

Going Home

A booklet for people returning home
after prison.



Prisoners · Families · Communities
A Fresh Start Together

Thinking about going home

Returning home after serving a prison sentence can be hard. There are lots of things to think about including:

- What may have changed since you have been away?
- How is your daily routine going to be different?
- Will your relationships with family and friends have changed?
- What about your character has changed?

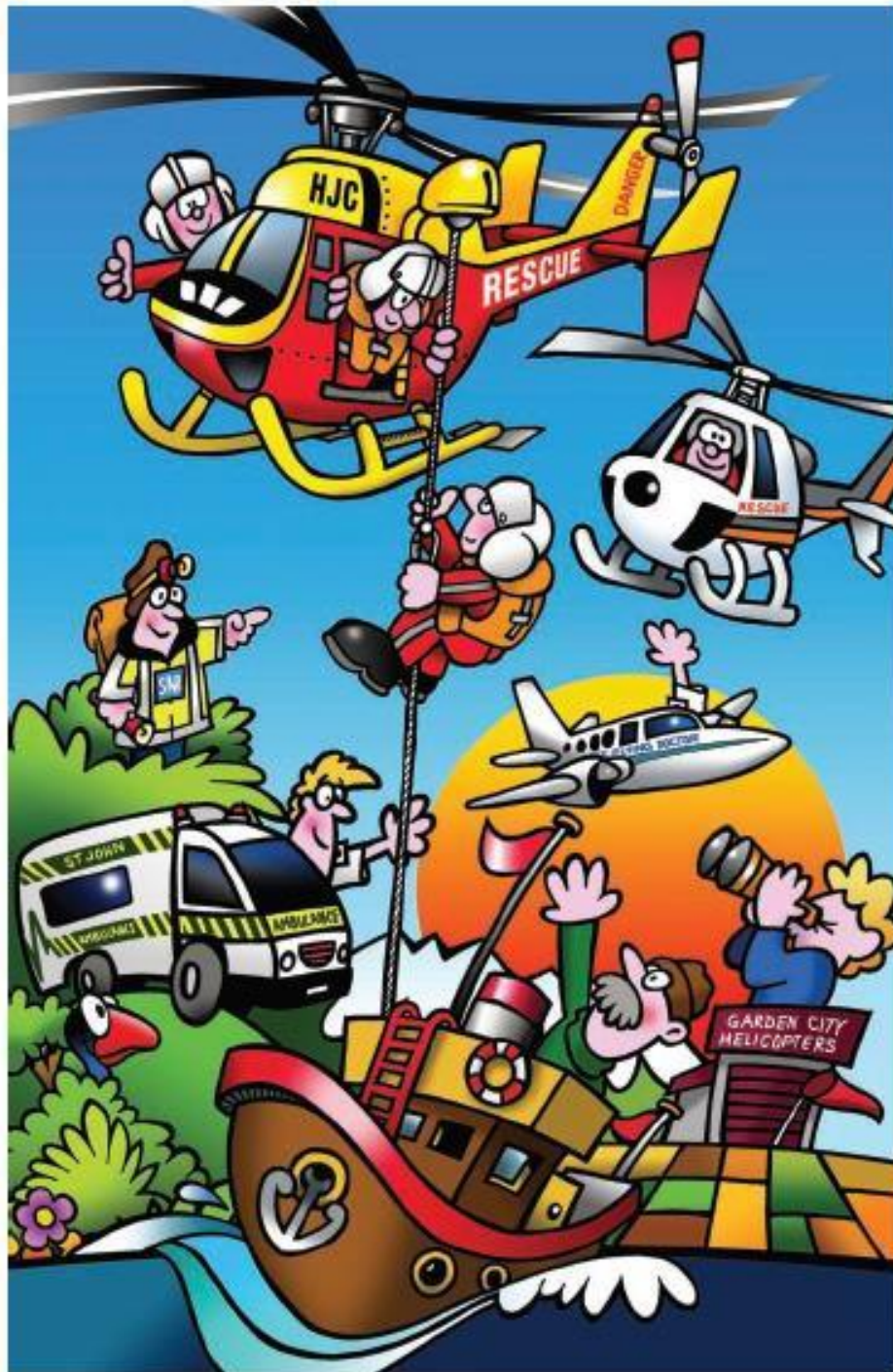
This booklet will help you think about these questions and others and help you to feel more prepared for going home.

