

MIFFLIN COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS



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Welcome to the Mifflin County Correctional Facility. We are committed to the active recruitment and retention of qualified volunteers who are committed to accept the challenge inherent in a correctional setting.

The goal of our volunteer programming is to assist the correctional facility in achieving a reduced recidivism rate, improve vocational and life skills, and to change negative thoughts and behaviors of those returning to our community. By working with our prison staff, you will become an integral part of our rehabilitative efforts.

This handbook has been prepared for you, the "volunteer", as an overview of the Department and to set forth important rules, regulations, and guidelines that must be followed in order to promote public safety. In carrying out your vital role as a "volunteer", you will be expected to understand and follow these requirements, as well as, local rules of operation. Please do not hesitate to ask the Prison Staff for clarification if you have any questions or concerns.

We are trying to provide education and support to change life-styles. Many offenders will not achieve this on the first try. Change takes time and we look forward to your continued partnership and collaboration in helping us to achieve this change.

We are very grateful for your interest and commitment as we work together to address the dynamic criminogenic needs of our offenders. Thank you for your continued support in helping us change the lives of our offenders; therefore, ultimately enhancing our community.

Respectfully,

Joshua E. Garver
Warden

HANDBOOK for VOLUNTEERS

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The mission of the Mifflin County Correctional Facility is to detain inmates as directed by the Courts, provide treatment services and maintain a physical environment a physical which ensures the safety of the public, staff, and the prisoner.

Volunteer Services Philosophy:

Our philosophy is to optimize the use of volunteers across divisional lines with MCCF to enhance agency efforts by promoting positive social change for offenders, to increase public safety, and to reduce victimization.

The objectives of this handbook are to state the mission of the Mifflin County Correctional Facility (MCCF); provide an overview of the volunteer program; provide an understanding of MCCF policy regarding the volunteer program; and to promote an understanding of the dynamics involved with volunteering in the facility.

OVERVIEW

The MCCF has enjoyed a long history of volunteer participation. Program areas in which a volunteer can participate include, but are not limited to:

- literacy and educational programs
- life skills
- job skills
- parent training classes and marriage classes
- drug and alcohol rehabilitation or education programs and support groups
- Faith based / religious classes and programs
- mentoring
- other programs designed to assist in the transition between confinement and society and to reduce the incidence of recidivism.

Prison Counselor will recruit and partner with volunteers and volunteer groups who:

- come from culturally and socio-economically diverse backgrounds and geographic areas of the state;
- have a positive and continuing influence on the behaviors of offenders, which promote public safety and reduce recidivism;
- share experiences and strengths, provide direction and guidance in assisting offenders to meet their goals and treatment needs, employment opportunities, abstinence from drugs and alcohol, and to reconnect with family and community;
- will join the MCCF in building a network of volunteers who can provide services to offenders, helping them become responsible and productive members of their communities.

USEFUL DEFINITIONS:

Approved Volunteer - A person who has been approved through an application process, and participates in a program or service or participates in volunteer activities on a regular basis.

Mentor - an approved volunteer who meets the re-entry agency-approved mentor criteria.

Releasee - An individual convicted and sentenced for any crime, excluding traffic violations, and is currently on community supervision, deferred adjudication, parole, or mandatory supervision.

Volunteer Services - A department within the Rehabilitation Program Division (RPD) that serves as the coordinator of the agency's volunteer program.

STAY CONNECTED with the PRISON COUNSELOR

Prison Counselor:

Lisa Hubler

103 W. Market St, Lewistown, PA 17044

Phone # 717-248-1130 ext 2310

AREAS FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Chaplaincy Department - The chaplaincy volunteer program extends services to offenders of all faiths, and provides reasonable and equitable opportunities to pursue religious beliefs and participate in religious activities and programs that do not endanger the safe, secure, and orderly operation of the agency. The following is a list of services a volunteer can provide with the chaplaincy volunteer program:

Specialty Programs

Rehabilitation Programs

Spiritual Growth Programs

Mentoring

Reentry Programs

Offender Pastoral Visits

Substance Abuse Treatment Program (SATP) - The substance abuse volunteer program offers a variety of recovery groups to offenders such as:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

