard at any job assigned. 2. Ask for more work if you complete assigned tasks. 3. Be on time. 4. Strive for 39 points on work reports 5. Request a more challenging job after a year on an assignment and 6 months of receiving work reports with 39 points 6. Do not refuse a work assignment. 7. _____ 8. _____	
		Work History	1. Establish a work history using employability skills and work ethic. 2. Volunteer for positions in prisoner organizations and nonprofit activities. 3. _____ 4. _____	

Self Motivation and Housing

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Motivation	1. Pattern weekdays as workdays. (Remain awake and active for at least 9 hours straight.) 2. Keep your mind active (read, journal, write letters, exercise, engage in hobby crafts). 3. Respect yourself. Dress, groom, and work as though you were in the real world. 4. Be respectful of others. 5. Always strive to improve. (Challenge yourself to learn new subjects or enhance your skills.) 6. Take every opportunity to make good decisions affecting your future. 7. _____ 8. _____	
		Stable Housing	1. Understand the possible restrictions: a. Parole stipulations b. Financial constraints c. Transportation constraints d. Family dynamics e. Health, mental health and disability implications 2. Consider pros and cons of living with family. 3. Contact housing resources or shelters in area of parole. 4. Research available boarding houses. 5. Consider in-patient treatment, if appropriate. 6. Explore MDOC residential opportunities. 7. _____ 8. _____	

Transportation and Clothing

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	Status or Progress
		Transportation 1. Understand limitations: a. Parole stipulations b. Finances 2. If driving is not an option, plan to be self-sufficient: a. Consider a placement where public transportation is available b. Learn schedules and routes c. Learn time management 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	
		Appropriate Clothing 1. Be aware of the availability and acceptability of resale shops in most communities. 2. Plan to purchase wisely. (One pair of basic, solid-color slacks or skirt with 2 matching shirts or blouses, a pair of comfortable shoes, and underwear will suffice.) 3. It is important to save your money; be conservative. 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____	

Budgeting and Finances

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Budgeting Skills	1. Save as much money as possible. Set a goal of \$500. Consider buying US Savings Bonds. 2. Do not plan to borrow money from other individuals. 3. Plan ahead. Determine the cost of: a. Housing b. Public transportation c. Food d. Clothing e. Therapy 4. Plan to visit DHS and the Social Security Office if you suspect you are eligible for assistance. (You are not eligible by virtue of just having been a prisoner.) 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____	
		Financial Assistance	Assess whether you are eligible for any financial assistance: *DHS/Food Stamps *Social Security *Pension/Retirement *Michigan Rehab Services *Medicaid *Veteran Benefits Identify any financial obligations: *Child Support *Restitution *Debt *Fines and Court Costs	

Parenting

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status and Progress
		Child Care/ Child Support	1. Take advantage of any parenting classes or special programming as available. 2. Read "Michigan Parents in Prison: Child Support Obligations." Contact AFSC if you're interested in this packet. 3. Continue contact with children and care givers through letters, phone calls and visits, if possible. Consider the needs of your children before your own needs. 4. Be observant of the intellectual, emotional, and physical development of your children to assess whether they are in a safe environment. Learn about systems to protect children, if necessary. (Consult librarian.) 5. During visits, read, discuss school, play games, and engage children in age-appropriate activities. 6. If possible, send small amounts of money to the caregiver for child support. 7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____	

Family Dynamics

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Personal Family History	1. If your family has a history of substance abuse, violence, abandonment, manipulation, etc., decide if you want to maintain close ties. (Sometimes it is healthy to sever ties.) 2. If you wish to maintain ties, begin working to understand and work with the family dynamics: a. Obtain books from library on codependency; encourage family members to read the same book(s) and discuss. b. Begin applying healthy boundaries while on visits or during phone calls. c. Help others to understand their family dynamics. d. Encourage family members to share more of their daily lives and challenges. e. Establish healthy expectations prior to your release. (Be practical and realistic, understand your limitations and theirs.) 3. _____ 4. _____ _____	
		Family Relationships	1. If your family is healthy and supportive, work hard to maintain those ties. a. Correspond regularly b. Keep visits positive c. Thank them for their support 2. If ties have been severed, and you wish to reunite, work at it. a. Write to express your desire. b. Ask for their input. c. Be respectful and patient. d. Don't insist if there is simply no interest on their part. 3. _____ 4. _____ _____	

Social Skills and Self Control

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Social Skills	1. If your institution offers a Special Education program for which you are eligible, enroll. 2. You may be eligible for the Adaptive Skills Residential Program (consult your counselor), if you have been diagnosed with a cognitive or developmental disability or if you consistently: a. Use poor grooming habits. b. Dominate conversations. c. Fail to respect the privacy of others. d. Fail to follow prison rules. e. Are loud. 3. Pattern your behavior after prisoners who avoid tickets and who engage in constructive programming. 4. Read the policy directives and library books for guidance on acceptable behavior. 5. Get involved in available programming. 6. _____ 7. _____ _____	
		Self Control	1. Read literature on impulse and rage control. 2. Take advantage of cognitive restructuring programming, if available. 3. Associate with and observe others who avoid confrontation and who remain calm in difficult situations. 4. Avoid those who tend to frustrate you 5. _____ 6. _____ _____	

Institutional Coping

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Institutional Behavior	1. Engage in as much positive programming as possible. 2. Choose friends and associates wisely. Do not associate with those who cause or attract problems. 3. Avoid individuals who are angry or difficult. 4. Read literature on anger management, negotiation, mediation, etc. 5. Be sure you understand institutional rules. If they are unclear, ask for clarification. 6. _____ 7. _____	
		Acceptance of Responsibility	1. Avoid: a. Minimizing b. Comparing your case with others c. Blaming the victim d. Blaming drugs or alcohol 2. Be aware of body language, eye contact, and language. 3. Don't let your family make excuses. 4. Recognize that if you committed or had anything to do with a crime, you are guilty of violating someone else or the community. 5. _____ 6. _____	
		Other (Indicate)	1. _____ 2. _____	

Physical Health and Mobility

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Physical Health	1. Take care of your health. Eat well, exercise regularly. Refrain from smoking. 2. Know your health problems. 3. Understand your medications, the purpose of each, and when each should be taken. 4. Know if any of your diseases are communicable and, if so, how they are transmitted. Avoid behaviors that could lead to infecting others. 5. Understand if you are eligible for insurance upon release. 6. Know the location of the public health department in the community where you will be living. 7. If possible, obtain a minimal set of pertinent health care records before leaving prison. 8. _____ 9. _____	
		Physical Mobility	1. Ensure that disabilities are accurately recorded in your health care records. 2. Understand ADA implications related to your restrictions and how to request accommodations under the ADA. 3. Learn about nonprofit support organizations in the community where you intend to live. 4. Remain as active as possible, despite limitations. 5. _____ 6. _____	

Obtaining Your Birth Certificate and Social Security Card

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Birth Certificate	1. Complete Form DCH-0569-BX, "Application for a certified copy of Michigan Birth Record." (If you were born in another state, you will have to contact that state.) 2. Submit form with check or money order to address on form 3. _____ 4. _____	
		Social Security Card	1. Complete form SS-5, "Application for a Social Security Card." 2. Submit form with acceptable ID (see instructions).	

Addiction and Mental Health

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Freedom from Addiction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in SA treatment (RSAT, NA, AA) 2. Contact SA agency in home county. 3. Establish pen pal relationship with recovering addict. 4. Develop relapse prevention plan to include post-release issues. 5. Consult librarian for books on recovery. Read as much and as often as possible. 6. _____ 7. _____ 	
		Mental Health	<p>If you were a perpetrator:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attempt to get into appropriate programming and work at it. 2. Develop a relapse prevention plan. 3. Be cautious about engaging in intimate relationships. 4. Plan on seeking treatment, if necessary. <p>If you were a victim:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek therapy in prison. 2. Read literature on codependency, violence, and victimization. 3. Develop a relapse prevention plan. 4. Be cautious about engaging in intimate relationships. 5. Plan on seeking treatment, if necessary. <p>If you are diagnosed with a mental health condition, learn to manage the illness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek treatment in prison. 2. Understand your medications, if any, and follow the medication schedule. 3. Learn where you can get medication in the free world. 4. If possible, leave prison with a 30-day supply of medicine. 	

