

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
INSTITUTIONAL DIVISION

GIB LEWIS UNIT
WOODVILLE, TEXAS

**RELIGIOUS VOLUNTEERS
A FEW HELPFUL HINTS**

Revised April 1994
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Dedicated to
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and
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Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Institutional Division

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PART ONE: MINISTERING

1. MINISTRY: MEETING NEEDS THROUGH RELIGION

In the August, 1993, issue of The Echo, the department newspaper sent to all inmates, there is a section entitled "Creativity in Confinement: Poetry by Incarcerated Writers." An inmate named, Penay, wrote the following poem.

ALONE

I am on the far side of no where,
amidst brooding shadows of despair.
Clinging to the broken, hopeless dream of my soul.
And I scream to the heavens, hoping, waiting
for my better tomorrows.

OH! Rainbow!
Rainbow! Cast your smile on my shoulders.
The fading sunset beckons, and I'm all alone.
The fire smolders in the hearth of my being.
Existing with deep and abiding pain
for the lost shining love of my life.
Penay

Heartbrokenness and devastation, the needs of incarcerated men and women run deep into the soul. Deeper into the heart and soul, beyond the emotional pain and resulting dysfunction lies the stream of a person's religion.

As a life-changing and personally motivating force, religion channels expression with an individual's God, keeps one informed about Supreme Being, and intimately touches Ultimate Concerns. For those willing to change, religion nurtures positive inner core values as well as contributes to healthy ideals of social interaction.

To touch those cavernous needs and reach core values, and thus aid in religion's divine cause--for millenniums--sincere ministers from all religions have been naturally and supernaturally impelled. By their religion and by their own loving and compassionate hearts they have been impelled to "reach out and touch" the brokenness of others.

With the touching, religion works its age-old art of nurturing the heart and soul from the inside out. And there are few places in more need of the craft of religion than in a prison.

2. MINISTRY: A TEAM EFFORT

As a religious volunteer, you are an important part of the ministry team. The success of your ministry is dependent upon the Team Spirit that you help cultivate between the staff and the variety of ministries active on any unit. With an increasing degree of Integrity and Respect by those ministering, the more ministry will be allowed to take place. And the more ministry is allowed, the more religion will be allowed to work her craft. With a nurtured soul, core values will change.

A friendly handshake and a kind voice is often the balm that helps the broken person reconnect with the Faith of his/her childhood or connect for the first time with a journey of Faith. With the journey of Faith thus begun, a life-change often results in a fresh Hope for tomorrow and in an honest Love for self and others.

Of course, the very nature of a penitentiary imposes restrictions on those within as well as on access from without. Connecting ministers with the cavernous needs of the incarcerated is the Chaplaincy Department's goal--simple and clear. Fortunately, there are many ministers and ministries available; unfortunately there is a limit on how many a "prison" can accommodate. Nevertheless, the ever-present challenge remains: how to raise the ratio of connection between available ministers and the needs of inmates.

To raise the level of nurture requires a Team Spirit. So everyone from the individual minister to the mass crusade plays a vital role in that Team Spirit. In order for ministry to increase, everyone has to help with Integrity and Respect. For as the degree of Integrity and Respect of ministry increases, so will the opportunity of ministry increase in the prison--and vice versa.

The following will help lift the degree of Integrity and Respect of your ministry. The higher the degree raised, the more success you will have. And as your success heals cavernous needs, nourishes souls, and cultivates vital religion--we will rejoice together with you as we hear the Lord say, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matt. 25:40).

3. A SHORT COURSE

- Know and maintain your religious perspective.**
- Attempt to be present with Respect and Integrity.**
- The more open, the better; the less, the better.**
- Ask or tell about a concern or a mistake.**
- Be visible and keep security aware.**
- Listen.**

- Be careful.
- Guard your trust diligently.
- Remain calm, or try not to overreact.
- Relate healthily by avoiding dependency.

4. CLEARANCE

You are special. For the most part, approved volunteers have a high degree of personal self-worth and a general bearing of stability about them. They know their professional goals. They are generally honest, firm, fair, and consistent.