Reentry and Integration Division - Reentry volunteers aid offenders in their return to the community by providing assistance in those errors commonly serving as barriers to successful reentry, including:

- Obtaining proper identification
- Housing
- Employment and education
- Health care
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation
- Clothing, Food and Amenities
- Financial Resources
- Support Services, and Mentoring

HOW TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Individuals who want to participate in the MCCF volunteer program shall complete an application. The Warden will look over the application along with the counselor and you will receive a phone call to let you know if you are approved.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers play a significant role in the criminal justice setting. Because of their firsthand experience and/or devoted interest in their field, volunteers have the ability to gain the attention and respect of offenders.

Volunteers are key players in programs designed for rehabilitation and reentry of offenders into the community. The transition process seeks to produce offenders who are law-abiding citizens with the strengths and skills to successfully manage the problems they will face daily. Volunteers are the role models for this journey and are an invaluable addition to the agency's limited resources.

"What is the role of a volunteer?"

- To provide programs and services in an effort to assist with the agency's mission to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behavior, to reintegrate offenders into society and assist victims of crime while maintaining a security mindset and a working relationship with staff.

RULES OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are subject to sanctions for failure to abide by MCCF rules and regulations. Being a volunteer is a privilege. Breaking the rules can end that privilege.

Volunteers shall be respectful of the needs and requirements of each department on the facility.

Volunteer activities shall be consistent with sound correctional practices for security and orderly operations. It is important to remember that security always takes precedence. Volunteers should exercise patience when delayed due to security activities. Please remember these procedures are for you, the staff and the offender's safety. When you are in the facility you should remain in the area designated for the program/activity. If you must leave the designated area let a staff member know where you are going and the purpose.

Respect the authority of staff, if you have a disagreement with a staff member discuss this in private not in front of offenders. Be mindful that offenders are observing your actions at all times. Additionally, you may speak to a Supervisor for clarity.

- A. Volunteers shall not form a non-professional, personal or emotional relationship with an offender(s). Refer to the section titled: ***How can you tell if an offender is getting to you***
- B. Volunteers (*excluding employee*) may correspond with an offender(s). Correspondence shall **not** include:
 - or reference personal information such as personal photographs, personal relationships, personal finances
 - legal advice
 - any references that are sexual in nature
 - reference to criminal behavior or gang-related information
 - reference to other offenders [*unless a verified family member of the offender who is also incarcerated*]
 - reference to or include contraband
 - reference to actions that are inappropriate, such as soliciting money
 - or contain records or documents held by MCCF
- C. The word "Volunteer" shall be included as part of the return address. Volunteers shall use a postal box address or the address of the organization, program, or church they represent as the return address.

Volunteer John Doe	<stamp>
Organization address (or)	
PO Box	
	(Inmate Name)
	MCCF
	103 W. Market St.
	Lewistown, PA 17044

- D. Volunteers shall not mail any items of correspondence for offenders. This includes, but is not limited to, correspondence between offenders, family members, victims, friends, or enemies. ***DO NOT take anything from an offender, and DO NOT give anything to an offender.***
- E. Volunteers shall not carry/pass messages from offender to offender; the offender's family; their victims or their victim's family in written or verbal form. This includes making or accepting personal calls for or from an offender's family member(s). Volunteers are not allowed to receive telephone calls from offenders.

[Exception: Family member or individual with whom a relationship was established prior to incarceration and declared to Volunteer Services.]

Statutes, court orders and MCCF policies prohibit offenders from contacting their victim or the victim's family members directly or indirectly.

- F. No volunteer shall contact the victim of an offender, including a family member who may be the victim. The offender may state that he wants to reconcile with or make it up to the victim. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to notify staff if the offender has made such a request, but the volunteer is not to act on the offender's request. The victim, if and when he or she chooses to meet with his or her offender, can contact the court system to initiate a mediation.

Many offender family members are victims of their crimes. It is a serious violation to contact an offender's family.