Self Esteem and Spiritual Foundations

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Self Esteem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in as much positive programming as possible (cognitive restructuring, support groups, therapy, NLA, Chance For Life, tutoring, domestic violence groups, parenting groups etc.) 2. Choose friends and associates wisely. Don't associate with those who cause or attract problems; seek out conflict resolution groups. 3. Avoid individuals who are angry or difficult. 4. Work hard at any job, and try to be as helpful as possible. 5. Get as much education as possible (The fact that you were not successful before does not mean that you cannot succeed now!) 6. _____ 7. _____ 	
		Spiritual Foundations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in worship services if they are meaningful for you. 2. If you are part of a religious community in prison, attempt to establish ties in the outside world as well through correspondence and possibly visits. 3. If community worship does not work for you, seek literature that may help to organize your beliefs and incorporate them into your daily life. 4. _____ 5. _____ 	

Other Considerations

Strength ✓	Need ✓	Success Factors	List of Action Items to Address Needs	Status or Progress
		Other (Indicate)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 	
		Other (Indicate)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 	

Long Term Statistical Risk Grid

	High Property Risk	Middle Property Risk	Low Property Risk
Very High Assaultive Risk	-3	-3	NA
High Assaultive Risk	-2	-2	-1
Middle Assaultive Risk	-1	0	+1
Low Assaultive Risk	NA	+2	+2
Very Low Assaultive Risk	NA	+3	+3

AGE SECTION

Short Term Age Grid

Age	Age Score
15-100	0

Medium Term Age Grid

Age	Age Score
23 and under	-2
24 through 27	-1
28 through 30	0
31 through 40	+1
Over 40	+2

Long Term Age Grid

Age	Age Score
22 and under	-4
23 and 24	-3
25 through 27	-1
28 through 30	0
31 through 35	+1
36 through 40	+2
41 through 50	+3

PROGRAMMING SECTION

Program Performance Grid

	Recommended and Approved Programs Adequately completed	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
A	At least one adequate, no inadequates	+1	+2	+2
B	More adequates than inadequates	+1	+1	+1
C	Adequates equal inadequates	0	0	0
D	More inadequates than adequates	-1	-1	-2
E	At least one inadequate, no adequates	-1	-2	-2

1. Add +1 if no inadequates and at least 2/3 of programs were rated excellent/outstanding. (Can only be awarded if indicated in PER)

2. Subtract -1 if prisoner refused to complete or participate in a recommended program

TOTAL PROGRAMMING ()

MENTAL HEALTH SECTION

Mental Health Grid

Condition	Mental Health Score
1. A history of a sexual offense related to a compulsive, deviant, or psychotic mental state, including serving for CSC offense or offense involving sexually assaultive behavior	-5
2. A condition above exists, but Parole and Commutation Board has determined that therapy reports indicate that significant improvement has occurred.	-4

HOUSING SECTION

Housing Score Grid

Condition	Housing Score
Housed in Security Level V with Level V Management Points	-20
Not Housed in Security Level VI, nor in Level V with Level V Management Points	0

PRELIMINARY PAROLE GUIDELINES SCORE

ACTIVE SENTENCE SCORE	
PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD SCORE	
CONDUCT SCORE	
STATISTICAL RISK SCORE	
AGE SCORE	
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE SCORE	
MENTAL HEALTH SCORE	
HOUSING SCORE	
PRELIMINARY PAROLE GUIDELINE SCORE:	TOTAL

FINAL PAROLE GUIDELINES SCORE

Preliminary Score of -13 or lower - no adjustment

Preliminary score of -12 - +3 - score adjusted to a +4 as FINAL score if ALL of the following exist:

1. prior criminal record points are +06 or less
2. not serving for active CSC sentence
3. conduct variable points are 0 or prisoner is 45 or more years of age

Preliminary Score of +4 or greater will have scores adjusted to +3 as a FINAL score if their prior criminal points are greater than +06

Final Score Grid

+3 or greater	High Probability of Parole
+2 or less but greater than -13	Average Probability of Parole
-13 or less	Low Probability of Parole

(This score sheet was compiled by American Friends Service Committee using the information contained in the MDOC Parole Board memo dated 12/1/2001)

PAROLE GUIDELINE SCORE SHEET

- (S) Short Term - Will have served less than 3 years at consideration date.
(M) Medium Term - Will have served between 3 and 7 years at consideration date.
(L) Long Term - Will have served more than 7 years at consideration date.

ACTIVE SENTENCE SECTION

Aggravating Sentence Variables - If any present, will receive at least -1 points or as indicated

1. Weapon or threat of weapon (-1)
2. Force/Injury (death = -3) (serious injury = -2) (any other or threat = -1)
3. Property Loss or damage exceed \$5,000, excluding joyriding
4. Violence or cruelty beyond that necessary to commit offense
5. Sexual offense or sexually assaultive behavior
6. Victim transported or held captive beyond necessary to commit crime
7. More than two victims threatened or involved
8. Victim unusually vulnerable
9. Leader in multiple offender situation
10. Designated by MDOC as career criminal
11. Designated by MDOC as a drug trafficker
12. Designated by MDOC as involved in organized crime
- Total Aggravating Sentence Variables

Mitigating Sentence Variables

1. Situation crime, unlikely to reoccur (no preplanning at all) (+2)
2. Minor role in multiple offender situation (+1)
- Total Aggravating & Mitigating Variables

Active Sentence Grid

Total Aggravating and Mitigating Points	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
+3	+3	+3	+2
+2	+2	+2	+2
+1	+1	+1	+1
0	0	0	0
-1	-1	-1	0
-2	-1	-1	-1
-3, -4	-2	-2	-1
-5	-2	-2	-2
-6, -7, -8	-3	-3	-2
-9 or more	-4	-3	-2

PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD SECTION

1. # of assaultive misdemeanors committed after 17th birthday (0 to 1 = 0) (2 or more = 1)
2. # of jail sentences served (0 to 1 = 0) (2 to 3 = 1) (4 or more = 2)
3. # of prior felony convictions (0 = 0) (1 = 1) (2 = 2) (3 or more = 3)
4. # of prior assaultive felony convictions (0 = 0) (1 = 1) (2 = 2) (3 or more = 3)
5. # of prior prison terms (MI or other jurisdictions) (# of prefixes, not # of sentences) (0 = 0) (1 = 2) (2 or more = 3)
6. # of probation, delayed sentence or parole failures (0 = 0) (1 or more = 1)
7. On probation, parole or delayed sentence at the time of current offense, or sentenced because of probation violation (No = 0) (Yes = 1)
8. # of juvenile commitments for non-status offense (s) (0 = 0) (1 or more = 1)
9. Received juvenile probation for non-status offense (s) (Assault = 2) (Non = 1) (no juvenile probation = 0)
- TOTAL

Prior Criminal Record Grid

Total Prior Criminal Record Points	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
0	+5	+3	+1
1	+4	+2	+1
2	+2	+1	+1
3	0	0	0
4	-1	0	0
5	-2	-1	-1
6	-3	-1	-1
7, 8	-4	-2	-1
9, 10	-5	-2	-1
11 or more	-5	-3	-1