All religious volunteers come with a specific faith recognition and recommendation. They have a religious heritage within a vibrant faith into which they look for guidance and core values in their personal lives. Their Integrity and ability to Respect are *growing* virtues they cherish in themselves and virtues they wish to cultivate in others.

Once cleared, everyone needs official identification that includes a photo. Only authorized visitors are allowed (none under 18); all others will be denied. If you are an ex-prisoner or are on probation, you will need special clearance. If you have a relative or close friend incarcerated where you wish to volunteer, you will need special clearance.

Do not bring *any* unauthorized item, especially anything sharp. Do not bring in briefcases or closed boxes without prior approval. All medications need prior approval. The more open, the better; the less, the better.

Do be aware that your vehicle and your person is subject to search anytime you enter the property of a Texas Department of Criminal Justice prison unit. Depending upon TDCJ officials' discretion, your failure to comply will result in denial of access or the involvement of additional law enforcement officials.

Dress conservatively. No shorts. No clothing with offensive language. No sexually suggestive or see-through clothes. Women should be self-conscious about avoiding tight-fitting clothes and short dresses that accent her sexually. This can be very distracting and confusing. Men's shirts need collars. No all white outfits. Do wear colored clothes that easily distinguish you from inmates who wear white.

You are not perfect. If something takes place or you do something that seems inappropriate, tell the Chaplain or a supervisor--regardless of how small it may seem. Better to learn than to be denied clearance.

5. STAFF RELATIONS

Respect. The age difference between some volunteers and some Correctional Officers can easily put undue pressure on an

Officer from a father or grandfather figure. Remember that inmates can learn a lot about Respect from such figures. *Never* forget that the Correctional Officer is the expert, that you are the guest, and that this can be a very hostile environment. *Never* forget that the staff and inmates *live* here--you do not.

Do what an Officer asks or tells you to do. *Never* argue. *Never* question an Officer in front of an inmate. Respect. Do not become overzealous or take up an inmate's cause with staff in public. Inmates are experts at pitting one person against another: a common ruse. If you have a question or concern, hold your emotions intact and report later (tell the Chaplain or your supervisor in a neutral, one-on-one environment-- Integrity).

Be friendly with officers, but do not be very distracting, especially around a group. Ask for help. If you are not sure what to do or not do, ask. Try to keep everything in the open. No one knows everything.

Avoid heated political/religious discussions, coarse jesting, siding against another employee, siding against another inmate, and engaging in criticism of the institution. Especially in front of an inmate/s.

6. MOVEMENT

You are only authorized to a specific area for a specific time period. Do not go into an unauthorized area. Make sure security knows where you are at all times. Be visible. Do not run. Try not to overreact to any situation. Do *not* be physical or horseplay with any staff or inmate.

Do not be overfriendly with staff or inmates. A handshake can be appropriate. A hug may be permissible with those who have a special relationship, like between those in a Mentor Program. *Remember*, too much physical friendliness is a *game* that *will* get someone hurt physically or emotionally--Respect and Integrity.

If you observe a fight or violence, yell out the word, "Fight!" as loud as you can. This is the only word you need to yell out; security will respond as quick as they are able. Yell out, "Fight!" again if necessary. Let security handle the crisis. Try to remain calm. Stay clear.

Do not intervene--even if you think you are strong enough. Try not to panic. If the commotion stops before security arrives, inform security of what you saw. Remain calm. See *Crisis Management*.

7. CONTRABAND

Do not bring to or take anything from an inmate. This includes a letter, a Christmas card, a stamp, money, a piece of gum, a photo, a religious tract, a piece of literature--anything.

Do not give or take anything, no matter how trivial. *Do not* mail anything for an inmate. Do not let someone else mail something to you to bring to an inmate. Said in another way: *nothing* changes hands between a volunteer and an inmate.

The Chaplain can give religious literature to an inmate, and occasionally the Chaplain authorizes a volunteer to give literature that has been pre-approved as in a seminar setting. But each piece needs approval each time. And if a mentor, who has a special relationship, has some literature pertinent to the discussions they have been having--anything of such a nature *must* be given to the inmate through the Chaplain.