- G. Volunteers are responsible for reporting immediately to Prison at 717-248-1130 when a family member, friend, victim, or enemy becomes incarcerated after the volunteer begins their service.
- H. Volunteers are not allowed to volunteer in a class where a family member, friend, enemy, or victim is assigned. If, once you arrive on the facility, you discover a family member, friend, enemy, or victim is in that class, you must report it immediately to a staff member.

DRESS CODE

Volunteers shall dress in a conservative and responsible manner that is appropriate for the volunteer assignment and does not detract from the safety and security of staff, offenders and the public. Volunteers shall adhere to established grooming standards. Any attire which is of extreme design, revealing in nature, and conveys messages of a derogatory or offensive nature through language, logos or symbols is prohibited. This includes signs or symbols of apparent membership in a Security Threat Group or Gang as evidenced by tattoos or other signs or symbols of membership.

Items that will not be allowed:

- a. jewelry items worn on the facial areas such as tongue, lips, or eyebrow

For females:

- any attire, to include slits in skirts, shorter than three (3) inches above the middle of the knee while standing
 - Capri pants shorter than three inches below the knee while standing
 - Shorts of any length
- b. sweat suits and wind suits unless they are appropriate for the activity being conducted
- c. any attire that exposes midriff or shoulders or any portion of an undergarment

- d. slacks and pants worn below the waistline
 - e. attire that is considered to be see-through, low-cut in the front or back or tightfitting
- K. Volunteers shall immediately report an injury to the assigned staff member.
- L. Volunteers shall not be permitted to perform any activity involving the actual receipt or handling of money (either cash or readily negotiable documents such as checks, money orders, state warrants, or stamps) while performing volunteer services at MCCF.
- M. Volunteers shall not accept any personal gifts from offenders or give personal gifts to offenders. If an offender states he needs a religious text such as a Bible, Torah, Quran or other religious text encourage the offender to contact the unit chaplain, **do not give an offender anything without prior approval.** **If you wish to donate religious texts to the agency you may contact the counselor.**
- N. Access to telephone service on a facility will be limited to emergency use only.
- O. Volunteers, and their family members, shall not place money in an offender's Account or purchase items for offenders.
- P. Volunteers may not visit an offender in regular unit visitation.
- Q. Volunteers shall not allow a releasee (see definition for releasee) to reside at their personal place of residence, nor on their personal property. [Exception: Family member or individual with whom a relationship was established prior to incarceration and declared to Volunteer Services.]
- R. Volunteers shall not have releasees (see definition for releasee) visit in their home.
- S. Volunteers shall report immediately to the appropriate authority any information revealed by an offender that is criminal/sexual in nature or could impact public/facility safety.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The MCCF has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct. Volunteers are custodial; therefore, no sexual relationships are consensual. Volunteers are prohibited from establishing or continuing in personal relationships with offenders, including engaging in, or attempting to engage in, any form of sexual misconduct with offenders or forcing or attempting to force offenders to participate in sexual misconduct. Volunteers who violate this policy shall not be allowed to continue to perform services for the agency and may be subject to criminal prosecution. Acts of sexual misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- having sexual contact or sexual intercourse with an offender;
- requiring or intentionally allowing an offender to engage in sexual contact, sexual intercourse or other sexual conduct for any reason (e.g., the sexual gratification of another employee or other individual);

- masturbating in front of an offender;
- making obscene or sexual advances, gestures or comments toward an offender or being receptive to any such advances, gestures or comments made by an offender toward another employee or other individual;
- touching of self in a sexually provocative way to solicit a response from an offender or while located in any area where offenders might be located.
- conducting any verbal communication of a sexual nature with or within potential hearing range of an offender;
- providing written communication or photographic items of a sexual nature to an offender; or
- influencing or making promises in exchange for sexual favors or because an offender refused to submit to a sexual advance. This includes putting money into or promising to put money into an offender's account or bringing in or promising to bring in contraband for an offender in exchange for sexual favors.

It is a felony offense and the MCCF is required by law to report to the proper authorities if anyone at the Prison, including a volunteer, violates the rights of a person in custody or engages in sexual contact or sexual intercourse with a person in custody. A volunteer with knowledge of any such misconduct, either by personal detection or being confided in by an offender or who witnesses any such misconduct shall be required to report the misconduct immediately to one or more of the following: facility staff, administrator, warden.