INSTITUTIONAL CONDUCT SECTION

1. # of major misconducts incurred in the last 5 years
2. # of major misconducts incurred in the last 1 year
3. # of non-bod major misconducts incurred in the last 5 years
4. # of assault, sexual assault, riot, homicide major misconducts in last 5 years
5. # of security classification increases in last 5 years
6. # of security classification increased in last 1 year
- # 1, 2, 3 or 4 based upon # of major misconduct convictions for each individual charge and points are assigned for each charge
- TOTAL

Institutional Conduct Grid

Total Conduct Points	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
0	+3	+5	+8
1	+2	+4	+6
2	+1	+3	+4
3	0	+1	+2
4	0	0	0
5	-1	0	0
6	-1	-1	-2
7	-2	-1	-2
8	-2	-3	-4
9	-3	-3	-4
10, 11, 12	-3	-4	-6
13 or more	-3	-5	-8

STATISTICAL RISK SECTION

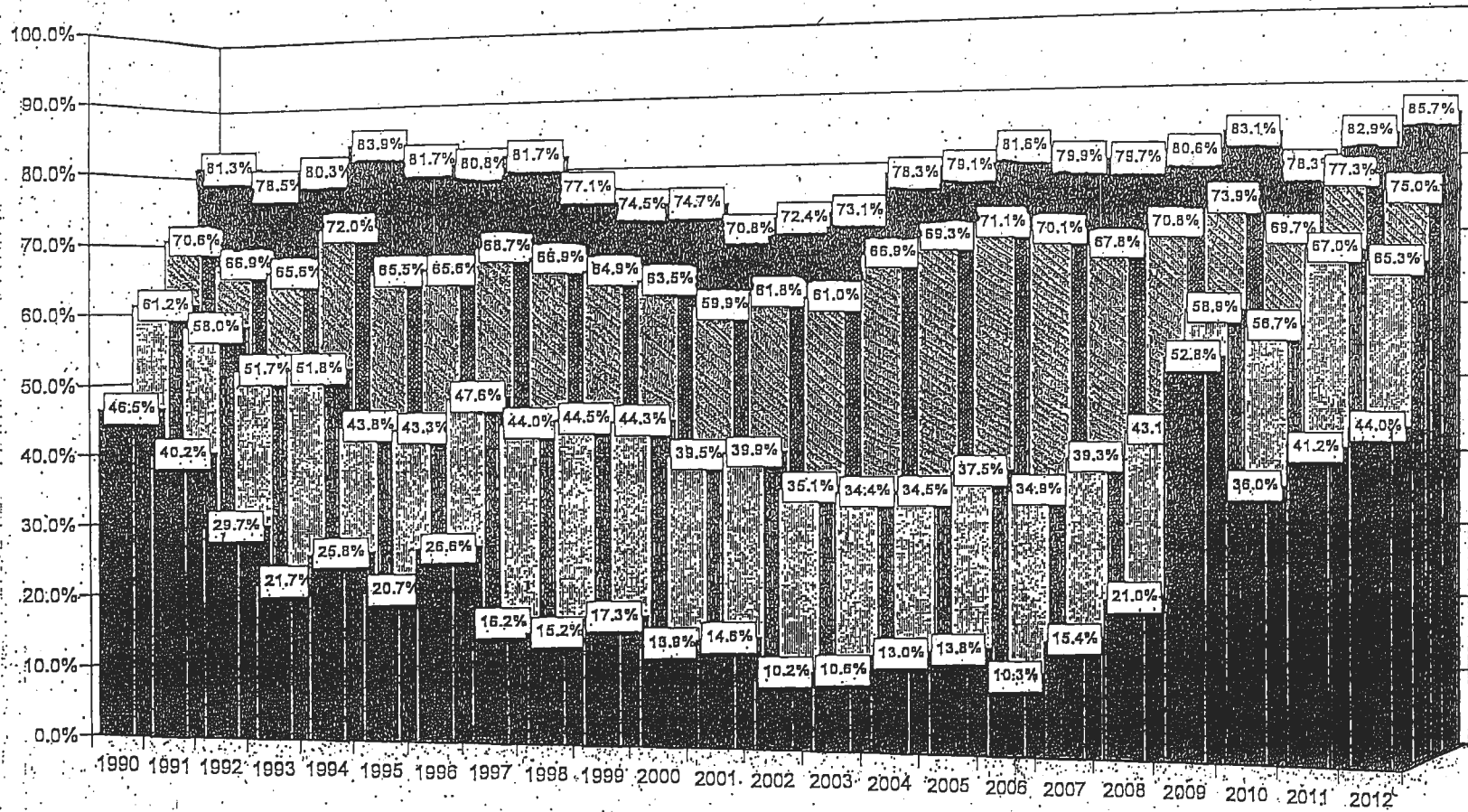
Short Term Statistical Risk Grid

	High Property Risk	Middle Property Risk	Low Property Risk
Very High Assaultive Risk	-9	-7	NA
High Assaultive Risk	-7	-5	-4
Middle Assaultive Risk	-4	0	+4
Low Assaultive Risk	+4	+5	+8
Very Low Assaultive Risk	+6	+7	+9

Medium Term Statistical Risk Grid

	High Property Risk	Middle Property Risk	Low Property Risk
Very High Assaultive Risk	-7	-6	NA
High Assaultive Risk	-5	-4	-3
Middle Assaultive Risk	-2	0	+2
Low Assaultive Risk	NA	+4	+5
Very Low Assaultive Risk	NA	+6	+7

Parole Approval Rates By Offense Group



Sex Offenders
 Other Violent Offenders
 Other Non-Violent Offenders
 Drug Offenders



SPECIAL EDITION

NEW PAROLE BOARD APPOINTMENTS
ANNOUNCED

Executive Order 2011-3 abolished the current 15-member Michigan Parole and Commutation Board and established a new 10-member Michigan Parole Board. Director Richard M. McKeon announced appointments today to the new Board which will officially be established on April 15. The appointees will begin job-shadowing current Board members on March 7, learning the process and function of the Board to ensure a smooth transition. In addition to the establishment of the new Parole Board, the organizational structure will also be changed. Effective immediately, the Parole Board will be housed within the Field Operations Administration.

New Parole Board members are:

- Tom Combs (four-year term): Tom will serve as the Chairperson of the Michigan Parole Board. He has been with the Michigan Department of Corrections since 1982 and is the current Administrator for the Substance Abuse Services Section. During his career, Tom has served as a corrections officer, field agent, field supervisor, supervisor of the electronic monitoring center, and community resource manager in the Office of Field Programs. He has a B.A. in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Western Michigan University.
- Amy Bonito (four-year term): Amy is the current Administrative Assistant for the Field Operations Administration's Outstate Region. She has been with the Department since 1988, serving as a field agent and acting parole violation specialist. Amy has a B.A. in English, Black American Studies, and Criminal Justice from Western Michigan University and a Juris Doctorate from Michigan State University Detroit College of Law.
- Barbara Sampson (four-year term): Barbara has served on the Parole Board since 2003 and was appointed chairperson in 2007. Prior to her appointment to the Parole Board, she served in positions as program manager and as quality assurance liaison for the Wayne County Department of Community Justice/Adult Services; as an adjunct instructor at Wayne State University; and as a corrections officer with the Department. Barbara has a B.A. from Wayne State University and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from University of Detroit.