The best rule of thumb: nothing changes hands between a volunteer and an inmate. The simple gift of a card or the gift of a single stamp can and most likely would result in termination of the visit and possible restriction from the unit for a period of time.

Of course, the possession of or exchange of any drugs, alcohol, or weapons could result in arrest and prosecution.

No medication is allowed on the unit without prior authorization. The volunteer has the responsibility to inform staff before bringing any medication on the unit: otherwise, such is contraband.

Nothing changes hands: this is the safest signpost to follow.

8. INMATE RELATIONS

[Language/Communication](#)

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LANGUAGE/COMMUNICATION

Listen. Respect.

Be natural. Do not engage in slang or attempt to be someone you are not. Integrity. Do not argue or force a point. Respect. Allow the inmate to be natural and disagree. No one is expected to violate their own conscience: volunteer or inmate. Do not give any message from one inmate to another inmate; encourage proper communication.

Do not engage in criticism of the institution, the staff, other races, other countries, or other religions. Do not forward any political cause.

Do not encourage confession or repentance on the *first* acquaintance. Such can easily be seen as a method to please.

Be human. Life can be rough for everyone, free or incarcerated. Losses are traumatic. Families have struggles.

Bills have to be paid. You and the inmate know this. Be human. It is OK to acknowledge your humanity.

But *avoid the sharing of personal problems* with an inmate. When an inmate becomes *your* counselor or confidant--*your major avenue* for stress reduction or other ego-lifting needs, it is time to move on. Make no mistake here. See the Chaplain or your supervisor and move on.

CORRESPONDENCE/TRANSACTIONS

Do not engage in any financial transactions, offer to send money to an inmate's trust fund, or promise to pay for anything--under any circumstance. In a Mentor Program especially, as Chaplain Solomon has often said, "if you start sending money your match will not know if he is relating to you for friendship or for money."

One should not correspond with, take phone calls for, or make arrangements with an inmate's family--with or without the inmate's knowledge. All such communication should be referred to the Chaplain's office.

Generally, a volunteer working closely with inmates should not be in any kind of regular contact with an inmate's family (See Clearance). Only those volunteers in a Mentor Program or aftercare ministry and who have a long-standing relationship with an inmate should attempt ministry with an inmate's family.

***EXTRA CAUTION* should be taken with any continuous relationship triangle among a unit volunteer, the inmate on that unit, and the inmate's family. Ideally, such should only take place with an inmate getting ready to parole: that is, within a structured aftercare ministry.**

And in an aftercare ministry, no family or inmate should be invited into your home. The risks are too great.

Outside of an aftercare or pre-release ministry, there should not be *any* continuous relationship triangle. If such is desired, then one should opt out of a unit's volunteer program. Consult with the Chaplain.

Do not give out your personal address. Generally, only mentors or pastoral visitors exchange mail. If correspondence is exchanged, use a Post Office Box or your church address. However, outside a mentor program, a regular volunteer should not have regular and intimate correspondence with an inmate on a frequently visited unit.

When an inmate asks for a specific favor--like contacting his family because of a family death, some material need, or whatever--instruct the inmate to see the Chaplain or fill out an I60 and mail it to the Chaplain.

THE RELATIONSHIP

Listen. Respect. Set limits. Be natural.

Requests will come. Learn to say, "No." Keep focused on your ministry and the relationship. Look at what is available: experiences, behaviors, feelings; the anxieties that foster these. Deep down there are faith issues that surround these. The Love, Integrity, and Respect you display will help him or her cope with these.

LISTEN. Generally, in a mentor relationship the inmate should have done most of the talking during the session. Listening is very closely tied to Respect.

Do be aware of con games. Being friendly and smooth is an art some prisoners have used to get them where they are. Do not believe everything that a prisoner tells you. In a Mentor Program, no matter what you hear, you should listen with Respect.

Whatever the dilemma presented--true or false--your presence, your listening, and your concern will help the inmate deal with the dilemma. If the presenting dilemma is true, you will help the prisoner cope; if false, there will be movement to another subject eventually. Regardless, such attention will *prove* you are there for him or her with an attempt in Integrity and Respect.

Do not make promises. If you do, keep them. If you do not, you should take the initiative to apologize and face up squarely. Integrity.