A volunteer shall not be subject to harassment, retaliation, intimidation or coercion for reporting a personal employee-offender relationship or any incident of sexual misconduct.

"Sexual Abuse" is forcing another person, by violence, threats of violence, or coercion, to perform a sexual act (a sexual act is any intentional contact between the genitals of one person and genitals, mouth, anus, or hands of another person), sexual fondling, or sexual assault with an object, without the effective consent of that person. For the purpose of this manual, the term "sexual abuse" shall also include:

"Sexual Assault" is the contact of any person without their consent, or of a person who is unable to consent or refuse.

"Sexual Fondling" is the intentional touching either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person, or of a person who is unable to either consent or refuse, for the purpose of sexual gratification.

"Improper Sexual Activity with a Person in Custody" is the act constituting improper sexual activity by a public servant with a person in custody.

Sexual abuse does not include the following:

- Custodial or medical personnel gathering physical evidence, or engaged in other legitimate medical treatment, in the course of investigating prison rape.
- The use of a health care provider's hands or fingers or the use of medical devices in the course of appropriate medical treatment unrelated to prison rape.

- The use of a health care provider's hands or fingers and the use of instruments to perform body cavity searches in order to maintain security and safety within the prison or detention facility, provided the search is conducted in a manner consistent with constitutional requirements.
- The use of a correctional officer's hands or fingers for the purpose of legitimate searches.

"Sexual Harassment" is sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one offender directed toward another;

- Verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an offender by an employee, contractor, or volunteer, including demeaning references to gender, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures.
- T. Communication with the media by volunteers regarding any MCCF business shall be approved by the Warden prior to contact and dissemination of any information.
- U. If a volunteer is required to take a prescription/non-prescription medication while on the facility, if it has to be taken into the facility it must be in the original container.
- V. Volunteers must notify the Counselor when there is a change in the volunteer's name and/or contact information such as address, phone number(s), and emergency, life-sustaining medications.
- W. Volunteers must notify MCCF within 48 hours if they have been arrested. Your continued status as a volunteer will be determined depending on the circumstances of the arrest. MCCF periodically reviews criminal background checks and if you are found to have not disclosed an arrest within 48 hours you will be removed as a volunteer.
- X. Volunteers shall not proselytize or induce someone to convert to one's faith or recruit someone to join one's party, institution, or cause while serving as a volunteer. Volunteers shall not disparage the faith of any offender, nor deliberately seek to influence a change in any offender's denomination.
- Y. Some professions can be considered a conflict of interest, for example, if you are a lawyer please do not solicit clients or give legal advice while you are serving as a volunteer. To maximize your effectiveness as a volunteer, please keep your personal interests separate from your volunteer service.

HOW TO REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT/ABUSE

- Any Uniformed Staff
- Current Prison Counselor
- Jamie Glick (Victim/Witness Advocate) 20 N. Wayne St, Lewistown, PA 17044

MENTOR SERVICES

A mentor is a volunteer who meets the reentry approved mentor criteria. Mentoring is a one-to-one relationship that focuses on the rehabilitative needs of the mentored offender, fosters caring and support, encourages personal development, assists in personal visioning, and develops active community partnerships.

Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings an offender together with an experienced volunteer who offers them guidance, support, and encouragement that is aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. A mentor is not a parent, therapist, parole officer or a cool peer.

CONTRABAND

Contraband is defined as any item not permitted in the secured perimeter or in the facility. It is also any item brought into, or taken out of a facility, or in the possession of an offender, visitor or employee. Contraband includes paper money or coins, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, cigarette lighters, matches or any tobacco products, controlled substances or unauthorized medications, cell phones and any component of a cell phone, pager, or similar personal electronic communication devices, firearms, pocket knives, explosives, escape implements, or dangerous weapons; or correspondence to or from an offender, documents, legal materials and sensitive information not received through authorized channels.

Anyone who provides contraband to an offender commits the offense of a Class 2 misdemeanor. Providing certain types of contraband to an offender may be punishable as a felony offense. If an employee of the facility or a volunteer commits this offense, it is a Class 2 misdemeanor. The MCCF has a zero tolerance policy towards contraband on its facilities.