PAROLE BOARD (Continued on page 2)

PAROLE BOARD (Continued from page 1)

- Sonia Amos-Warchock (four-year term): Sonia is a current Parole Board member who has served on the Board since 2009. She has been with the Michigan Department of Corrections since 1989, serving as a corrections officer, probation agent, parole/probation supervisor, acting area manager, and parole violation specialist. Sonia has a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Northern Michigan University.
- Stephen DeBoer (three-year term): Stephen has been on the Parole Board since 2005. Prior to that, he served for 10 years as the Barry County Sheriff, and also served as first lieutenant and post commander, sergeant, and trooper for the Michigan State Police during a career spanning 25 years. Stephen has an extensive educational background in law enforcement including completion of the F.B.I. National Academy and the National Sheriff's Institute. Stephen attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI.
- Anthony King (three-year term): Anthony King is a current member of the Parole Board and will continue serving in that position on the new Board. He has been on the Board since 2008. King has an extensive background in college academia in the areas of teaching, research, and administration. His prior positions include Adjunct Associate Professor at Michigan State University, Associate Professor at Wayne State University, and Associate Professor at the University of Alabama. Anthony has B.A. degrees in Sociology and Social Sciences from Cleveland State University, a Master's Degree in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis, MO, and a Ph.D. in Social Work from Washington University. Anthony has a wealth of practice experience and published reports on crime, families and effects on crime on communities.
- Jayne Price (three-year term): Jayne Price is currently a parole/probation supervisor with the Michigan Department of Corrections, serving in Kent County. Jayne started as a corrections officer with the Department in 1983 and has also served as a sergeant, resident unit manager, and parole/probation officer. She has an Associates Degree in Elementary Education from Grand Rapids Junior College, a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Grand Valley State University, and a Master's Degree in Communication from Western Michigan University. Jayne has served on at least eight community boards during her career, including serving as chairperson on two of those boards.
- Charles Brown (two-year term): Charles was appointed to the Parole Board in 2009 and will continue serving as a Board member. Charles has over 40 years of law enforcement experience including ten years as the Saginaw County Sheriff. Prior to that, he served as a criminal investigator for the Saginaw County Prosecutor's Office.

PAROLE BOARD (Continued on page 3)

PAROLE BOARD (Continued from page 2)

fice, and had a distinguished career in the Michigan State Police, serving as a trooper, sergeant, and detective sergeant. Charles has an Associates Degree in Secondary Education and completed the National Sheriff's Institute and the F.B.I.'s Law Enforcement Executive Academy.

- Abigail Callejas (two-year term): Abigail is currently a probation supervisor with the Michigan Department of Corrections, serving in Oakland County. She started with the Department in 1988 as a probation officer, then promoted to a department specialist in the Office of Community Corrections. Prior to coming to the Department, Abigail worked as a program developer with Goodwill Industries of Greater Grand Rapids. She has a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Michigan State University and Master's Degrees in Adult Corrections and Juvenile Delinquency from Michigan State University.
- Michael Eagen (two-year term): Michael worked as a prosecuting attorney with the Eaton County Prosecutor's Office for 25 years, serving as an assistant prosecuting attorney, senior assistant prosecuting attorney, and chief assistant prosecuting attorney. Michael has advised state, county, and local officials on legal issues within Eaton County and had 15 years experience supervising other attorneys within the office. Previous work experience includes time as a law clerk for the Eaton County Circuit Court, work with the Dickinson, Wright, VanDusen, and Freeman Law Office and with the Michigan Department of Community Health. Michael has a B.A. in Psychology from Michigan State University and a Juris Doctorate from Thomas M. Cooley Law School.

"Each of these appointees brings to the Parole Board a wealth of experience within various components of the criminal justice system," Director McKeon said. "Their career diversity will help ensure that the new Board continues to make sound and appropriate decisions regarding prisoners who will be safely released back into society."

McKeon added, "I want to thank the current members for their commitment to the Board and the Department, especially during this time of increased scrutiny of the parole release process and the resulting pressures placed on Board members. Again, thank you for your service to the State."

QUESTIONS ASKED FROM PAST INTERVIEWS:

1. General questions about statistical risk, parole plans, past history, confirmation on dates, age, etc.
2. Asked about "A" prefix case, details of case. What did I learn while serving my "A" prefix?
3. "B" prefix details; why did I commit another crime. Referred to "A" prefix on anything learned.
4. Why do I commit assaults? Why did I reoffend?
5. Explain institutional misconducts—why do you continue to break the rules?
6. Representative's statement.
7. Prisoner's statement (closing).
8. What would you do if you were granted a parole?
9. What have you accomplished that makes you feel a parole is justified?
10. What changes have you made since being in prison that can assure you will not reoffend?
11. Explain your Relapse Prevention Plan.
12. What have you learned most about being in prison?
13. What is the most important thing you learned in VPP/SOP that you feel has made you a better person? Give detailed answer.

Jane S. Doe
1234 E. Main St.
Hometown, MI 48888

Aug. 22, 2013

Michigan Parole Board
c/o John Doe—212121
SMT—1790 E. Parnall Rd.
Jackson, MI 49201-9037

Dear Parole Board Members:

Soon you will be considering whether to parole John Doe—212121. John is my brother. I hope that you will consider the following factors when reviewing John's parole eligibility:

I have maintained contact with John throughout his period of incarceration. I have visited approximately once a month and we talk on the phone approximately once each week. Through that contact, I have seen what I consider to be some significant changes in John's demeanor and behavior. Contrary to when he first entered the system, he is now able to talk freely about his offense. He has talked about the events which led to the offense and he has explained in detail the event itself. He accepts full responsibility and has acknowledged, more than once, his concern for the impact on his victim.

John has also talked at length about his therapy experience. He has shared his relapse prevention plans with me and with other members of our family. We all recognize that the major responsibility for John's relapse prevention is John's. But we also understand that we can be of some help by providing safe social situations and encouraging John to seek help if he demonstrates signs of stress or isolation. We all understand that this will be a lifelong effort for John.

John has accepted my offer to live with me until he gets established. We have been told that it may take as long as six months. That is acceptable to me. I am also prepared, as are other family members, to provide him transportation for work, therapy, and parole reporting until he is able to afford a car of his own. Aside from myself, my father and sister-in-law are willing to assist with this effort. Neither of them work outside the home, so their schedules are flexible enough to provide transportation at odd hours, if needed.

We understand that the adjustment to the free world is a difficult one. We are eager to have John home, and are prepared to help wherever practical.

Sincerely,

Jane S. Doe

PAROLE CONDITIONS

General Conditions (not an exhaustive list):

- Must report regularly to parole agent
- Cannot travel out of state without parole agent's permission
- Must make earnest effort to find and maintain employment
- Must obey the law
- Must submit to drug and alcohol testing at the agent's request
- Must reside at approved residence
- Must avoid any unauthorized association with known felons
- Cannot possess firearms
- Must comply with special conditions, written and verbal orders

Special Conditions (some examples):

- No contact with children
- No use of computers
- Must comply with the Sex Offender Registration Act
- Electronic monitoring
- Polygraph examinations

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Here are some practical suggestion for dealing with anger:

1. When you are angry, say nothing.

- If we speak in anger we will definitely aggravate the situation and quite likely hurt the feelings of others. If we speak in anger we will find that people response in kind, creating a spiral of negative anger. If we can remain outwardly silent it gives us time for the emotion of anger to leave us.
- "When angry count to ten before you speak. If very angry, count to one hundred."
— Thomas Jefferson

2. Be indifferent to those who seek to make us angry

- Some people may unfortunately take a malicious pleasure in trying to make you mad. However, if we can feel indifferent to them and their words—if we feel it is beyond our dignity to even acknowledge them—then their words and actions will have no effect. If we do not respond in any way to their provocation, they will lose interest and not bother us in the future.

3. Use reason to stop anger.

- When we feel anger coming to the fore, try to take a step back and say to yourself, "This anger will not help me in any way. This anger will make the situation worse." Even if part of us remains angry, our inner voice is helping us to distance our self from the emotion of anger.

