

# To The Imprisoned Sex Offender



A Few Things To Think  
About If You Are Incarcerated  
For A Sex Offense

## Incarcerated sex offenders throughout the nation report many of the same obstacles...

- Therapy delayed until close to the prisoner's out date; and in some cases, no therapy offered at all.
- Prisoners moved from one facility to another during incarceration, thereby disrupting treatment.
- Quality of therapy often inadequate.
- Therapy facilities inadequate.
- Considerable stigma attached to sex offenders, leading to fear for one's safety. There can be danger and/or threats of assault if identified as a sex offender, especially if child-related. A low profile can help prevent confrontation.

Despite these difficult obstacles, the healthiest of our members have discovered that there is much they can do while incarcerated. The following is a list of ways to minimize the negative impact and maximize the positive.

## Choose your battles....

- Your personal growth should be the focus of your efforts. The worst enemy of a sex offender who wants to change can be a sex offender who doesn't. Don't dwell on issues of your status in prison, the staff at the institution, or your fellow prisoners. You can't control your environment, but you can control what you do with your life.
- Grievances and litigation are expensive, time-consuming, generally unsuccessful, and frustrating. Concentrate on bettering yourself. There are self-help materials available which can assist you.
- There is no significant merit to being the center of attention or a staunch defender of what's right. It is counter-productive to serenity.

- It is difficult, if not impossible, to change the world or your environment from prison, but you can change yourself.
- Mentally prepare for your eventual freedom. Visualize positive activities and interactions with people in the future.

## Nurture relationships...

- Understand that others on the streets do have a life and many responsibilities (especially in view of your absence), and may not be home whenever you call. Schedule times to call.
- Correspond -- even when there is no answer.
- Do not abuse telephone privileges. It is expensive.
- Letters, calls, and visits should focus on positive issues and free-world events, and not be a gripe session regarding prison policies. Ask your loved ones to focus on the positive as well.
- Be supportive of others on the street. The imprisoned sex offender is not the only one who has problems. Be sensitive to your family's difficulties. They may experience changes in income, responsibilities, residence, etc. possibly because of your absence.
- Because life in the free world may be hectic, you may have to do more than 50% of the work to maintain the relationship. Remember, they are "doing time" with you.
- Be grateful for those who remain loyal and supportive. Don't waste time and energy being angry with those who cannot be supportive.
- It takes time to build relationships and to get to an intimate level. Be sensitive to opportunities to discuss your background, offense patterns, etc.
- Listen. Listen. Listen.

## Live like a citizen...

- Contribute your gifts and talents to help individuals and organizations in and out of the prison environment.
- Your offending behavior was a part of your life, not the whole thing. Build on the positive aspects of who you are. Build on positive personality traits and qualities and stop playing the old, negative, self-talk tapes.
- Be aware of all possibilities for participation at your facility in positive, self-enhancing activities. Learn what is available. Like any new living experience, you must seek ways to participate. Check with staff or fellow inmates to learn what activities are available and how to go about getting involved. You will have to take the initiative to find these. Read bulletin boards. Talk to counselors and chaplains for suggestions.
- Find a suitable job and work hard at it. It may differ from your free-world profession, but make the best of it.
- Find ways to grow...
  - Learn a hobby.
  - Read the "classics."
  - Read something besides novels.
  - Educate yourself.
  - Earn a GED or other educational diploma or certificate. If you have a degree, take courses, if available.
  - Attend church services and bible studies.
  - Join civic clubs (e.g. Jaycees, NAACP, etc.), if available.
  - Learn to play a musical instrument.
  - Read the Bible, Koran, Talmud, etc.
  - Study yoga or another relaxation method.
- Learn to exercise regularly. Your institutional meals may not be satisfying. You may want to use that in a positive and healthy way by going on a diet.

## Plan for your release...

- Take care of your health. Medical facilities will not be extensive. Get your sleep and rest.
  - Develop a balance in your life (work, relaxation, and relationships).
- Take charge of your recovery...**
- Request therapy, if available. Most programs have waiting lists based on parole eligibility. Show significant interest in getting enrolled.
  - Study self-help literature. It is available by mail.
  - Join a self-help group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Sexaholics Anonymous, or start one if none are available.
  - Develop a relapse prevention plan. There is material available to accomplish this.
  - Be open to observations and suggestions about changes required in your behavior or lifestyle. Remember that the way you were conducting your life was not productive and you probably kept people at a distance to prevent confrontation. To make change, you must be willing to hear all information and then relate it to your life.
  - Develop victim empathy. There is material available to accomplish this. Besides the specific victim(s), consider your family, friends, your workmates, and yourself.
  - Perform an honest evaluation of your sexual orientation and sexual maturity. Your sexual identify may have been very difficult to discuss in your regular life setting, but you must look at this seriously as you study your offending behavior. Be honest with yourself; you will be happier.
- Begin planning as soon as possible, but no later than six months before your release date.
  - Line up treatment and/or a support group.
  - Locate housing free of potential victims.
  - Make plans for transportation which may include obtaining a driver's license.
  - Locate employment or employment services.
  - Be realistic about employment possibilities. Consider your energy levels as you make these plans. You have not been accustomed to a real world work place. Know your emotional limitations; know your physical limitations. You have many parts of your life you are putting back together besides work. Don't overwhelm yourself with a heavy workload at first. Also know that with a sex offense charge, you may be denied work at certain places. Don't seek work where you are vulnerable to your sexual attractions. Consider your safety and that of others. Temporary services are particularly effective.
  - Plan to take care of yourself first. Once that is done, you will be in a better position to help others.
  - Learn and understand your relapse prevention plan.

## You are not alone...

CURE-SORT was founded in 1990. Since our founding, we have corresponded with thousands of sex offenders in 50 states. In addition, we regularly communicate with some of the best therapists in the nation.

Through those contacts, we have learned a great deal. For example, we know that...

- Therapy is often successful in helping sex offenders learn to control their inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Due to your incarceration, part of your life is on hold. You can, however, still grow, contribute, and use your time positively. Learn how to change your life, and enjoy the growth of your family members and friends. You can discover how your sexual behavior and thinking patterns influenced nearly all areas of your life. You can, through quality choices, once again become a productive member of society.

Since more than 90% of the nation's prisoners are eventually released, it is important that you work toward these goals.

*This brochure is designed to share with you what we have learned from our members and supporters. We hope that it proves helpful to you as you work on your recovery. Contact CURE-SORT for information on obtaining any of the resources mentioned.*

Please share this brochure with others. Feel free to make copies.

Additional copies available from:  
**Sexual Abuse Treatment Alliance**  
**And its program:**  
**CURE-SORT**  
**Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants Sex Offenders Restored through Treatment**  
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