Volunteers may be permitted to bring into the facility, or be in possession of: a pair of eyeglasses, a clear bag, a small notepad, and/or items related to the performance of their service, such as binders, workbooks, folders, books, and pencils. Additional items or materials may be brought in with the approval of the Warden, or his designee. MCCF is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damages items.

All items or materials the volunteer will be using during their program/service must be approved and coordinated with the appropriate volunteer authority before entry into the facility.

Volunteers shall not remove any item from the facility without prior approval. Volunteers shall not take out of any institution either letter, message (written or verbal), or any article or thing for an offender.

Everyone entering the facility is subject to search. This includes the search of the vehicle, personal belongings, or person, and can include a physical search.

Firearms, or other instruments designed/used as a dangerous weapon or having explosive substance, are not allowed on MCCF property.

Volunteers shall report the possession or trading of contraband between offenders, offenders and staff, and offenders and other volunteers.

Under NO circumstances will volunteers engage in trading or trafficking with offenders. Volunteers are prohibited from possessing, selling to, buying from, or delivering to ANY offender ANY article or commodity of ANY description except through authorized channels.

Offenders spend a lot of idle time thinking of ways to get their hands on contraband. It is important that you are part of the solution to controlling contraband and not part of the problem.

VOLUNTEER AND PROPERTY SEARCHES

All volunteers, their vehicles, and property are subject to search upon entering MCCF property. During a search, volunteers shall:

- Remove their jacket, smock, cap/hat, belt, footwear, and any other type of outer apparel. After these items have been removed, the searching officer shall physically search each item and set the items aside, or use a handheld scanner to search the items if one is available;
- Remove all items from their pockets. The searching officer shall examine the contents along with all other items in the individual's possession and then set them aside;
- Be thoroughly pat searched by an officer of the same gender;
- Be searched using a handheld or walk-through metal detector; and
- Lift their feet so the bottom of each foot can be visually inspected or scanned by the searching officer.

If a volunteer objects to any portion of a search, the searching officer shall discontinue the search and immediately contact a supervisor.

If anything suspicious is noted during a search, a supervisor shall be called to determine whether further investigation is warranted. If further investigation is necessary, the warden shall be summoned to determine whether or not the volunteer shall be taken to a private area to resolve the issue.

- Any item deemed inappropriate or has the potential to jeopardize the security of the institution shall be confiscated. All seized items classified as contraband of a criminal nature will be immediately turned over to the proper authority.

- If suspicious items are not noted during the search, all items shall be returned to the volunteer.

VEHICLE SEARCH

All vehicles on MCCF property are subject to search. All individuals shall ensure all vehicle doors, windows, and trunks are secured and locked. The beds of trucks shall be free of garden tools, clothes, or anything that could be used as a weapon or aide in an escape. All tools in the bed of the truck shall be secured.

Intoxicating beverages or other contraband items shall not be left in any vehicle parked on MCCF property.

Tobacco products shall be stored out of sight, in a locked vehicle.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND SAFETY

CHEMICAL AGENTS

On occasion the use of chemical agents is necessary to contain, or take control of emergency situations. Staff are trained to handle emergency situations. If you are exposed to chemical agents during an emergency situation, you should follow the following decontamination procedures.

For exposure to Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) gas:

OC is a natural substance made from the oil and resins of peppers. The effects of OC will usually subside in 45 minutes; however, the following procedures will help minimize the effect.

- Exit the affected area, face into the wind or a fan, breath normally, and try to relax.
- Do not rub eyes or skin. This will force the substance into soft tissue and prolong the effects.
- Flush eyes and exposed skin with large amounts of cool water.
- Remove and discard contact lenses, if applicable.
- Blow your nose if it is irritated.
- Use a wet paper towel, followed by a dry one, and pat the exposed area to lift the resin. Change the paper towel frequently and avoid rubbing the towel over the exposed area. This will only smear the resin to other areas.
- Do not use lotions, salves, or creams on the affected area since this will trap the resin against the skin.
- Do not use commercial eyewashes to flush the eyes. This may cause an adverse chemical reaction with the OC.
- Use soap and shampoo that do not have an oil base to wash the affected area. Start from the head and wash down.