Let's start by thinking about how well equipped you feel for returning home at the moment. Take a look at the five options below and circle the number of the statement that most represents how you feel:

1. I am really scared and nervous about returning home to my family. I will not be able to manage by myself. I need support.
2. I am not very confident about returning home to my family. I think it will be difficult to return to home life. I don't know whether I will be able to cope.
3. I am not too sure how I feel about returning home to my family. I am excited to return but I am not sure how I will cope with it.
4. I feel partly confident about returning home to my family. I have thought about the challenges and I believe that I have many of the skills I need to cope with this change. I think it will be challenging but I think it is something I can achieve.
5. I am very confident that I have all the skills and resources required to return to my family with ease.

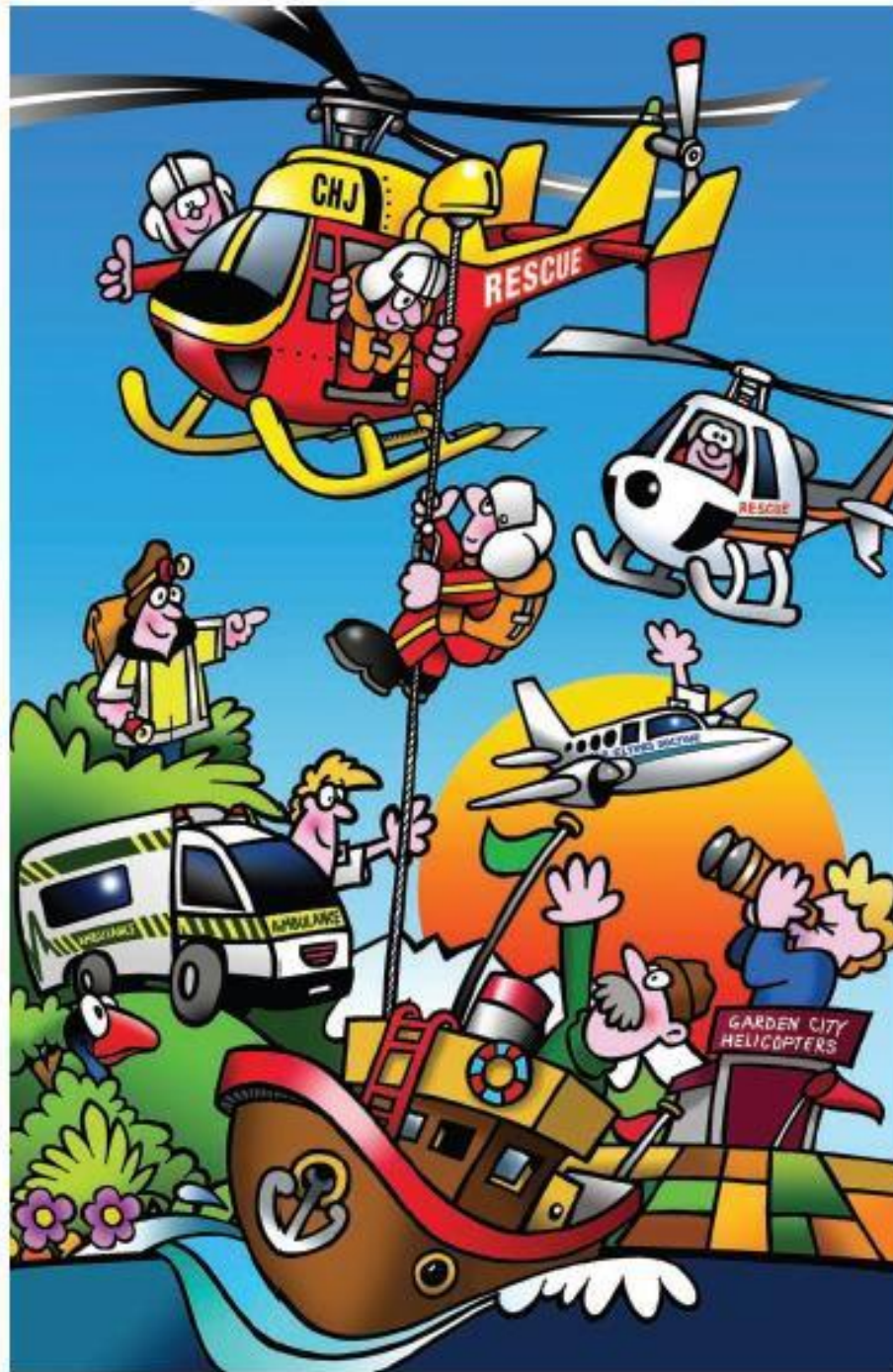
A different way to look at your release

Give yourself one minute to really study the picture below. After your minute is up, turn the page - no cheating!



Spot the difference!

Now, look at this picture. Give yourself another minute to write down or circle all of the differences between this picture and the one on the previous page – don't look back yet! When your minute is up, turn the page.



Spot the difference (again)

Here is your second attempt! Give yourself two minutes to look at the two pictures side-by-side and spot as many differences as you can. See how many you can find this time!



What does this activity show us?

Before custody

When you were asked to look at the first picture, you were not given any instructions about what to look for or why you were looking at it. You weren't prepared for the task and you didn't have much time to think about it.

In the same way, going to prison and being separated from your family might not be something you were prepared for. It might have been a sudden change and you might not have had time to think about what was happening to you. Though you may have had your family with you before you were sentenced, you may not have had the chance to truly enjoy and reflect on the time you had with your family before life in prison.

In custody

When you were asked to look at the second picture, you were given instructions to 'spot the difference': you knew that something was different and therefore you had an idea of what to look for. Even so, you might not have got everything right because you did not have the first picture to look at and compare.