Avoid as much as possible general and broad claims: "I'll always be here for you," "I love you," "You can count on me," "Oh, I'll be back." The meaning of such claims are not very clear among good friends. How much *less* clear will they be between you and someone of a radically different background?

Claiming Integrity does not mean *anything* to an inmate--it does not mean *anything*. But if an inmate has a developing relationship with a person who *demonstrates* Integrity and Respect, such a relationship will change that inmate's life and point towards a living faith.

RELIGION

Avoid "preaching." Whatever that means today, try to avoid forcing your views in a strong-handed fashion. There is to be no proselytizing: that is, no inmate should be coerced, forced, or pressured into any religion. No volunteer is to criticize *any other religion*, including any inmate's religion or any volunteer's religion. That is not how Christ worked. And that is not how a religious volunteer will work on a TDCJ-ID unit. Respect.

An inmate has just as much a right to choose a religion as you do. Know the difference between presentation and

dissuasion. And for the most part, a healthy relationship should precede a presentation. Respect.

SEXUAL CONCERNS

Avoid talk about sex. Avoid jokes about sex.

Sex is volatile. Everyone knows this. Most volunteers do not have a problem with inmates. Nevertheless, it is an area of concern. Most of the concern focuses on those in continued or regular contact with inmates: most often between a male inmate and a female volunteer or employee, or vice versa. Yet every gender and age combination has been compromised.

Be aware of your own sexual responses and prejudices. Many subtleties are hard to define; and often the best and only indicator is one's inward "feeling" that this was "sexual": sometimes even hours or days after the fact. Even if you are a strong male among males or a confident female among females, you are not exempt.

Handle a romantic advance firmly and kindly, and handle it immediately. Do not allow a small touch here and there to go unnoticed. Be human, show your surprise. If an apology comes quickly, do not agree that it was nothing or a simple mistake. Was it *nothing* if it *bothered* you? And if you are a person of Integrity and Respect it should bother you, for sexual communication outside of therapy oftentimes compromises professionalism. Instead, be human, be honest; admit, "mistake or not, I was offended."

If you do not feel comfortable with your response, report the incident as soon as possible. Keep everything in the open.

Allusions or compliments of a sexual nature need a response. They cannot be ignored for very long or more will certainly come. "My, you have pretty legs" is very sexual. Only in some select and religiously pious circles could such a comment be bantered away as talk about the form and structure of a woman's legs. Normal people and *especially inmates* are talking in sexual terms, about "sexual legs," and such a comment needs to be treated as such. A stern glance or some kind of claiming language or behavior is called for, like, "that is not appropriate."

A romantic advance, in guise as a "joke," can be quelled by, "that is not why I am here," "you may have the freedom to discuss this with someone else, but you know that that is inappropriate for us," "that is an inappropriate comment," "I am not interested," "that is no concern of yours," or "I will report another comment like that" (and you had better follow through--Integrity).

Unless you are prepared do deal with sexual issues in a therapeutic manner, small talk about sex should be countered

with a direct response. "What do you think about sex?" needs a direct answer that affirms you know this is a sexual comment and that you do not appreciate this kind of approach to your emotions. For instance, "that is a topic I do not desire to discuss with you," "that is a topic you would do better to take up with the Chaplain, counselor, or psychiatric nurse," "that is not appropriate for us," "Inmate ___?___, I am surprised you would bring this up. This is really not appropriate for us to discuss. Do not bring it up anymore."

Volunteering or working in this environment will take courage. Obviously, most inmates have or have had trouble with control. Mature men and women know sex is very powerful and pleasing, yet they have a Respect for limits. To comment about sex is to toy around with sexual feelings: normal and mature men and women *know* this. *Predators* know this too, and make a game out of watching some persons "pretend" sexual feelings are not part of their dialogue or "joking" about sex. Unfortunately, some persons of extreme religious piety play this game the best: which excites the predators immensely and similarly undermines the victim's Integrity.

Sex is volatile. Everyone knows this. Pretending sex not volatile is basic denial. Be direct and firm. Do not play the game; you will not win. Report an impropriety over which you have doubts about how you may have handled it. Avoid talk about sex. Avoid jokes about sex.