4. Look kindly upon others.

- Another visualization, suggested by spiritual teacher Paramhansa Yogananda, is to see the anger-rousing agent as a 5-year-old child. If you think of the other person as a helps 5-year-old, your compassion and forgiveness will come to the fore. If your baby brother accidentally stabbed you, you would not feel anger and desire to retaliate. Instead you would just feel he is too young to know any better. This exercise may be particularly useful for close members of the family who at times evoke your anger.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

5. Value peace more than anger.

- If we value peace of mind as our most important treasure we will not allow anger to remain in our system.
- "You may have every right to be angry with someone, but you know that by getting angry with him you will only lose your precious peace of mind..." — Sri Chinmoy

6. Always try to understand those who are cross.

- Don't worry about feeling the need to defend yourself from their criticisms. If you can remain detached and calm they may begin to feel guilty about venting their anger on you. Inspired by your example of calmness, they will seek subconsciously to do the same.

7. Focus on something completely different.

- Suppose someone has done something to make you angry. Think about something that will make you happy. The best antidote to negativity is to focus on the positive.

8. Breathe deeply.

- The simple act of breathing deeply will help considerably with removing anger.

9. Meditation

- Practice meditation regularly to bring your inner peace to the fore. If we can have access to our inner peace we will be able to draw upon this during testing times.

10. Smile

- When we smile, we defuse many negative situations. To smile is to offer goodwill to others. Smiling costs nothing but can effectively defuse tense situations.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger Management

- The goal of anger management is to reduce both your emotional feelings and the physiological arousal that anger causes. You can't get rid of, or avoid, the things or the people that enrage you, nor can you change them, but you can learn to control your reactions.

Are You Too Angry?

- There are psychological tests that measure the intensity of angry feelings, how prone to anger you are, and how well you handle it. But chances are good that if you do have a problem with anger, you already know it. If you find yourself acting in ways that seem out of control and frightening, you might need help finding better ways to deal with this emotion.

Is it Good to "Let it All Hang Out"?

- Psychologists now say that this is a dangerous myth. Some people use this theory as a license to hurt others. Research has found that "letting it rip" with anger actually escalates anger and aggression and does nothing to help you (or the person you're angry with) resolve the situation.
- It's best to find out what it is that triggers your anger, and then to develop strategies to keep those triggers from tipping you over the edge.

Strategies to Keep Anger at Bay:

Relaxation

- Simple relaxation tools, such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery, can help calm down angry feelings. There are books and courses that can teach you relaxation techniques, and once you learn the techniques, you can call upon them in any situation. If you are involved in a relationship where both parties are hot-tempered, it might be a good idea for both of you to learn these techniques.
- Steps to try:
 - Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm; breathing from your chest won't relax you. Picture your breathing coming up from your "gut."
 - Slowly repeat a calm word or phrase such as "relax" or "take it easy." Repeat it to yourself while breathing deeply.
 - Use imagery; visualize a relaxing experience, either from your memory or your imagination.
- Nonstrenuous, slow yoga-like exercises can relax your muscles and make you feel much calmer.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

- Practice these techniques daily. Learn to use them automatically when you're in a tense situation.

Problem Solving

- Sometimes, our anger and frustration are caused by very real and inescapable problems in our lives. Not all anger is misplaced, and often it's a healthy, natural response to these difficulties. There is also a cultural belief that every problem has a solution, and it adds to our frustration to find out that this isn't always the case. The best attitude to bring to such a situation, then, is not to focus on finding the solution, but rather on how you handle and face the problem.
- Make a plan, and check your progress along the way. Resolve to give it your best, but also not to punish yourself if an answer doesn't come right away. If you can approach it with your best intentions and efforts and make a serious attempt to face it head-on, you will be less likely to lose patience and fall into all-or-nothing thinking, even if the problem does not get solved right away.

Better Communication

- Angry people tend to jump to—and act on—conclusions, and some of those conclusions can be very inaccurate. The first thing to do if you're in a heated discussion is slow down and think through your responses. Don't say the first thing that comes into your head—slow down and think carefully about what you want to say. At the same time, listen carefully to what the other person is saying and take your time before answering.
- Listen, too, to what is underlying the anger. For instance, you like a certain amount of freedom and personal space, and your significant other wants more connection and closeness. If he or she starts complaining about your activities, don't retaliate by painting your partner as a jailer, a warden, or an albatross around your neck.
- It's natural to get defensive when you're criticized, but don't fight back. Instead, listen to what's underlying the words: the message that this person might feel neglected and unloved. It may take a lot of patient questioning on your part, and it may require some breathing space, but don't let your anger—or a partner's—let a discussion spin out of control. Keeping your cool can keep the situation from becoming a disastrous one.

HOW TO DEVELOP EMPATHY

What is it? Empathy is the ability to not only see another person's point of view but also to sense what they are feeling. Empathy is the human skill that makes possible the ability to understanding other people accurately. Think of it as the ability to "step into the shoes" of another person.

Where does it come from? Humans are "wired" for empathy. It's a circuit in the brain. But like every other trait—eye color, musical ability, sense of humor-- some people have more ability than others.

So what? Empathy is the glue in human relationships. Without the ability to have empathy, we would have little idea what other people are feeling, what they mean by the words they use, what motivates their actions, and what it might be like to be "them."

How do I improve my empathy skills? Like hitting a baseball, playing a piano, or operating a backhoe, skills that use parts of our brain get better with practice. Empathy is a skill like that and uses the brain.

It starts with emotions or feelings. To be able to "get" what someone else is feeling or going through, we have to know what emotions *feel like*. In other words, we have to notice our own feelings and know what they are.

Emotions are mental and physical changes we *feel*. It's often hard to name what we are feeling because our brain is processing stuff very quickly. Not only do feelings overlap and blend together, but there are more feelings than words to label them. The color *blue* ranges from very light sky blue to the dark blue-gray of the ocean. In the same way, a feeling like *sadness* ranges from "a little" (candy bar is gone and you're still hungry) to "overwhelming" (you find out a family member you love has died). Sometimes there are words for the range of feelings we have and sometimes not. You may have come across the very basic labels of *mad, sad, glad, scared, ashamed, hurt*. Obviously, there are more feelings than that. The words are not as important as knowing what you are feeling when you feel it and paying attention to it.

Ways to practice:

1. Start by noticing what you are doing at any given moment and whom you are doing it with (walking, talking, watching a movie, etc.). This is the beginning of being *mindful*, or aware of your self in the present moment and less "automatic," mindless or habitual.
2. Notice the feeling you are experiencing at that moment. If the labels *mad, sad, glad, scared, ashamed, hurt* work for you, great. You can also rate intensity from 1 to 10 if that helps.
3. Notice what stream of thinking is fueling your emotions. It may help to put words to those thoughts. Think of emotions as the fire and your thoughts as the logs.
4. Now, imagine yourself in another person's situation. Really take time to think through how you would feel and what you might be thinking if you were in that

HOW TO DEVELOP EMPATHY

person's shoes. This is easier with people we know and like. It is harder with people we don't like or don't understand very well—like another inmate, a corrections officer, or a member of the parole board.

5. When the other person talks, try to identify what experiences have brought them to this point and what you have experienced that may have been similar.

Now the stretch: All of this involves paying attention to what's going on inside of you *and* listening very carefully to the other person. If you are thinking about your own comeback, you are not paying attention to your inside self and also not really hearing the other person.

How to practice feeling: Imagine a person or animal that brings up feelings of kindness or affection in you. This could be a person, for example a baby, a niece, a grandparent who has passed away. Maybe you had a puppy as a kid or took in a stray cat.

Notice the feeling you get when you imagine this person or animal. Notice whether your body changes or you have any internal sensations of caring or affection.

If you can feel this kind and warm feeling, give yourself a minute to continue imagining the situation and feeling that warmth, that gentle friendliness that goes with it.

If you don't feel the kindness and warmth at first, give yourself some time and experiment with other images until you find one that helps you have a sense of *caring*.

