

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

**RELEASE AND BEYOND: SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

**VIDEO 6 OF 6**

*“The need for other people is built into us.”*

## **Overview**

Even though you may think you can succeed alone, you need others to help you. Often people in prison feel that they can't trust anyone. They become insular and don't interact with others. However, to survive outside, you have to reach out to somebody else. It's not always easy, but when you feel you want to give up or go back to prison rather than stay in the outside world, you should find someone, and talk to this person.

In this program, you learn about building a support network that fits into your life and meets your needs. There are lots of community organizations and people who will give you support. That support can come from a variety of sources.

Support can come from:

- Family
- Friends (although not those who encouraged your original bad behavior)
- Counselors
- Former inmates
- Faith-based programs
- Social services

Not everyone will use all of these sources, and not everybody will be on your side, but you should make the effort to find people and groups to help you succeed. Making the best use of your support network involves trust. It's not always easy to trust people when you have been burned by relationships in the past, and in prison you may have learned to mistrust people. Still, the more people you have on your side, the better your chances of staying on the outside and succeeding.

Sometimes your family members support you and have a positive influence and sometimes they don't. If you have no family support, turn to organizations to help you. You should take advantage of counseling to help with issues of mental health and substance abuse. Faith-based groups may be a good source of support even if you don't share their faith.

Seeking support isn't about weakness; it's about becoming stronger so you can deal with the things life throws at you. Even if you've been burned by past relationships, your success outside depends on how you open up to others and incorporate them in your support system.

## Presentation Suggestions

Use the board or overhead to write this statement from the program: *The need for other people is built into us*. Ask students what they think that means. If it is human nature to connect with other people, how can that desire be a sign of weakness? How could anybody, whether they are coming out of prison or not, survive without some kind of support from other people?

Give students 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. Who can you ask for help when you get out?
2. Is your family always a good source of support?
3. Should you contact all your old friends for support?
4. What is key to asking for help?

### Answer Key

1. Family, friends, faith-based groups, social services, counselors, former inmates.
2. No.
3. No; you have to evaluate what the relationship was based on; if you abused substances together, you can't count on that friendship now.
4. Trust.

## Activities

### Activity #1

**Title:** Counting Your Friends

**Format:** Individual

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Materials:** Paper and pens

1. Ask students to draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper.
2. Have them write the names of people who they trust to help them when they get out on the left side of the line; then have them write the names of people who formerly had a bad influence on them on the right.
3. When they have finished, suggest that those who have few people in the left column write in organizations or other people that might help them, such as church groups or counselors.
4. Ask students to discuss the sources of support they have listed to see if they might make suggestions to each other that could be useful.

### Activity #2

**Title:** Building Trust

**Format:** Small Group

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Materials:** None

1. Break students up into groups of 2.
2. Ask a group to come to the front of the class. Have one person stand behind the other and ask the other person to close her eyes and fall backward into the other person's arms. Explain that you have to trust the other person to catch you.
3. Ask each group to perform this exercise in front of the class.
4. Now ask how it felt to give their trust to someone else. What did they have to do to make that leap? How much harder is it to fall backward hoping somebody will catch you than to simply say "Can you help me?"

## Discussion Questions

1. The narrator of the program says we have to trust other people to survive outside. She also points out that most of us have been disappointed by others. How can you overcome problems in past relationships to trust others when you get out?
2. The program speaks of the value of family in your support group. If you have family members available to you when you are released, how can you fit them into your support group? What kinds of help could you ask them for?
3. In what ways have you changed the way you relate to people since becoming incarcerated? Are you less social? Do you mistrust more people? How will that behavior work for or against you when you get out?

## 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. Sometimes your family is your own worst enemy.
2. A friend is important to involve in your support network, even if she was involved in your previous negative behavior.
3. Asking for help starts with trust.
4. Faith-based programs must represent your faith to help you.
5. Seeking support isn't about weakness; it's about finding the strength to succeed.

## Answer Key

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

## Take Away Activity

Do some research or ask your counselor about organizations and people in the community you will return to who might help you when you get out. Then draw a large circle. Put yourself in a small circle at the center. Imagine the network of people and organizations that could surround you when you get out. Write the name of each person or group along a line that forms the spokes

of a wheel. Try to draw a dozen spokes. If there is a gap, ask questions and research until you find another person or organization that you can place there to make the wheel stable.