This is similar to being sentenced and taken away from your family. You know that things will be different (and sometimes this makes you more aware of the parts of family life that you value and need). But you might find it hard to identify everything that has changed because you don't have the first picture side-by-side to compare. When you are released you may be expecting everything to be the same at home – but it is likely that there will be some differences. Will you be able to spot the differences? More importantly, will you be able to adapt to the changes?

Preparing for life after custody

In the third picture, you were given the two pictures side-by-side in order to spot the differences between them. You were also given instructions of what you were looking for and a longer time to complete the exercise.

This activity represents your current state. You are serving a specific sentence and you have been given some time to prepare for your release. You are aware that there have been changes but how can you compare and contrast the two images of your family? Use the extra time to your advantage!

Exploring change

It is helpful to start thinking about what changes have happened in your family while you have been away, and how these might mean your family life is different when you return home. There might be both big and small changes that have happened – and you might think some changes are good and others are less positive. Some changes might have happened to your family members (for example, your children starting school) and some changes might have happened to you (for example, you have learned a new skill in prison). Think about five changes that have happened within your family (including yourself) while serving your custodial sentence. Write these down below and explain how you think these changes might affect your family life:

What is the change?	How might it affect my family life?
<i>For example: "My eldest child has started secondary school."</i>	<i>"My eldest child is learning to be more independent. They might be making new friends and school might be harder for them."</i>

Being a role model

Social Learning Theory is a psychological theory that suggests we learn by watching what others around us do and replicating their actions: we copy what we see.

Albert Bandura was one of the psychologists involved in developing Social Learning Theory. Bandura tested his theory by carrying out an experiment. He put a friendly-looking inflatable clown in a room and asked a group of adults to play with it in an aggressive manner (for example, throwing things at it, hitting it or punching it.) He filmed the adults while they were interacting with the clown. He then asked two groups of children to go into the room and play with the clown. The first group of children (Group 1) are shown the video of the adults' playing with Bobo before they go into the room. The second group of children (Group 2) are not shown the video.