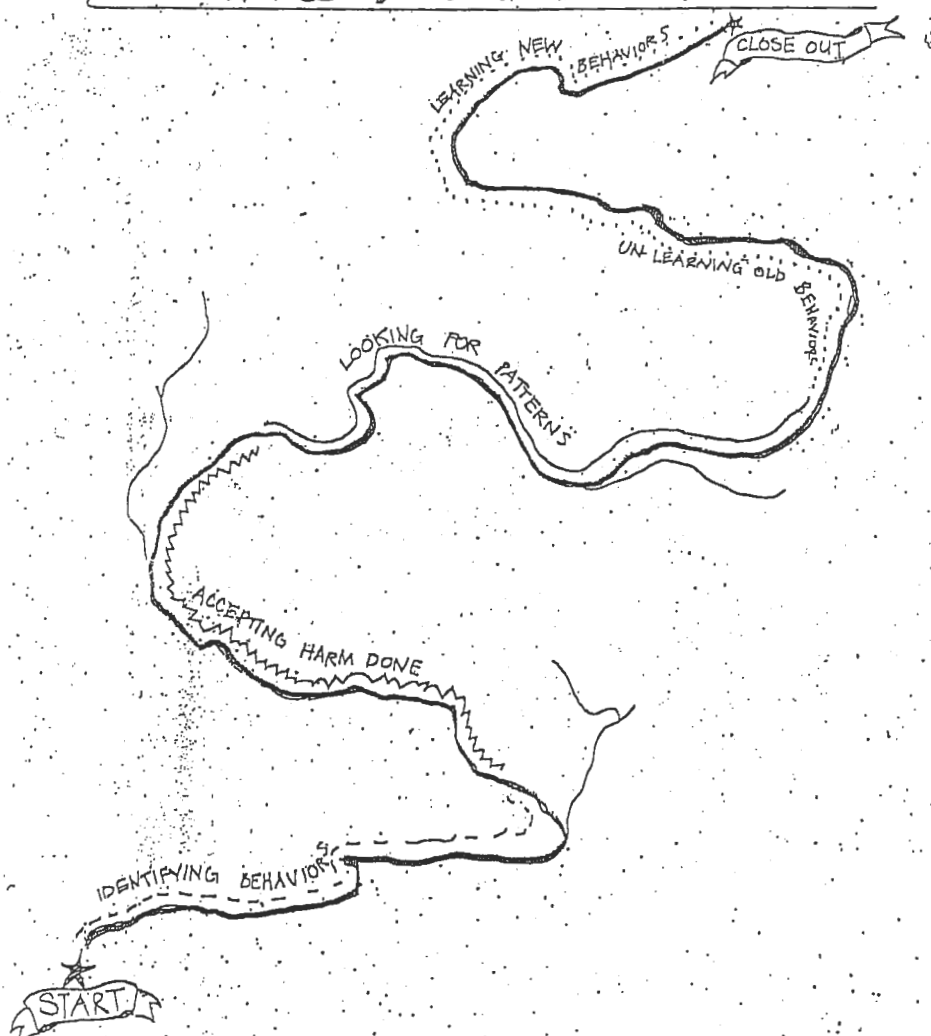
Now bring to mind an image of yourself as a young child. Move the kindness from the other person or animal to yourself. You might even use the words "May I love myself just as I am." Notice the feeling sensation inside—don't worry about the label. Gently "stay with" the feeling and accept the feeling as it is right now.

Maybe this *hurts*. If you don't let past hurts heal, you will be like a *walking wound* and anyone who brushes up against you will send shock waves of anger and pain through your body. This anger keeps you from sensing the other person's feelings and understanding what is really going in the interaction.

What if that doesn't work? The purpose of any skill is to get things you want to do done. Keep practicing. Keep noticing what is going on inside yourself. Look for what you have in common with the other person (even if it's as basic as "We both have to sleep, eat, pee."). And pray if it suits you. But pray for the *other person*. They have joys, they have sorrows, they have pain. Our ability to empathize takes more than will power. We need to cultivate the mercy, compassion and grace that are within all of us to help us develop empathy.

ROAD MAP

ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESS



Road Map of an Accountability Process

An Accountability Road Map sketches out a process to give it structure while clarifying intentions, goals, and allowing you to get a sense of the trajectory and the big picture. Because accountability processes are never linear or clear cut, we use a road map instead of an agenda; Road Maps have ample room for construction, road blocks and detours. They help you maintain a sense of your overall goals, while remaining flexible and open to re-routing paths and re-imagining the journey once you've started.

The Five Major Phases of Accountability Processes

There are endless ways to map out phases of an accountability process, but here are the five most common phases we have charted in our work and experience:

Identifying Behaviors

The first step in a process is that a person must have an awareness and understanding of the actions and behaviors for which they are being called out. This is foundational and can sometimes take longer to accomplish than you might imagine.

Accepting Harm Done

Building on the understanding of what specific behaviors led them to this accountability process, the next step is to acknowledge in what ways these behaviors were harmful—even if harm wasn't their intention. This is the seed of one of most frequent goals in a process: building empathy.

Looking for Patterns

Making comprehensive change to prevent future assault requires broadening the focus beyond the isolated incident(s) that precipitated this process. This means identifying and naming the person's history of abusive/harmful actions and contextualizing these behaviors in their underlying assumptions and socialization.

Unlearning Old Behaviors

The process of breaking habits starts with identifying harmful dynamics and then deepens beyond naming to analysis and understanding. Gaining an awareness and determining the kinds of situations that trigger or enable abusive or harmful behaviors and then having clear strategies to avoid and diffuse the potential path for harm.

Learning New Behaviors

Building new positive/healing patterns of behavior goes hand in hand with breaking down the old harmful patterns. One of the tools in this stage is role play, where a person can rehearse their consent practices, graceful acceptance of criticism, disclosure strategies, etc. Also important is becoming familiar with their resources to support positive and new behavior [affordable therapy, sites to find jobs, a clearly defined network of supportive friends, membership to the gym, etc]. This phase is very much about understanding the ways to build new behaviors so this skill becomes sustainable and fueled by self reliance.

Blueprint for Doing the Work

Three of the most consistent and challenging barriers people going through accountability processes run up against are:

1. inability to recognize and name the emotions they commonly feel
2. lack of empathy for others (specifically the survivor(s))
3. getting lost in the sea of dynamics, feelings, and memories they are being asked to consider, talk about and revisit.

The Blueprint is a tool we came up with to help move past all three of these sticking points. It is a structure that can sometimes be conceptual and confusing to get the hang of, but it has endless possibilities for how you can use it and the potential to help ground them in what is often a confusing and overwhelming process.

Floors

In the Blueprint, each floor is assigned to represent one person or group of people. The first floor is often the Person Who Has Perpetrated Harm's floor. The 2nd floor is the Survivor's floor. There is no limit to how many floors you can add.

Rooms

Each floor is made up of rooms. One room holds one emotional state like, "anger", "feeling misunderstood", "embarrassed", "joyful", "irritated", "anxious", "rational" and on and on and on. You can fill in the rooms of your blueprint as you get to know each other. Together you can all build the rooms based on what themes or commonly experienced emotions the person you are working with feels. It is helpful and feels productive to say, "I've noticed that when you are telling stories about times you've lost your temper or gotten upset, you often feel frustrated at the beginning and end of the interaction. Would you say that *Frustration* is a room we should build on the first floor?" The process of building rooms together is a great way to have all of you meaningfully participate in the hard work of the process. Building rooms is also a key way to identify patterns of behavior. Where you place specific rooms can also help see the connection between two or three emotions, i.e. if "feeling misunderstood" often results in "anger" or "being mean" it is helpful to build those rooms next to each other, so you can all see how they interact with one another.

How to Use Your Blueprint

While the act of building it is ongoing (you can always add more rooms, closets, relabel rooms), once you have some things labeled and constructed, there are lots of ways to use the blueprint. Often, we have it sitting on the table while the person we are working with is telling us a story from their week or discussing an instance of assault that we are working through in our process. If they get confused, are getting off track or losing focus, we can say "Where were you on the first floor when he said that to you?" They can take a minute to regroup and work to notice what emotional state they were in.

