

**INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE**  
**FOR**  
**COUNTDOWN TO FREEDOM FOR WOMEN VIDEO SERIES**

**DAY OF RELEASE**

**VIDEO 3 OF 6**

*“Anticipation isn’t preparation.”*

## **Overview**

Your day of release may be an exciting one, but if you haven’t prepared for it in advance, it may bring disappointment. The outside world can be a difficult one. When you’re in prison you have little you have to do and others take responsibility for you. In the outside world you have to be ready to take responsibility for yourself.

In this program you learn about:

- What to expect on your day of release and how to prepare for it.
- What you can do in the first 30-60 days to increase your chances of staying out.

Housing and employment are two of the most essential things you should prepare for before your release day. On a practical level, the day you are released you should know these specifics:

- Your method of transportation to leave prison.
- Who will meet you at the gate or at the bus stop.
- Where you’ll sleep after your release.
- What you’ll do for clothing.
- How you’ll spend your time the morning after you get out.
- How you’ll get a job.
- What social services are available through private, government, or faith-based programs.

When you have been released you should set yourself a schedule and follow it. Get out and look for work. Find productive things to do. Because life outside prison is stressful and difficult at times, you may be tempted to find a way back to prison. The more you prepare yourself before you get out the better chance you have of success.

You will have to look for work, and there are some things that can help you do that. Get education before you get out and after. Study those you consider successful and try to adopt their traits. You may have to get your foot in the door first at a job that doesn’t appeal to you and then prove yourself to move into the job you really want. Be tenacious and persistent. Keep working the plan you make for yourself before and after you are released.

Your family and friends may be a help or may make things harder. Don't go back to people who will draw you back into bad habits. If your family cannot provide support, connect with a community group who can line up a support system for you before you are released.

In summary, this program advises you to:

- Work the plan you created before your release.
- Secure housing, clothing, a job.
- Expect to be surprised.
- Have a support network in place, and use it.

Remember that you have to be actively involved in the reentry process. Not everybody will welcome you, and you will face obstacles. You have to have a plan, follow it, and take responsibility for changing yourself.

## Presentation Suggestions

Use the board or overhead to write this statement: *How will you spend your first day out of prison?* Ask students to respond to this question. Let them anticipate not only the good (I'll have a good meal; I'll see my children) but also the challenges (I don't know where I'll sleep that night; I will feel pressure to get a job).

Give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to viewing the video.

Show the program. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the program.

At the conclusion of the program, ask students to discuss any changes they made to the answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of watching the program. Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from the students.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and review the quiz questions as a group.

Assign a **Take Away Activity**, if desired.

## Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the program.

1. What can you do to help you succeed in the first 30-60 days after your release?
2. Should you connect with all your old friends?

3. What physical needs will you have to deal with?
4. What are some sources of a support network?

### **Answer Key**

1. Make a plan before you get out. Contact people who can support you. Set a schedule and stick with it.
2. Only if they don't pull you back into negative behavior.
3. Find housing, food, and clothing.
4. Old friends and family; community organizations; faith-based groups.

## **Activities**

### **Activity #1**

**Title:** Your First Week of Freedom

**Format:** Individual

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:** Paper and pens

1. Ask the students to use the paper to draw a calendar with 7 days representing their first week out.
2. Write this list on the board: Housing, Food, Job, Clothing, Transportation, Support System.
3. Ask students to write two action steps in each day of their calendar that will help them with the items on the list. For example they might write "call my sister," sign up with an employment agency, or buy a bus pass.
4. Ask students to discuss what they have written and share ideas. Reemphasize the importance of having a schedule, a structure, and a goal.

### **Activity #2**

**Title:** Finding a Job

**Format:** Small Group

**Time:** 25 minutes

**Materials:** Board or flip chart paper; chalk or marker pens

1. Break students up into small groups of 3-4 people.
2. Give each group a large piece of paper or assign an area of a whiteboard for them to write on.

3. Have each group identify a possible type of job they might look for; for example, work in a factory, restaurant, or office. In 15 minutes have each group list all the things they might need to get and keep such a job. This list might include creating a resume, finding clothing, having a home address or phone where they can be contacted, providing a social security number and ID, the ability to run a cash register or computer, and so on.
4. Have each group share their lists and then identify the things they can begin to work on from inside prison. If they lack skills, they can take classes. They can begin to line up housing or apply for an ID. They can write a friend or family member asking if they could use their phone number to get messages from prospective employers.

## Discussion Questions

1. In this program people talk about how ex-offenders often choose to go back to the safety of prison rather than deal with life on the outside. Can you imagine a situation that would make you want to return to prison? What is the most frightening responsibility you will have to take on when you are released?
2. How do you choose which people you should seek out when you get out? If you have family members or friends who push you toward negative behavior, how will you treat them? Will you just ignore them or simply tell them that you no longer want to participate in the negative behavior? What will you do if they refuse to support your wishes?
3. One woman in this program suggests that you study successful people and determine what makes them successful. Discuss what you think makes people you know successful. Do you share some of those traits? Can you acquire others?

## Quick Quiz

**Note:** You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, write responses on the board/overhead.

**Directions:** Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the program.

1. Women can be harder to find housing for than men.
2. You may have to take a job you don't want and then use that job to move on to a better one.
3. Focus exclusively on your material needs in the first 30-60 days out and put your emotional needs aside.
4. Housing and employment are two of the most important issues you have to deal with when you are released.
5. If you have nothing to do with your days, you are more likely to get in trouble again.

### **Answer Key**

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T

### **Take Away Activity**

Identify sources to help you with three specific needs: food, clothing, and transportation. Make a list of people and organizations that can help you. Research government programs that provide assistance in these areas. If you have children who will come to live with you, how can you get help with their food and clothing needs? Through this exercise, try to end up with two sources of help and their contact information and write each a letter to ask for assistance before you get out.