What do you think happened when Group 1 went into the room?

What do you think happened when Group 2 went into the room?

Why do you think this happened?

When Group 1 went into the room, they acted in the same way as the adults. The children hit and kicked the clown and even came up with new ways of hurting it. When Group 2 went into the room, they were far less aggressive towards the clown. Bandura used these results to demonstrate that we learn our behaviour from watching how other people behave.

It's important to remember that not every person who sees aggressive or bad behaviour will act in the same way. But whether you know it or not, you are modelling behaviour to someone else. To other people you are a dad, brother, cousin, son, uncle, nephew and friend – and your behaviour will have an impact on everyone who sees you in these roles. It's important to model good behaviour to be a good role model for other people in your life.

How does this apply to you? What has it got to do with going home?

Who do you think looks up to you in your life? Who sees you as a role model outside? If you cannot think of anyone - ask a cell mate, an officer or even a loved one over the phone to help you. (This could be a great opportunity to have an honest, open and helpful conversation with your loved ones.)



Although there are people in your life who will know that you have been in prison, there is a chance that your time away might have been explained to others in different ways, for example, "Daddy is working away," "Uncle is in holiday", or "Your brother has done something naughty and had to go away for a while." Often people explain prison in this way to young children who may not understand 'prison' or because they don't want to make other people think badly of you – especially if you are a role model to that person.

The harsh reality is that your behaviour before going to prison is still something that other people may have seen and copied. There may be people who have learned this behaviour and are still doing it when you go home (for example, being violent or aggressive, breaking the law or cutting corners). These examples may not apply to you but are there any other behaviours you may have shown others before or during your sentence?



Think specifically about three of the people who see you as a role model. How do you think your prison sentence has affected them?

Who is this person?	How might my sentence have affected them?