You can use the model of a "house" as realistically or creatively as you want. Often, we use

the "hallways" as actions and opportunities for making decisions: "When that conflict was happening, you were walking down this hallway and you turned in to the "manipulative" room. What would happen if you had turned in to a different room?" or "What would it take for you to have gotten up out of "anxiety" room and walked down the hallway to the "spiritual centered" room? What route would you have taken?" The hallways are key. They remind the person you are working with that there are decisions and actions before, during and after conflict or conditions that lead to harm. Pointing out how they have choice in which rooms they walk in to is a way to point out responsibility — it is also a way to talk about the real challenges of and default ways they get to a specific emotional state.

The distinction of floors can be confusing. The struggle of "learning empathy" often looks like the person who has caused harm having a difficult time seeing anything from a point of view that is different than theirs. This can come off as egotistical and narrow. If the person you are working with is spinning around and around in their version and experience of the story and you want them to move or see it from a different vantage point, it's hard (and probably not helpful) to say, "you are being completely self-involved. Look at it from the survivor's point of view!" It is possible, though (and maybe more helpful) to say, "you are stuck on the first floor. I want you to try and get to the stairs and walk up to the second floor for a little while." The second floor usually won't have any rooms labeled because you (probably) don't know the emotional states of the survivor. Being "on the second floor" is symbolically important because it signifies a separation from the person who has caused harm's story and rooms. When they are on the second floor it is an exercise in imagining and trying to understand how someone could have interpreted or experienced their actions differently than they might think.

Your Relapse Prevention Plan

Assume that you are back living in the community. Using your imagination, write about how your re-offense might occur.

I. YOUR REOFFENSE STORY: If you were to again become assaultive, tell your story of how it would likely happen. (Do not forget to include the situations, behaviors, distorted thoughts, or problem emotions, which should be a part of your story.)

II. BEHAVIORS: Describe the assaultive and criminal behaviors, in detail, which would be part of your "acting out" behavior.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS: List your 10 highest environmental risk factors (life situations). Develop a coping strategies plan for at least the 6 highest of these risk factors.

IV. INTERNAL RISK FACTORS: List your 10 highest internal risk factors. Develop a coping strategies plan for at least the 6 highest of these risk factors. List 6 positive activities or things that you will do more of to develop a healthier lifestyle—include a schedule of when, where and how often you will do these things.

V. CLUE LISTS: Make a list of 10 "clues" which would indicate that you may be slipping into your pre-assault cycle. Explain each in detail.

VI. YOUR COMMUNITY PLAN—INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES I WILL USE TO HELP SUPPORT MY RELAPSE PREVENTION WORK:

List the individuals, groups, organizations you will use to aide you with your relapse prevention plan, i.e., 1, 2, 3, etc. Also indicate how often or under what conditions you intend to use each resource.

VII. YOUR PERSONAL GOALS: Think about and set goals, which you intend to achieve following release. Include those things, which you hope to achieve and accomplish during the first weeks and at 6 months upon returning to the community and long-term goals for each of the first 5 years of your "new life." For each goal indicate what you plan to do to reach that goal. Be specific about your actions and the dates on which you do these things.

Financial Aid, College, and Work-Study for Ex-Prisoners

We are encouraging folks who are just returning to the community to go to college and apply for financial aid through FAFSA. Not only will a twelve-month certificate or two-year degree from community college help them find meaningful work and get their lives back on track, but under FAFSA funding, most will qualify for the work-study program while attending college.

FAFSA funding is determined by what you earned the prior year, so most of us who have been incarcerated will qualify for full funding, which will cover most, if not all, of our tuition, books, and other supplies. Work-study is a program under FAFSA where the college student will be provided a job at the college they're attending, probably earning about \$8.50 an hour, generally allowed to work up to 25 hours per week. Jobs may vary from tutoring classes to general office work, from grounds keeping to research work. It's especially convenient because of the location (you're going to school and work at the same place), your supervisors will work around your schedule because they know that you're a student first, and I don't think anyone's background is going to come up during the hiring process (it didn't for me up at Mott Community College).

During my time at Mott all of my tuition and books were paid for through the Pell Grant (FAFSA) and sometimes I'd even receive a small rebate check from funds that weren't used. Make sure to schedule classes full-time to receive the most funding and check with your Michigan Works branch to see if they have any funding available to contribute as well (they pitched in gas money and any extra funding needed if I scheduled extra classes on top of the full-time load).

The financial aid application must be completed and submitted online: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> Make sure you check the box requesting work-study consideration.

Speak to admissions, advisors, and financial aid at the college you're planning on attending for site-specific information. And remember, those friends we've left behind in there will be judged on our successes and failures out here.

VOTING: START BY REGISTERING!

In most places, before you can vote the first time, you need to register. Each state has its own voter registration deadline. When you register, you sign up and tell the elections office your name, address and some other information. You can register at your local elections office. You may be asked to show a photo ID with proof of address. You can also register to vote at places like motor vehicle offices and public libraries, or you can call up your local elections office and ask them to mail you a voter registration form.

TAKE 5 TO VOTE!

WHO CAN VOTE

If you are a U.S. citizen and you are at least 18 years old, you can vote.

WHAT YOU'LL VOTE ON

Most likely, you'll have several choices to make when you vote. For example, you may vote for President and Vice President of the United States; members of Congress, governor, mayor and school board. You may also be asked to vote on other things, like money for schools or roads, and whether you approve of certain laws.

WHEN TO VOTE

General elections, when we vote for President and members of Congress, come in November of even-numbered years. Election Day is the Tuesday between November 2 and November 8. State and local elections may be held at other times as well. Primary elections, in which voters choose which candidate they want to represent their party, usually take place several months before general elections.

WHERE TO VOTE

You should get a card or letter after you register, telling you where you vote (usually a nearby public building). Hold on to it. It's a handy reminder for Election Day.

WHY VOTE

The leaders you elect – for example, members of Congress – make decisions that affect you – your job, your health care, your energy costs, your security, and more. Voting is your chance to choose the decision makers and tell them what you want. If you need to register to vote, become a poll worker, get an absentee ballot, or learn what you'll be voting on and where, visit VOTE411.ORG

ELECTION DAY

- **Make sure you know where you vote.** If you don't, visit VOTE411.org or contact your local board of elections. It's best to go vote during off hours: 10:00-11:30 am and 1:30-3:00 pm or allow some time for voting, since there may be lines.
- **You'll be asked to check in.** Bring identification and proof of address with you. If you registered by mail, the first time you vote you must bring a photo ID, or a utility bill or a paycheck that shows your name and address. If you go to your polling place, you must be allowed to vote. You cannot be turned away. If for some reason they don't have you listed as a registered voter, you can still vote with a *provisional ballot*.
- **There are various kinds of voting devices.** You may vote by filling out a form with pencil or touching a computer screen. If you have problems, you can ask for help. Check your ballot to make sure you've voted the way you wanted to vote. Then cast your ballot by handing in your ballot or touching the screen that says you're done.

YOUR ELECTION DAY RIGHTS

- If your name is not on the list of voters, you may be directed to another polling place or given a provisional ballot.
- Equal treatment regardless of race, religion, national origin, gender or disability.
- Privacy – you can't be forced to show how you voted.
- Assistance from poll workers if you request it.
- If you have a disability, access to a voting device you can use.
- Signs should be posted to assist you with voting machines, voters' rights and how to file a complaint.

Information courtesy of the League of Women Voters.

Bicycling Safety Tips and Ideas

Soon you may be returning to the community and transportation to move around, from home to work and social activities, will be one of the benefits and obstacles of your new freedom. Michigan has been an automobile centric state for many years and due to the focus on cars, our public transit system is not all that great.