- Once washed, use a cool towel or ice pack on exposed areas to reduce inflammation.
- Avoid direct sunlight and stay in a cool place. An air conditioned room is ideal.
- If major symptoms persist, seek medical attention.

HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

The MCCF policy will not permit offenders, or others, to use hostages (i.e., employees, volunteers, visitors, or other offenders) to escape from custody or otherwise interfere with orderly institutional operations. Hostages will not be recognized for bargaining purposes.

There are no guarantees in a hostage situation; however, research indicates that the following guidelines have proven very helpful.

- Do not be a hero! Accept your position and be prepared to wait. Be patient. Remain calm.
- The first fifteen to forty-five minutes are the most dangerous. **Follow the instructions of your captor. Do not hesitate! Be cooperative.**
- Do not speak unless spoken to and only then when necessary. Be a good listener.
- Try to rest. As soon as things settle down, try to get as much rest as possible without turning your back on your captor. Try to stay in a group if there is more than one hostage. ➤ Use your mind to create an emotional safe haven.
- Do not make suggestions, express opinions, moralize, threaten, plant ideas or worry out loud. Do not try to be a negotiator.
- Do not try to escape unless you are absolutely certain that you will be successful, and even then, rethink it. Consider how your escape attempt will affect the treatment of or outcome for the remaining hostages.
- If anyone, including you, needs any special medical attention, inform your captors.
- Be observant. Try to remember everything that you see and hear. Memorize things about the captors, their descriptions and conversations.
- Do not be argumentative.
- Treat the captor like royalty. Don't turn your back on your captor unless ordered to do so. Do not stare at your captor, as this may unnerve him.
- Have a positive attitude.
- If you believe a rescue attempt is taking place, or you hear a noise or shooting, hit the floor and stay down. Keep your hands on your head and don't make any fast moves. Assume the fetal position.
- Never doubt that you will be rescued.
- When rescue comes, follow all orders given by security staff. You may be asked to remain on the floor until the offender has been apprehended, secured and removed from the area.

VOLUNTEER SAFETY

Volunteers are a valuable asset to the MCCF mission. Your safety is important to the agency.

- A. **MOST COMMON ACCIDENT:** Slips, trips and falls are one of the most common sources of injury. Always pay attention to the surface you are walking on and wear low-heeled footwear that is comfortable and in good condition.

- B. UNSAFE CONDITIONS: Volunteers should learn to recognize unsafe conditions such as frayed electrical wiring, trip hazards, slippery floors, etc., and report them immediately. Unsafe actions such as leaning back in chairs, improper lifting, or not observing warning signs should be identified and discouraged.
- C. CHEMICAL HAZARD COMMUNICATION INFORMATION: You have a right to know if any chemical substances you come in contact with are hazardous to you. If you have questions regarding chemical substances you may be exposed to, contact the facility Shift Commander.
- D. BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS PRECAUTIONS: Because of the potential hazard of contracting Hepatitis B and/or the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that are transmitted by blood or other body fluids, you are asked to please refrain from assisting in any situation which may lead to contact with blood and/or body fluids. Please notify staff in case of emergency.
- E. FIRE: Fire escape plans are posted in areas of the facility. Locate them and become familiar with the escape route(s) and intercom buttons.
 - In the event of fire, remove yourself/others from the area and follow staff orders.
 - Pull the fire alarm nearest the emergency, if one is available.
- F. GENERAL EMERGENCY: Notify staff either in person, or via the intercom system whichever is most applicable.

OFFENDER MANIPULATION

Volunteers understandably want to approach their volunteer service in a positive and optimistic manner. Volunteers must be aware that some offenders will attempt to manipulate the volunteer for their own benefit. The following are suggestions to help you reduce the chance of being manipulated:

- Realize that some offenders will take advantage of you if you let them.
- Do not do anything you would be ashamed to share with Prison Staff, or Prison Counselor.
- Keep everything out in the open. If an offender's actions are questionable, ask for advice and assistance.
- Know the policies and procedures you are required to follow. Ask for help to review and understand these policies and procedures.
- Learn to be assertive and use the word "NO" appropriately.
- Be aware of verbal and non-verbal messages you send out, particularly body language.
- Always report and document any attempt at manipulation or game-playing.