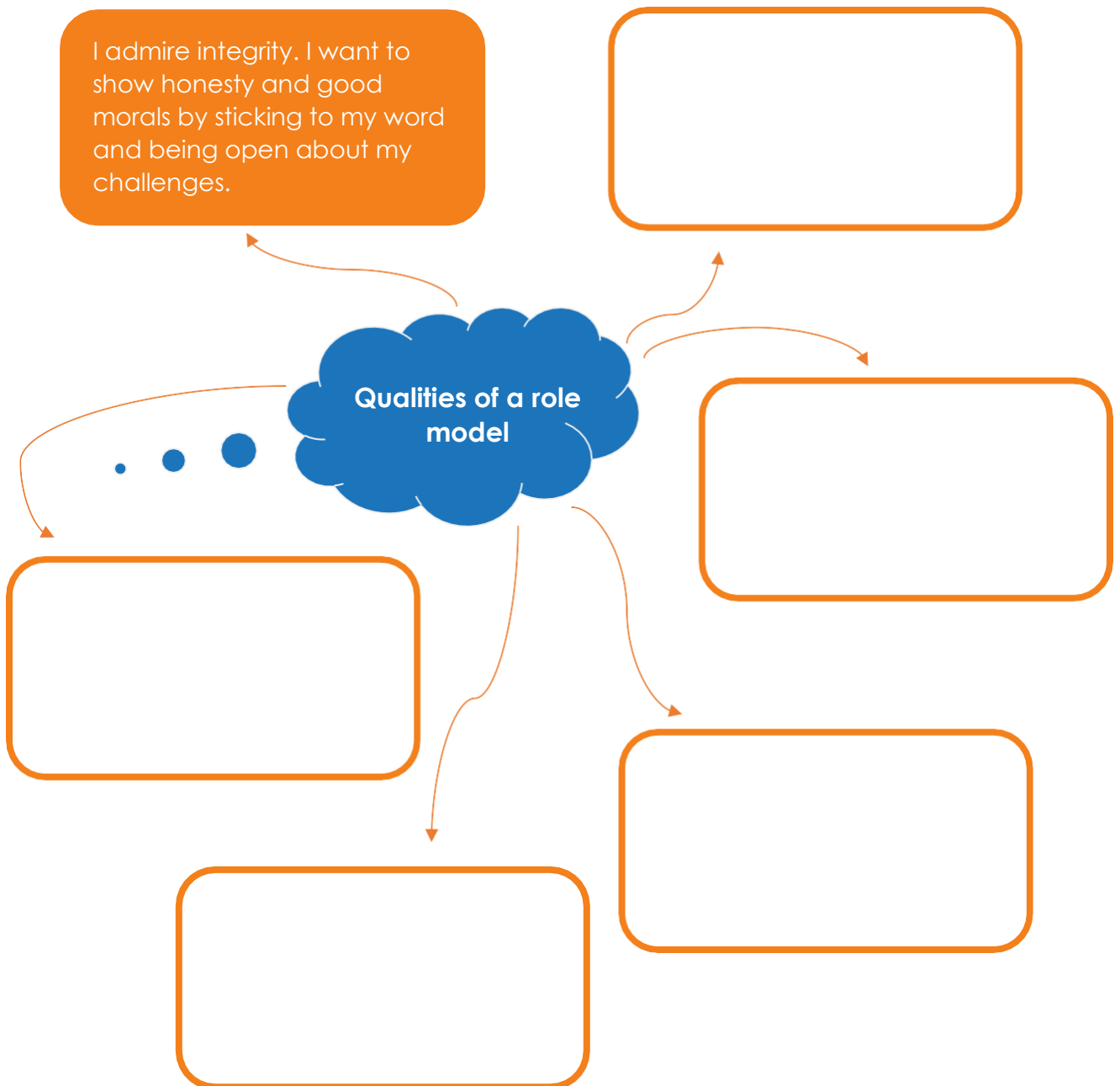
Modelling good behaviour

When you return home it will be really important to model good behaviour to anyone who may have been affected by your previous behaviour and to everyone who sees you as a role model. Remember that positive behaviours can be really simple things that mean a lot to someone else, for example: volunteering to help a family friend or doing something positive in your community.

What can you do once you are released to model positive behaviours?
List your answers below:

Qualities of a role model

It can also help to think about what qualities you admire in the people you look up to and how you can model those things in your own behaviour. For example, you might think it's important to be open about things that you find hard, and to ask people for help when you need to. Fill in the diagram below with examples of positive qualities of a role model. Will you model these when you return home? How will you do that?



Effective communication

At its most basic level, communication is simply sharing information with others. We all communicate in different ways every day – we communicate when we speak to people or when we write them a letter. We also communicate with our behaviour. Although there are lots of different useful ways of communicating, some are more effective than others in helping people to understand what we mean. By thinking about the important steps in communication we can make sure we're communicating in the most effective way.

Step 1: Work out what to say

This might sound obvious but without knowing what we want to say, it is impossible to communicate! It's important for us to know what information we want to share before we can share it with others.

Have you ever just been in a bad mood and you're not sure why? Have you ever done something and then looked back and thought, "Why on earth did I do that?" Many of our actions and reactions are confusing for us and this can make it really hard to explain to other people. One of the first steps in communicating effectively is to work out what is important to talk about.

For example: when you get home you might feel as though nobody understands how it feels to be in prison. This can be frustrating and it might make you feel as though nobody cares about your experience. This could make you angry. If you shout because you are angry, the information you are sharing is: "I am angry!" This does not help anyone to really understand the reasons behind your anger or what they can do to change this.

Instead, think about what is important for you to communicate. In this example, it is important that you communicate your experience of prison – and it may also be important for your family to communicate their experience while you have been in prison. You can start a conversation by asking, "I'd like to talk about my experience of prison and how it made us both feel." This will help someone else understand you more and is a more effective way of communicating.

What do you think it will be important to talk about when you get home?