In addition to poor public transportation in Michigan, it can be an expensive and difficult journey to becoming a car owner. Furthermore, some people returning to the community from prison may have driving restrictions due to their felonies.

In the light of all that is mentioned above, riding a bicycle as a major form of transportation is an inexpensive, healthy, and environmentally friendly way to get around once you are released from prison.

This instruction sheet is intended to give you some insight on how to ride a bicycle safely on the roads here in Michigan.

Many of you may have been taught to ride against traffic when you were young; this was **WRONG** information and is one of the most unsafe things you can do while riding a bicycle—**ALWAYS RIDE WITH THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC**. It is also really important to **WEAR A HELMET** whenever you ride. If you need to carry things while riding, it would be helpful to use a back-pack or get a rack for saddle bags.

10 things to remember when sharing the road with cars...

Riding the road:

1. The same laws that apply to motorists apply to bicyclists, so obey all traffic lights, signals, and stop signs.
2. Riding the sidewalks is allowed in most residential neighborhoods but is prohibited in many downtown areas of cities (local ordinances vary). Furthermore, it is safer to ride in the street where you can be seen by motorists.

Be predictable:

3. Always ride in the same direction as traffic and use the furthest right hand lane, except when turning left.
4. Use hand signals when stopping, turning, or changing lanes.



5. Ride in a straight line and do not swerve in the road or between parked cars.

6. Check for traffic before crossing a street or intersection.

Be visible:

7. Wear brightly colored clothes.

8. Use a reflector or reflective tape to help motorists see you after dark (Use a battery powered headlight and taillight to be seen and to see your way through the night).

9. Always wear a helmet that fits properly.

10. It is legal to ride two abreast (side by side in one lane), and it makes cyclists more visible.

10 things to remember when sharing the road with a bicyclist...

Yield to cyclists:

1. Bicyclists have a right to ride in the road.

2. Bicyclists have the right of way. Yield to them.

Be considerate:

3. Reduce your speed; do not tailgate, and try not to blow your horn near a bicyclist.

4. Always look for cyclists, especially when backing out, opening your car door, and making right turns.

5. Bike lanes are not turning lanes or parking lanes. Leave them to cyclists.

6. Learn bicycle hand signals.

Pass carefully:

7. Wait for clear road conditions before passing.

8. Allow four feet between you and the bicyclist when passing, even when passing bicyclists in bike lanes.

9. Look behind your shoulder when returning to lane.

Watch for children:

10. Remember children on bikes are often unpredictable, hard to see, and generally do not know traffic laws.

SOME RESOURCES

The HUB is a community bike shop in Detroit. They sell used bicycles and offer educational programs regarding bicycle maintenance. The HUB is located at 3611 Cass Ave. in the CCNDC building, between MLK and Brinard. Telephone: (313) 879-5073

MSU Bikes is a Lansing based bicycle shop. They sell some used bicycles. MSU Bikes is located at 810 Bessy Hall/ Michigan St. University, Along the N. River Trail, 300 ft. west of Farm Ln. Bridge, E. Lansing, MI 48824-1033. Telephone: (517) 432-3400

Ypsilanti Cycle LLC is a bicycle shop in Ypsilanti that sells used bicycles. They are located at 116 West Michigan Avenue, Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Telephone: (734) 482-7881

League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) is a non-profit, tax-exempt statewide membership organization working to improve conditions for bicycling in Michigan. LMB supports many programs and projects and cooperates with state and local agencies and other like-minded groups toward this goal. 416 S. Cedar Street - Suite A, Lansing, MI 48912. Telephone: (517) 334-9100 or (888) 642-4537

Bike Ypsi is a group of local cyclists who like riding bikes and engaging in bike-related shenanigans. We go on group rides (small and big, short and long), promote awareness of cycling in Ypsilanti, encourage safe routes around town, and address issues important to cyclists. Contact: 734-330-0550

If you are really trying to pursue riding a bicycle as your major form of transportation when you get out and you need some more direction, you can call Natalie at AFSC and she will try to help you along. 734-761-8283 ext.5

How to Prepare for a Parole Hearing

State Appellate Defender Office

☐ **#1 tip: Act as if you are parolable TODAY!**

☐ Stay busy with positive activities. Some options:

- Voluntary Programs Offered by the MDOC. These are not offered at every facility, so check with your counselor whether these, or others, are offered:
 - InsideOut Dad
 - Parenting Inside Out
 - Family Preservation
 - Faith and Character Prison
 - Substance Abuse Education
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - Narcotics Anonymous
- Referral-Based Programming. While most of these may not be available to lifers, you should still ask whether you could take one, or more:
 - Thinking for Change
 - Moving On (WHV)
 - Voices (WHV)
 - Cage Your Rage
 - Seeking Safety (WHV)
 - Residential Substance Abuse Program (RSAT)
 - Substance Abuse Outpatient
 - Violence Prevention Program
 - Domestic Violence- BRIDGES
 - Domestic Violence- MERIDIANS (WHV/SAI)
 - Sex Offender Program
 - Pre-Release
- Community Volunteer Programming: Various institutions have volunteers from the community who offer classes and programs. Ask if any are available at your institution.
- Vocational Education: I.e., Food Tech, Woodworking, Computer Programming. While these programs are usually on a wait-list basis, and lifers tend to be at the bottom of the list, if your facility has one, or more, ask to be in the class, or to get on the wait list.
- Hobbycraft
- Exercise
- Religious services
- Self-Help books: Keep track of what you read and what you are learning.

☐ Education: If you do not have a GED/high school diploma, get into school to obtain your GED.

☐ Work Assignments:

- Take jobs and do well at them.
- Do not refuse any job assignment. Remember, if you refuse a job assignment, you could get 00 status, which will reflect poorly during any potential Board hearing.
- While on job assignments, do as you are told and if you feel you have a problem, follow the order, and then grieve it if you feel it still needs to be resolved.
- Ask your supervisor on the work assignment for a work report, if you are not getting them regularly.

- ☐ Block reports: If your facility still does block reports, and you have a good relationship with staff, ask for block reports on a regular basis.
- ☐ Document, document, document: Collect and keep safe all of your good and bad records from while you were in prison. Examples include:
 - Misconducts
 - Work/block reports
 - Pictures from visits
 - Certificates (program/vocational training completion)
 - Psychological counseling records
 - Security classifications (to Ad. Seg. and annual Screens)
- ☐ Get your security level down: If you are in Level IV or V for disciplinary reasons, it is past time for you to start working your way down to a lower security level. The Board, or a re-sentencing judge, can look at what you have done with your time inside. If you have a lot of misconducts, it is time to start turning things around and show the Board, or a judge, that you have made changes and can be trusted to be released.
- ☐ Avoid Negative Behavior:
 - Remember, you are going to be confronted with things throughout your prison experience that may put you in a conflicting position, and you should be learning how to deal with conflict in good and constructive ways.
 - Avoid sucker stores and gambling tables and other behaviors that could get you tickets.
- ☐ Reflect:
 - On the crime for which you are convicted, your role, its effect on the victims, etc.
 - The Board will want to hear why you will not commit any crime again. Statements of remorse and personal insight about who you were then compared with who you are now are good ways to discuss this.
 - Your prior criminal history, if any. How can you avoid that behavior/lifestyle if you were to be paroled?
 - If you have a substance abuse history, demonstrate insight as to why you were using, and how you can avoid using if released.
- ☐ Mentors: Contact people in the community who are leaders or have religious affiliations similar to yourselves or positive peer correspondence. Create positive appropriate mentor relationships with non-prisoners.
- ☐ Parole Plan: Start thinking and planning:
 - Who would you live with?
 - Do you have any potential job leads? School?
 - What skills have you developed while in prison?
 - What type of programming would you seek on the outside? AA? NA? Sex Offender programming? Anger Management?
- ☐ Bottom line: Do good time, and prove through your actions you can be trusted to parole.