

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN AN ADULT PRISON OR JUVENILE FACILITY

***NOTE:** This training guide is a compilation of the experience and suggestions of the Prison Creative Arts Project from our more than 20 years of facilitating this work in prisons, juvenile facilities and high schools. It should be taken as recommendations based in experience. Local teams of facilitators are encouraged to make the work their own, including the training and preparation of future facilitators. Your workshops will come to resemble what you shape them into.*

- 1. Always be on time.** Leave with enough time to arrive a half hour before your session starts. Timeliness is very important; workshops can be shut down if facilitators are consistently late. When the facilitators are late, the security people face the dilemma of not knowing whether to call the prisoners out or whether to leave them in the room alone if they have already been called out.
- 2. Always bring your driver's license** to the prison or to any juvenile facility. If you do not have your driver's license (or passport) at the prison, no matter how many times you have been there and no matter how well the staff knows you, they will have to turn you away.
- 3. Dress conservatively.** Hair should be pulled back. Jeans are fine, if they are without holes. Even during performances facilitators should be conscious of what they are wearing.

We encourage you to wear:

- LOOSE conservative clothing (no tight/low-cut tops, no sagging pants, no skirts or shorts)
- Close-toed shoes **and** socks
- Bra/Undergarments (women without bras have been prevented from entering the prison and have been unable to do their workshop)

Please DO NOT wear:

- Clothing containing any inappropriate slogans (i.e. advertising cigarettes or alcohol) or subject matter (i.e. political statements; profanity).
- Large or flashy jewelry (no long earrings, no big belt buckles, no large pendants) or excessive makeup. All big jewelry must be removed to pass through the metal detector, thus it is better to leave it at home or in the car.
- Hats or bandanas.
- Clothes with holes in them. Clothes that show your stomach or lower back (check this by stretching in front of the mirror). Tight clothing.
- Skirts (regardless of length), shorts, sandals

- 4. Leave all valuables in your car trunk or in a locker in the prison lobby.** Take into the facility only your driver's license, pen, notepad and/or workshop materials. Your pockets must be empty of change, pencils, lighters, etc. **And no cell phones ever!**
- 5. Your car, alcohol and drugs.** Lock your car. Do not have alcohol and/or drugs in your car or trunk. Do not bring alcohol and/or drugs into the facility **ever.**
- 6. Materials**
 - *For prisons:* Make sure that you have a signed manifest for all materials you are bringing into the site **and double check** that you bring out everything you brought in, unless the manifest

states you are leaving something with participants. Always manifest your entire list of supplies or props, even if the officer in the bubble does not require it.

- *For juvenile sites:* Ask site liaison for permission to bring in materials.
- *For high schools:* If you have any sense you might be bringing in something problematic, call and ask the teacher.

7. Photographs/Video

Do not take photographs of the prison or juvenile site unless you have secured permission. Your doing so at a prison is considered a security risk, and your workshop or portfolio session may be closed. You will not be allowed to bring a camera into a prison. At juvenile facilities, we are generally not allowed to take photographs, because of identity protection. When a youth leaves such a facility, it is off their record. There are some exceptions at some places, for reasons unknown. Make sure to check with your liaison. Generally you will not be allowed to videotape juvenile facility performances. In recent years some prisons have allowed filming of performances.

8. Escort

Make sure you have an escort to cross the prison yard. If you are not given one, ask for one. This is not always necessary in juvenile facilities, though this is something you'll want to speak to your liaison about at your site orientation.