Step 2: Show active listening

Effective communication also involves receiving information as well as sharing it. Have you ever heard the phrase, 'You have two ears and one mouth'? The reason is so you can receive twice as much information as you share!

Active listening is an important part of effective communication. Active listening means not just hearing the other person but understanding and processing the information they are sending (what they are saying).

The steps to active listening are listed below. Read each one and explain how you could show this active listening technique when you talk to your family. Try to make this specific to you and your family and use "I" statements – for example, "I will..."

1. Pay attention.

This might sound obvious but we all have a tendency to let our minds wander sometimes! How can you make sure that you pay attention to your family when they are speaking to you?

2. Show that you are listening.

How can you show your family/ household that you are listening to what is being said to you?

3. Avoid interruption.

How can you avoid interrupting someone when they are communicating with you?

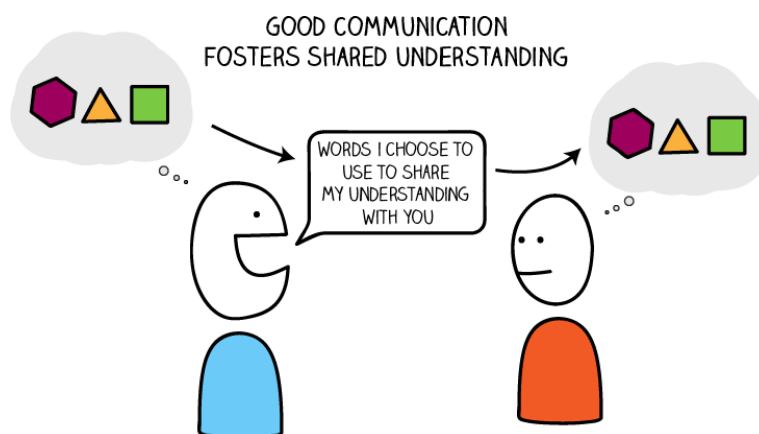
4. Give feedback.

In what ways can you provide feedback to members of your family when they are communicating with you?

Step 3: Send your communication effectively

This step is all about choosing your words carefully before you speak and thinking about where and when you want to communicate. If you have worked through the first two steps, you should use what you have learned to form your message.

For example, effective communication might involve setting aside some time to help your child with their homework. This shows them that they are a priority in your life and you care about them.



Communication challenge

Try this challenge to practise effective communication. You'll need a pen or pencil and some paper – and someone to try the challenge with you.

1. Decide who will go first – this is Person 1. Person 2 should sit or stand with their back to Person 1.
2. Person 1 should draw a picture on their blank piece of paper. Don't tell Person 2 what the picture is of!
3. Person 2 should then get ready to draw.
4. Person 1 should explain to Person 2 how to draw what they have drawn but without telling them what it is (for example, you could say, "Draw a square with a triangle on top," but not "Draw a house with a roof.")
5. Person 2 should try to follow Person 1's instructions and draw as accurately as possible what Person 1 is describing.
6. Once both drawings are finished, compare how alike the drawings are and how effective your communication has been.

Good luck!

Changing patterns and forming habits

“Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”

What do you think about this quote?



Wanting to go home and make your loved ones proud is one thing. But it is an entirely different thing to make these changes happen. It can be really tough. In order for you to make the changes you want to make, it is important that you have enough support from your family and friends, the prison service, probation and other agencies that can help you settle back into the community and give you practical advice. But it is also important that you support yourself.

How do I support myself?

You can support yourself by putting patterns and habits in place to help you make the changes that you want to make. You may want to be a better father to your children; a better son to your mother and/or a better person for your family. To do this, it is likely that you will need to have better patterns and habits than before. Over time, patterns and habits can lead to lifestyle changes.

Habit-forming behaviour

It is generally thought that it takes 66 days to form a habit (something that you do regularly and sometimes unconsciously – without thinking about it). A

habit is formed as a result of repeated action (pattern) which, over time, creates signals in the brain over time to perform the action without much thought or willpower.