- Confront manipulative behavior and take action as the issues arise. Verify information before you take action.
- Know your personal goals and ethical limitations.
- Understand your value system.
- Understand your strengths and weaknesses.
- Be firm, fair, and consistent.
- Realize that offenders view themselves as the victim.
- Realize that when an offender is told “maybe”, they often regard it as a promise.
- When in doubt, ask.

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF AN OFFENDER IS “GETTING” TO YOU?

- You feel **anger** towards the system and see yourself as an advocate for the offender. You should maintain an emotional detachment.
- You are usually **irritated** at the staff to the exclusion of considering that there may be valid reasons for delays. You presume that a delay is caused by staff, and do not consider that an offender may be responsible for the delay.
- You begin **favoring** an offender, or some offenders, over others and show it by spending more time with them or by **sharing** personal information with some, but not others.
- You begin to **enjoy** hearing stories of how other volunteers or staff are awful and you are wonderful.
- You feel good because offenders like you.
- You begin to think about **bending a rule** for an offender, or you do **bend a rule** for an offender.
- You feel a strong sense of **pity** for offenders, often to the point of wanting to rescue them from the natural consequences of their actions.
- You feel **superior** to other volunteers and have an inflated view of what impact you can have on an offender.
- You **fail** to report questionable behavior or requests because you do not want to get an offender into trouble.
- You unquestionably **believe** stories about cruel officers and find yourself buying into the “gossip”.
- Offenders begin emphasizing common interests. For example, an offender may engage you in a long conversation about what you like, dislike or other personal matters. Be aware of personal probing to see where you stand. There may be an ulterior motive behind this behavior.

- Offenders begin soliciting empathy or sympathy. Offenders will tell you truthfully and sometimes untruthfully about the many problems that they have, such as a sick child, a dying mother, bankruptcy problems, etc.
- Offenders exhibit the “we/they attitude”. Offenders will try to pit you and them against the system, especially if they can determine that someone or some organization has treated you unfairly. They will point out a similar thing has happened to them and try to establish a commonality. Try to recognize this so you can make a response that promotes personal accountability.
- Offenders begin testing your limits. Offenders will ask for certain things, some of which may be acceptable and others which may be illegal, to see what you will allow them to do. Offenders will break minor rules to see how you react. Report all infractions.
- The offender will suddenly offer favors, do extra work, be excessively nice and/or overly complimentary.
- Offenders offer comments such as, “You’re the only one who understands.” “You’re the best teacher, preacher, counselor, etc. They have ever had.” “You’re the only one who can help.”

If you begin to identify with ANY of the above examples contact Prison Staff, or the Prison Counselor immediately for assistance.

BECOME A SKILLED VOLUNTEER

The following is provided to assist you in becoming an effective and skilled volunteer.

- ✓ Practice active listening skills when dealing with offenders.
- ✓ Ensure you have time; do not act as if you are in a hurry.
- ✓ Do not act as if you want to help and then provide none. Offenders are good at detecting a lack of sincerity; it is one of their common traits.
- ✓ Know your physical, emotional, and personal boundaries when working with offenders.
- ✓ Set your boundaries. A prevalent downfall of volunteers is inappropriate relationships with offenders.
- ✓ Have a positive effect on the offenders you are working with. Encourage them to share feelings and become more open. Empower them to have self-direction, independence, autonomy, personal growth, and self-development.
- ✓ Do not take the offender’s side against the agency. They will use manipulation and deceit to try and turn you towards them.
- ✓ Do not undermine staff. If your group gets interrupted for count, sit patiently and wait for the officer to perform their duties. You are there to support staff in the agency’s mission and you are a guest. If offenders see an inappropriate attitude on your part they will use this to further manipulate the situation to their advantage.