9. RIOT/HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

Riots and especially hostage situations are very rare in TDCJ-ID. Usually, the staff is clued by experience, and at such times activity--including volunteers--are limited. Do what an Officer tells you.

Whenever a hostage situation results, do communicate with the other hostages as much as possible; this will strengthen everyone. Protect yourself, but do not provoke or resist. Listen. Plan for safety. Listen and pay attention to the captor's plans. Stay calm. Take deep breaths. *Do not act as a figure of authority!*

Do communicate with the captors. Allow a bond to develop if possible. This will be possible--*not by your talking--* but by your *listening*. The more the captor will talk to you--unprovoked, the better.

When possible, avoid helping the captors with anything. Do not arouse suspicions or hostility. Do not aggravate anger. Do not threaten. *Do not interfere* with the captor's plans or discussions. Do not offer suggestions. Do not show recognition if they are trying to hid their identity with a mask. If clothing is exchanged, do know that security is aware of this tactic.

If negotiation breaks down and you believe an assault is forthcoming, try to get into a corner or against the wall. If activity begins, get on the floor and cover your head. Protect yourself, as in a fetal position.

If gas is used, try to remain calm. Oftentimes a response to gas breeds a fear that raises anxiety and brings more fear. Try to remain calm. Try not to breath deeply, but *do breath*. And try not to rub your eyes, for this will increase irritation. Tears and sweat attract more gas. A towel may delay the effects; a wet towel will aggravate the effects. Try not to fight the effects; lower your head and try as much as possible to relax.

Gas immobilizes, expect this. And it will immobilize everyone, including the captors. The more you fight the affects of immobilization, the worse it will seem. *Expect severe* discomfort for awhile. Try to relax and endure. By this time the situation is almost under control. You are safe, and you will recover.

Identify yourself to security. But *do not* resist being apprehended and cuffed.

Do know that TDCJ-ID units are among the most organized and well-trained penal systems in the world. Whenever a riot or hostage situation evolves, the unit is fully mobilized and containment procedures are initiated immediately. Response is immediate and efficient. See *Crisis Management*.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

Every minister naturally keeps business confidential. That is expected and understood. However, being a religious volunteer does not mean one is expected to keep everything confidential without an understanding and a Respect for security requirements. Anytime an inmate threatens security as with suicide, danger to another inmate or staff, or with escape--confidentiality comes second. Otherwise, such a volunteer breaches the confidence placed in clearance.

Into the confines of confidentiality comes the issue of discretion in consultation. The importance of a confidential relationship needs no defending: the question comes with the priority of one.

No inmate should ever come to feel that his every word is subject to a broadcast. Do know: one should never share confidential information. Nevertheless, a religious volunteer is expected--indeed, *entrusted* to desire a healthy relationship above a confidential relationship in a "penitentiary."

To digress for a moment, this does not undercut the priority of a confidentiality. If you are committed to the

individual, regardless of his or her health--as in a marriage and some family codes (as in the inmate code)--then you do breach the integrity of the relationship with an unapproved consultation.

If you are committed to a healthy "relationship" *first*--as in a "mentor" program--then consultation with discretion becomes an asset to the "relationship." When a good relationship is established and a difficult issue arises, getting permission (by either party) to share that issue is preferred. Regardless, in a good mentor program, it should be understood by all parties that whatever is shared is subject to consultation with the unit Chaplain or other qualified professional (whoever is sharing).

Bear in mind, in a prison one does comprise Integrity when "confidentiality" takes absolute precedent over a healthy "relationship." Said in another way, you do not want to become an inmate's ally against the system. You want to become his/her ally in facing the world with Integrity and Respect, as well as with all of the other virtues he/she will gain in a *healthy* relationship with you.

PART ONE: MINISTERING

1. MINISTRY: Meeting Needs
2. MINISTRY: A Team Effort
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PART TWO: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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SOURCES

PART TWO: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

As an aid in close relationships, the following is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, they are sign posts on the road of life, many of which most volunteers have encountered under different titles.