So, over time, patterns lead to habits and habits lead to lifestyle changes and positive results. Some examples of patterns, habits and results are listed in the table below:

Pattern	Habit	Lifestyle change/result
Brushing your teeth and showering every morning.	Brushing your teeth and showering without really thinking about it.	Healthier teeth and better hygiene.
Going to the gym in the evening and choosing to eat healthy food afterwards.	Exercising every day and eating healthily.	Improved health.
Taking your children to school in the morning and helping them with homework in the evening.	Spending more time with your children.	A better relationship between father and children.

Following the same pattern as above, think of some poor lifestyle choices/results that you currently have in your life. Write these down in the third column below. Then work backwards from them and think about the patterns and habits that you have that have led to these lifestyle choices. We all have habits that are not good for us, but it is important to be able to identify these if we want to change some of our habits:

Pattern	Habit	Lifestyle change/result

Replacing bad patterns and habits

Let's be honest: it can take a long time and be quite difficult to form new habits. This is especially true if you want to change a habit that you have had for a long time. **But it can be done!**

The three ingredients: Cue, behaviour and reward

Replacing bad habits starts with identifying three different elements of the habit:

- **The cue** is something that triggers the action. For example, feeling frustrated might mean you want to lash out.
- **The behaviour** is what you do once the cue has occurred. For example, physically or verbally lashing out at your family.
- **The reward** is what happens after the behaviour. For example, you might feel satisfied at releasing your frustration.

Breaking down our bad habits into cue, behaviour and reward will allow us to replace the different elements of the habit with something that can help us to make the change we want.

Have a look at the examples below where a negative behaviour has been replaced by something more positive.

Cue	Behaviour	Reward
Feeling frustrated	Negative: physically and/or verbally lashing out	Released frustrations
Feeling frustrated	Positive: <i>exercising/going to the gym</i>	Released frustrations

Cue	Behaviour	Reward
Feeling bored	Negative: doing silly things with friends	Thrill/excitement/fun
Feeling bored	Positive: <i>going to work with Uncle</i>	<i>Purpose/motivation</i>

Cue	Behaviour	Reward
Feeling low/depressed	Negative: having a drink	Forgetting about my low mood
Feeling low/depressed	Positive: <i>spending time with my children</i>	<i>Feeling more cheerful, motivation</i>

Now think about three of your bad habits and the negative behaviour you show in them. Following the format of the examples above, write down the cue, negative behaviour and rewards in the first row, and then replace the negative behaviour with something positive in the second row:

Cue	Behaviour	Reward

Cue	Behaviour	Reward

Cue	Behaviour	Reward

Choose one of the behaviours above that you want to make into a habit when you return home. It might seem like a difficult challenge but it can be done!

On the next page there is a 66 Day Challenge sheet for you to work through. Use this to create a positive pattern and habit for this behaviour when you return home.

66 Day Challenge

Remember, a habit is formed by repeating a pattern of behaviour until it becomes unconscious. Repeat your new behaviour for 66 days uninterrupted and see how you get on. Put an X through each day you complete. Good luck!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63
64	65	66				

Now look back over the past 66 days. First of all - congratulations if you can see positive patterns forming! This isn't an easy task. Now think about the following points:

My new habit is:

How often do you do this?

Did you stop at any point? If yes, why did you stop? If you didn't stop, how did you maintain motivation?

Was there anything hard about keeping motivation? What were they?

Setting your own goals


Hopefully you will have found the information in this pack useful to help you prepare for going home. Now it's important to think about how you can apply the information you've learned to help you achieve your goals on the outside.

It's important that the goals you set for yourself have some key elements. They should be SMART:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**imed.

Following these guidelines means you are more likely to achieve your goals – it's unrealistic for most people to write that you'd like to be a millionaire two days after release!

Spend some time thinking about your own specific goals for when you return home and how you plan on reaching them. You might want to split them into work goals, relationship goals or personal goals – but there's no right or wrong way to do this. Remember that small but consistent changes develop into patterns which then turn into habits – and ultimately lifestyle changes. This eventually leads to purposeful and sustainable results. Unfortunately there are no 'quick wins' when it comes to forming habits – but the results over time make it worth sticking with.



