

Words to live by...

Tomorrow is today

The work you do today is the work that will provide you a better tomorrow.

You made a mistake, you are not a mistake

Accept your past mistakes while finding self-worth in the present. This will help you deal with the attitudes of others who may find it difficult to believe that you are changing and engaging in more positive behaviors and activities.

Break through barriers

Many obstacles lie in your way as you return home. Don't let these obstacles derail you in your journey. You have the power and information to overcome barriers to housing, employment, healthcare, and staying sober.

Exercise

Exercise physically, mentally and spiritually. Exercise your rights to housing, to health care, and to anything else that you need. Exercise your right to be your best advocate. Exercise your ability to continually inspire yourself and motivate yourself during your return home.

Live your best life with power

Reclaim your power and yourself. Despite the initial setbacks you face as you return home, you owe it to yourself to live each day as fully as possible, without placing limits on yourself.

Move forward and reach back

As you move forward in your return home, give back to other incarcerated or formerly incarcerated women. The valuable lessons you learn during reentry must be passed on to others to help ensure your survival and success, as well as the survival and success of another woman.

RECONNECT is a program of the Women in Prison Project at the Correctional Association of New York. The Correctional Association is a non-profit organization committed to reforming the criminal justice system in New York State.

The Women in Prison Project is dedicated to creating a criminal justice system that addresses women's specific needs and that treats people, their families and their communities with fairness, dignity and respect. Our goals are to:

- Stop the misguided use of prison as a response to social and economic issues facing women and expand community-based, gender-specific alternative to incarceration programs;
- Ensure that the needs of women are addressed before, during and after incarceration;
- Improve conditions of confinement in women's correctional facilities;
- Ensure that incarcerated mothers can maintain bonds with their children and work toward reunification during incarceration and after release;
- Remove barriers to women's re-entry and expand programs that help women make a safe and productive return to their communities;
- Enable formerly incarcerated women to play a leading role in advocating for changes in criminal justice policies that directly affect their lives.

If you would like more information about ReConnect, the Women in Prison Project, or the Correctional Association of New York, call (212) 254-5700 or go to www.correctionalassociation.org.



your rights
your voice
your power

your rights

Build Skills

RECONNECT is a training program that supports women returning home from prison or jail by providing them with information and tools to strengthen their ability to effectively advocate for themselves and others.

Through ReConnect, women build the core skills they need to successfully navigate the barriers they face when they return home from prison or jail.

Women also learn how to use their voice and personal experience to change the laws and policies that negatively affect them and other women involved in the criminal justice system.

The ReConnect sessions are small so that everyone can actively participate. Women are provided with metro cards to help them attend the training sessions. Participants who complete the training cycle are awarded a certificate and modest stipend.



your voice

Achieve Goals

I knew I had a voice, but I didn't know how to use it. Now, I use it for me and for all those women who are locked up who can't do it on their own.

ReConnect women use their knowledge and skills to achieve their personal goals, support their peers, and change the criminal justice system. Here are some examples of what ReConnect women are doing in the community.

- Serving as mentors and peer leaders.
- Educating community groups about issues affecting women in prison and jail.
- Working to help women find supportive services in the first hours and days after their release from prison or jail.
- Testifying at public forums on issues like conditions in jail and the impact of trauma on women.
- Speaking to students about the impact of incarceration and substance abuse on women.
- Working in coalitions, like the Coalition for Women Prisoners, to make sure that New York's criminal justice system respects the true needs and rights of women.

your power

Make Change

Every woman who participates in ReConnect has the potential to succeed in reaching her personal goals, becoming a leader in her own life, and working with others to change the criminal justice system.

ReConnect links you to people in the community who can support you and help you tap into your power and use it in a new way so that you can stay strong in your return home. Whether it is finding a job, looking for housing, cleaning up your credit, or fighting for your parental rights, ReConnect has trainers and mentors to help you learn how to get what you need and effectively advocate for yourself and others.

In ReConnect, we all learn from each other. We learn to help people see who we really are, rather than who they think we are because we have been to prison or jail. In ReConnect, we work together to build and support each other.

ReConnect also helps us as women to take our personal power to the next level. We learn how to speak out about our experiences in prison and jail; how to talk to our elected officials; and how to get the community involved in changing the systems that affect us. We believe that we are the best people to lead the fight for change in the criminal justice system because we have been there and know what needs to be improved to make things better for women, our families and our communities.

If you want to be your best advocate, to stay strong in your return home, and to create a better future for yourself and others, ReConnect can be the best 36 hours that you give yourself.