11. DIFFICULT ISSUES

What is a difficult issue? This is hard to answer. Difficult issues are elusive and will vary from person to person. This underscores the value of a good mentor/volunteer program, for every mentor/volunteer will for the most part bring some strengths that are uniquely their own.

If one can answer yes to any of the following questions, then one might consider consultation regarding the issue involved or one might consider this a signal a time for change in conversation (or changing matches). Are you afraid of your

match or his reactions? Did fear seem to grasp for no particular reason? Did you feel unusually tired or bored or distracted? Did you seem out of control of your own emotions for a while, as though you were overreacting or angry or defensive or worried? Did you find yourself with an unusual desire to take this inmate home and tuck him, literally or figuratively? Are you sexually attracted/distracted? Do you seem in control most of the time?

Does your match seem in control most of the time? Can your match manipulate your emotions by a simple change in his/her emotions, like quickly becoming offended or tearful? Do you feel bound, tied down, trapped? Do you feel afraid to say, "no," or to disagree? Do you feel the need to hide?

Be aware that two sets of personalities are involved. Getting side-tracked into deep psychological issues will not help the Respect or Integrity of your relationship. In other words, trying to figure out all of the problems is not nearly as important and healthy as being a good friend with a solid faith--being a mentor. Avoid those hard to control areas of vulnerability. A good relationship should "feel" somewhat free. By staying attuned to faith issues and to listening with an honest and sincere heart, your faith and stability will itself help the inmate deal with his/her issues of faith and stability. What your religion means to you will help him/her discern where to go in his/her religion; subsequently, religion will work her craft, and God will move.

It is far better to stop dealing with a difficult issue outside of one's ability, than to continue without consultation. And if the issue itself is not crucial, your refusal to deal with that issue will increase your Integrity and Respect in the maintenance of confidentiality. And in a certain sense such will free the person involved to do their own internal work of faith.

12. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Gerald Caplan divides the crisis state into four phases. In phase one, a hazard is faced, and there follows a rise in anxiety and disorganization that makes heavy demands on a person's regular coping skills and resources. Phase two involves a failure of these regular coping mechanisms while the hazard continues. Phase three involves an increase in tension where additional internal and external resources are mobilized. In this phase, the problem "may abate in intensity, may be defined in different ways, or certain goals may be given up as unattainable." If these mechanisms fail, phase four is entered and major disorganization in the individual results.

Wilbur Morley lists four level of crisis intervention: 1) connecting a person with a resource which would remove the hazard or lessen its intensity; 2) listening, non-threatening

manner, allowing person to speak in detail, and being non-judgmental; 3) involving a combination of crisis understanding, support, and kinds of approaches for specific crises like death; 4) involves all three plus a knowledge of personality theory, psychodynamics and how the crisis is related to the individual's long-term personality dynamics.

The Suicide Prevention & Crisis Intervention Program, of the MHMR Services for the Concho Valley, San Angelo, Texas, has some suggestions and lists four major steps involved in crisis communication. One should be relaxed and calm. Pay close attention. Avoid talking down to the person or take them flippantly. Avoid arguing, bribing, and threatening. Also avoid taking full responsibility or fixing the whole problem for him or her. Avoid questions denying the reality of the crisis: like, "everything will be all right." Avoid debating. Be non-judgmental. Attempt to develop trust.

1. *Making contact.* Listen and attend carefully. Get the facts and ask identifying questions. Identify an understanding of feelings. Check understanding. Respond to the person by stating what you hear him saying and how you think he might be feeling.

2. *Discovering the source of distress.* Restate or paraphrase feelings and their source. Ask if you are correct. Use open-ended questions. Find the precipitating event. What is different now, today. Nail down the "trigger" for the stress: Is this the problem, why you are here, or why you called. Yet avoid "why" questions, because this forces justification. Is there more than one event causing stress. Encourage talk. How is the person viewing the stress--but do not ask: mental anguish, interpersonal (another involved), physical? Detect if the person has loss control (as with drugs) or loss of a dependency (as with a death). See if it is a new situation like a promotion involving a frightening challenge.