- ✓ Do not make plans with offenders before coordinating things with the appropriate volunteer authority. This will increase your effectiveness by not having to change plans if something you propose is not in accordance with regulations or policies.
- ✓ There is no need to establish a facade or to create some kind of special status for yourself in relation to the offender. Express your feelings genuinely. An honest and unmasked expression of feelings is one important way for the volunteer to show concern.
- ✓ Review what you know of the offender you will meet.
- ✓ Never make a promise unless you've thought it through first and are prepared to carry it out. The offender will test you, call your bluff, and see if you will deliver. This is an important part of the offender's learning to trust you.
- ✓ Be honest and objective, disapproving when it is warranted, as well as praising, supporting, and encouraging when it is warranted.
- ✓ There is a mechanism in place for offenders to receive what they need and are lawfully entitled to. If they ask for something, you can assist within the appropriate mechanism. If no mechanism exists, it is probably illegal.
- ✓ Be familiar with signs/triggers of the relapse process and who to contact for assistance.
- ✓ Respect is the keystone. The offender will not be open with you until respect and a rapport is developed. Conversely, you must respect the offender's individuality and basic rights as a human being. There is no room for narrow prejudices or feelings of superiority. Respond to the offender's needs and interests, not to your own.
- ✓ Let the offender tell you in their own good time about the offense committed, the family left behind or any other deeply held guilt-associated matters. Accept him or her as an individual who is no better or no worse than anyone else. To pigeonhole or categorize a person is, in a way, to dehumanize the person.
- ✓ Do not expect overnight miracles. When things have been going wrong for years and years with a person, these things cannot be corrected in a few weeks or months. The positive effects of your relationship with the offender may not have a decisive effect until long after you've stopped working with the person.
- ✓ The offender will never respect you until it is clear that you cannot be conned or manipulated. The offender's manipulations may be expressed in a request for you to influence correctional officers, for a witness, or for you to bring something in or out of the institution. Never give out your home address or phone number. **Never deposit money in an offender's account.** If the offender asks you to do something which you consider "borderline," say that you will check to see if it is all right. Then ask the appropriate official.
- ✓ There will be a time when the offender, overwhelmed by troubles, will confront you with hostility. At such times, do not force conversation upon the offender and above all, do not respond in a hostile, sarcastic, or anxious manner. Do not act shocked. Retain your composure, ignore the hostility, or withdraw for a while. Chances are that the offender will regain their composure.

- ✓ Remember that every contact with an offender has the potential for aggression. Delay, interrupt, stop or terminate the contact if you feel it is necessary.
- ✓ You cannot take the burden of the other person's problems on yourself. They are the offender's problems, not yours.
- ✓ You may not receive thanks or any show of gratitude from the offender. They may feel it but may not know how to express it and may actually feel embarrassed by it. You may never hear "thank you" but your effort will be, in the long run, appreciated.
- ✓ Be familiar with criminal thinking errors and ways to redirect that thinking. It is how we think that determines how we behave. When dealing with the offender population, there are criminal patterns or thinking errors that must be acknowledged and changed before significant, long lasting change can be made.
- ✓ Get offenders to ask questions of themselves such as:
 - Did I do anything to bring about or cause this situation?
 - Did I respond to a situation and make it better or worse?
 - Does blaming someone or something else make the situation better?

CONFIDENTIALITY

All approved volunteers shall agree in writing by signing the Volunteer Handbook to abide by agency policies relating to security and confidentiality of all records and information, both written and verbal, which pertains to employees, offenders, and releases. A volunteer may have access to confidential information on an as needed basis and as approved by the appropriate department and applicable facility administrator or their designee. Failure of the volunteer to maintain confidentiality as stated may incur a penalty for disclosure of such information, i.e., criminal prosecution or civil suit.

WANT TO LEARN MORE? ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Helping Hands

A Handbook for Volunteers in Prison and Jail By Daniel J. Bayes

Games Criminals Play

By Bud Allen and Diana Bosta

CONTACT /SERVICE INFORMATION

Prison Counselor:

Lisa Hubler

103 W. Market St, Lewistown, PA 17044

Phone # 717-248-1130 ext. 2310

Be Aware and Not Complacent!

Awareness promotes safety.

Complacency promotes trouble.

Stay "tuned in" to your environment.

Subtle changes may alert you to trouble.