Now, use the tables below to outline your vision for the first four months after your release and what steps you're going to take to reach your goals. Perhaps you could show them to your family to help keep you accountable to your action plan and support your resettlement back into the community?

In the first month after my release I would like to achieve:	In the first week after my release I will:
	In the second week after my release I will:
	In the third week after my release I will:
	In the fourth week after my release I will:

In the **second month** after my release I would like to achieve:

In the **first** week of this month I will:

In the **second** week of this month I will:

In the **third** week of this month I will:

In the **fourth** week of this month I will:

In the **third month** after my release I would like to achieve:

In the **first** week of this month I will:

In the **second** week of this month I will:

In the **third** week of this month I will:

In the **fourth** week of this month I will:

In the **fourth month** after my release I would like to achieve:

In the **first** week of this month I will:

In the **second** week of this month I will:

In the **third** week of this month I will:

In the **fourth** week of this month I will:

Daily affirmations

In the space below, write down the things you will do to help you have positive interactions with your family and friends when you return home. You can continue to add to this this once you return home with different things you would like to start including in your routine. Say these things to yourself every day as a reminder of what you will do and the positive changes you will make.

For example:

- I will make the time to spend with my children at the weekend.
- I will go to the gym with my younger brother.
- I will help my mum with household tasks every week.



How do you feel now?

Now you have completed this booklet, think again about how prepared you feel to go home. Circle the answer that now most fits how you feel:

1. I am really scared and nervous about returning home to my family. I will not be able to manage by myself. I need support.
2. I am not very confident about returning home to my family. I think it will be difficult to return to home life. I don't know whether I will be able to cope.
3. I am not too sure how I feel about returning home to my family. I am excited to return but I am not sure how I will cope with it.
4. I feel partly confident about returning home to my family. I have thought about the challenges and I believe that I have many of the skills I need to cope with this change. I think it will be challenging but I think it is something I can achieve.
5. I am very confident that I have all the skills and resources required to return to my family with ease.

Who else can help?

There are lots of organisations that can help you when you get out of prison. Here are just some of them:

The Prison Advice and Care Trust (Pact)

There is lots more information about resettlement and plenty of resources for your family on the Pact website www.prisonadvice.org.uk.

Remember, if you want to talk to someone you can also call the Prisoners' Families Helpline for free (9am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 3pm at the weekend). If you prefer, you can also email the Helpline on info@prisonersfamilies.org or contact them through their website (which also has lots of useful information) at www.prisonersfamilies.org.



For help with financial worries

- Citizens Advice England – 03444 111 444
- Citizens Advice Wales – 03444 77 20 20
- www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk

For help finding a local food bank

- www.trusselltrust.org
- Food banks are designed to provide short-term, emergency support with food during a crisis. Their aim is to relieve the immediate pressure of the crisis by providing food, while also providing additional support to help people resolve the crises that they face.

For help with housing/accommodation

- Nacro Resettlement Helpline - 0300 123 1999 or helpline@nacro.co.uk
- Shelter England – 0808 800 4444
- Shelter Cymru – 08000 495 495

If you are worried about/experiencing domestic violence

- National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 (24-hours)
- National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0800 999 5428
- Domestic Violence Assist - 0800 195 8699

For help with drug/alcohol issues

- FRANK (England) – 0300 123 6600
- DAN (Wales) – 0808 808 2234
- If you're worried about someone else's drinking you can contact Al-Anon Families on 0800 008 6811

For help with gambling issues

- Gamblers' Anonymous – 0330 094 0322

For emotional support

- Samaritans – 116 123 (24-hours)
- Samaritans (Welsh) – 0300 123 3011 (7pm – 11pm)

For help with mental health

- www.mind.org.uk
- SANELine – 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm – 10.30pm)



Prisoners • Families • Communities
A Fresh Start Together

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