3. *Discuss options.* None? There are always choices. Give some options. See if the person has a plan for suicide (the more specific the plan, the greater the risk). What do you want? What have you tried? Keep the person talking. Avoid giving advice: this steal responsibility. If information is needed, give this. Help person to choose among options. Help empower. "What are you willing to do?" Remove source? Accept situation? Do something else?

4. *Making a plan of action.* Institute a verbal contract. Rehash the territory you have just covered. Discuss pros and cons of each option. Help the person decide on an option. What will be done? How will it be done? When will it be done? "If things get bad again, will you call so and so?"

1. Drama of shock: denial vs. panic
2. Drama of emotions: catharsis vs. depression
3. Drama of negotiation: bargaining vs. selling out
4. Drama of cognition: realistic hope vs. despair
5. Drama of commitment: acceptance vs. resignation
6. Drama of completion: fulfillment vs. forlornness

In the process of helping a person work through their grief, he encourages helpers to be present in empathy, get a significant other, encourage the expression of feeling, avoid sedatives and stay with the pain (unless a they become a danger to themselves or others), not do things for them they can do for themselves, generalize and say things about normality in grief, avoid abstract religious ideas for simple comfort (that denies the significance of loss), use appropriate scripture and prayer, and caution about immediate decisions.

14. ANXIETY

A crisis or loss is often a circumstance causing major anxiety. Rollo May's *The Meaning of Anxiety* (Washington Square Press: New York, 1977) is a classic and set the pace for a secular and public understanding of anxiety. After a lengthy discussion in chapter 7, "Synthesis of Theories of Anxiety," he gives his definition.

Anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality.

The threat, thus, in anxiety is not necessarily more intense than fear. Rather, it attacks us on a deeper level. The threat must be to something in the "core" or "essence" of the personality. My self-esteem, my experience or myself as a person, my feeling of being of worth--all these are imperfect descriptions of what is threatened. . . . [what is] essential to his existence . . . his security as a person . . . *this security pattern itself is threatened.*

In the light of this definition, May gives us chapter 11, "Methods of Dealing with Anxiety," presented in summary below.

[As it cannot be avoided, management focuses on] reducing the anxiety to normal levels, and then to use this normal anxiety as stimulation to increase one's awareness, vigilance, zest for living.

[There are two primary processes for developing management of anxiety] One is *an expansion of awareness*: the person sees what value is threatened, and becomes aware of the conflicts between his goals and how these conflicts developed. The second is *re-education*: the person restructures his goals,

makes a choice of values responsibly and realistically. . . . [We must be mindful that these are] never achieved perfectly. Courage consists not of the absence of fear and anxiety but of the capacity to move ahead even though one is afraid. . . .

A person is subjectively prepared to confront unavoidable anxiety constructively when he is convinced (consciously or unconsciously) that the values to be gained in moving ahead are greater than those to be gained by escape. . . . anxiety arises when the values the individual identifies with his existence are threatened. Let us picture anxiety as resulting from a conflict between the threat on the one hand and the values the person identifies with his existence on the other.

In the long run, the confronting of normal anxiety depends on what one regards as of value in himself and his existence.

The system of value on the basis of which we confront normal anxiety can be called, as Fromm does call it, our 'frame of orientation and devotion.' From the theological viewpoint, Paul Tillich expressed this valuing in his term, 'ultimate concern.'

[The question towards resolution, therefore, becomes] Which of these formulations of value will serve a given individual most constructively as a basis for confronting anxiety? Which [formulation], in other words, will release the individual's capacities and permit greater expansion in the development of his own powers as well as enhancement of his relation with other human beings?

As religion enters as mankind's most valued source of values, ministry in prison moves into the tender depths of the soul. With Integrity and Respect, we will not trample broken reeds. As a person is able to re-connect or connect with a living Faith, is shown an honest Hope, and is able obtain a genuine Love--so will they face their inner conflicts more sincerely. God will work, and religion will nurture change of core values.

15. THE HELPING PROCESS

Gerard Egan, in *Exercises in Helping Skills*, gives three stages with three steps in each stage of the helping process that can be of immense value in a long-term relationship.

STAGE I: EXPLORING THE PRESENT SCENARIO

An inmate can neither manage problem situations nor develop unused opportunities unless they identify and understand them. Exploration and clarification of problems and opportunities take place in Stage I. This stage deals with the current state of affairs, that is, the problem situations or unused opportunities which prompt inmates to come for help.

1. *Helping inmates tell their stories.* They need to tell their stories. Some do so easily, others with a great deal of difficulty. You need to develop a set of *attitudes* and of *communication skills* that will enable you to help inmates reveal problems in living and unused potential. This means helping inmates find out what's going wrong *and* what's going right in their lives. Successful assessment helps inmates identify both problems and resources.

2. *Helping inmates focus on significant concerns.* This means helping inmates *identify* the particular concern or concerns they want to deal with and explore and clarify these concerns. Effective counselors help inmates work on *high-leverage* issues, that is issues that will make a difference in inmates' lives. They also help inmates spell out problem situations in terms of *specific* experiences, behaviors, and feelings.

3. *Helping inmates develop new perspectives.* This means helping inmates manage *blind* spots, that is, helping them see themselves, their concerns, and the context of their concerns more objectively. This enables inmates to see more clearly not only their problems and unused opportunities, but also in ways in which they want their lives to be different.

STAGE II: DEVELOPING A PREFERRED SCENARIO

Once inmates understand either problem situations or opportunities for development more clearly, they may need help in determining what they would like to see different. They need to develop a preferred scenario, that is, a picture of a better future. For instance, an inmate with poor relationships with his cellie or his wife can be helped to picture the kinds of relationships that are possible.

1. *Constructing a new scenario.* Since the current state of affairs is unacceptable, the inmate needs to be helped to create a vision of a new state of affairs. In family counseling, the new scenario might be, in generic terms, a better family. Some of the possible elements of this better family could be greater mutual Respect, fewer fights, more effectively managed conflicts, the surrendering of grudges, the elimination of extramarital encounters, and so forth. The new scenarios or scenario elements constitute possible *goals* for the inmate.

2. *Evaluating the new scenario.* Goals, if they are to be translated into action, need to be clear, specific, realistic, adequately related to the problem situation, in keeping with the inmate's values, and capable of being accomplished within a reasonable time frame. Many inmates need help in establishing goals or outcomes with the characteristics.

3. *Choosing goals and assuring commitment.* Some inmates need help in making a final choice of goals and in committing themselves to them. While helpers are not responsible for their inmates' sense of commitment, they can help them in their search for *incentives* for commitment.

STAGE III: THE PREFERRED SCENARIO ON LINE

Ultimately, inmates must act in order to manage their problems in living and develop unused potential. The new scenario expressed in specific and realistic goals indicate *what* the *inmate* wants to achieve. But the inmate may need help in determining *how* he or she is to achieve these goals.

1. *Developing strategies for action.* You can help inmates discover a variety of ways and means of accomplishing their goals. Often inmates fail to use their imagination; they see only one way of accomplishing a goal.

2. *Formulating a plan.* Once inmates are helped to choose strategies that *best fit* their style, resources, and environment, they need to assemble these strategies into a *plan*. A plan indicates precisely what the inmate is to do and when.

3. *Action: The implementation of the plan.* Inmates often need both support and challenge from helpers to implement plans. Counselors can also help inmates monitor their progress.

A RELATIONSHIP APPROACH TO HELPING

Helping usually does not take place in a step-by-step linear fashion. Effective helpers start wherever there is a need. For instance, if a inmate needs support and challenge to commit himself or herself to realistic goals that have already been chosen, then the counselor tries to be helpful at this point. The nine steps of the helping model are ways of *being with* inmates in their attempts to manage problems in living and to develop unused potential. *Needs* and not the logic of the helping model should determine your interactions with them.

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PART ONE: MINISTERING

- 1. MINISTRY: Meeting Needs**
- 2. MINISTRY: A Team Effort**
- 3. A SHORT COURSE**
- 4. CLEARANCE**
- 5. STAFF RELATIONS**
- 6. MOVEMENT**
- 7. CONTRABAND**
- 8. INMATE RELATIONS**

9. RIOT/HOSTAGE SITUATIONS

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PART TWO: CRISIS MANAGEMENT

11. DIFFICULT ISSUES

12. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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