

*"My son is a lovely person but things have gone wrong since he got caught up in drugs, he really lost his way, his brother doesn't want anything to do with him, now he's gone to jail, I feel caught in the middle because I love both my boys."*

*"I was nervous about talking to a stranger on the phone but it was such a relief to talk to someone who understood and was non-judgmental about my husband."*

## Re-negotiating Relationships Helpline 03 9573 1770

The Helpline is confidential

SHARC Family Drug Help (program helpline)  
SHARC (Self Help Addiction Resource Centre)  
SHARC Drug and Alcohol Family Support Service

(03) 9573 1770  
(03) 9573 1700  
(03) 9573 1754



For families re-negotiating relationships affected by alcohol, drug use and imprisonment.



## Re-negotiating Relationships **Resource Kit**

Helpline 03 9573 1770



A program for families re-negotiating relationships

affected by alcohol, drug use and imprisonment.

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## The experience of having a family member in prison

The experience of having a family member in prison can be devastating for the family, whether it's the first or tenth time. You may be coping with a range of feelings such as **grief, loss, anger, loneliness, confusion** and **worry** about your family member's welfare and safety.

*"I love him, but how could he do this to our family."*

*"I don't know how to tell the kids."*

*"How can I afford to visit her?"*

If the family member in jail was the sole income earner in the family, you may experience financial hardship and difficulties in raising children without support from your partner.

*"I can't afford to keep the house now that he's inside."*

Parents' feelings may fluctuate between relief, guilt and worry when a family member is in prison.

*"I feel bad for thinking I'm glad she got caught, but at least I know she's safe."*

Resources utilised within this booklet have been accessed through:

- the Department of Justice
- Family Drug Help
- VACRO

Special thanks to our Peer Support Volunteers at Family Drug Help who have shared their personal experiences within this booklet



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## Family Drug Help

Family Drug Help is a Victorian state-wide service that supports families experiencing the effects of problematic drug and alcohol use with:

- Peer based programs.
- Telephone helplines.
- Support groups and education programs.

*“Family Drug Help gave me confidence to help me get through this.”*

*“Family Drug Help have a lot of knowledge, practical skills and understanding.”*

The Department of Justice has recently provided further funding for a program of support for families who have members of their family incarcerated as a consequence of drug related crimes.

This program is an extension of Family Drug Help existing services.

The programs specifically implemented:

- A helpline whereby calls are answered by trained volunteers, who have been through the experience of having a family member imprisoned.
- Six week education program that explores strategies for families to cope, steps to change and tools to forge positive outcomes.
- Referrals to prison related services (information, family liaison worker, individual counselling and support for families, pre and post release support, financial and legal advice).

Re-negotiating Relationships Helpline: **03 9573 1770**

## The Re-negotiating Relationships family program provides:

- Support and assistance for family members.
- Information about the Victorian criminal justice system.
- Information about prisons.
- Referral to specific support services.
- A special Helpline for families with members who are involved with the justice system.
- Counselling via a call back service at a time suitable to you, including after hours.
- Access to Family Drug Help’s network of 25 state-wide family support groups.
- A 6 week education program for family members.
- A quarterly family newsletter.
- Confidentiality.

*“I didn’t know who to ask about how to see my son.”*



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## Frequently asked questions

### Who do I contact to find out which jail my family member is in?

Corrections Victoria 03 8684 6600 – Information inquiries line

### Visiting

- Prior to visiting, family members need to be listed on a visitor list for the person you are visiting. Check with Corrections Inquiries on 03 8684 6600.
- There's a schedule of 'Prison visiting times' for each individual prison.
- You or your property (including your car) may be searched and if you refuse, you may have a non-contact visit, or be refused a visit.

### What identification do I need?

You are required to provide 100 points and if you have any queries contact the prison directly. You can find the phone number via the internet at [www.justice.vic.gov.au](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au) select the 'Prisons' tab on the left or phone Telstra on 1223.

**100 points:** Current driver's licence, passport, police ID etc.

**50 points:** Birth certificate, marriage certificate etc.

**25 points:** Medicare Card, Bank book etc.

### What's a CRN number?

*Corrections Reference Number* is an identification number given to a person who has been in prison or convicted of an offence or has been on an *Intensive Corrections Order* (ICO) or a *Community Based Order* (CBO). A person with a CRN who wishes to visit a prison needs to seek the permission of the Governor of that prison, and provide their CRN number when making the request.

### Can family members bring money for people in prison?

- Yes, but with guidelines so it is important that you check with the prison.

### Will the prison provide all the clothes?

- People in remand can wear their own clothes.
- After sentencing, people are issued with prison clothes.
- Additional clothing can be requested but conditions may apply.

### Can I take food and toiletries?

- No, it is not permitted.
- People in prison are provided with 3 meals a day.
- Toiletries can be purchased within the prison.

### Does my family member have to cancel their Centrelink payment?

- Yes, they do.
- People in prison are not eligible for Centrelink payments.
- People in prison should contact the Centrelink Liaison Officer within the prison to avoid any over-payments.

### Will the prison phone me when my family member is transferred to another prison?

- No, they will not.

### How do I find out where my family member has been transferred?

- Phone Corrections Victoria on (03) 8684 6600.

*(NB. Information will only be provided for people listed on the prisoners visiting list)*



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### Can I phone and speak to my family member in prison?

- No, you cannot.
- You will need to organise dates and times for them to call you, after you have been listed on their outgoing call list.

### What can I do if there's an emergency in our family?

If a serious family issue, ie: death, serious illness, you can:

- Contact the prison and request your urgent message to be passed onto the prisoner. You may be transferred to the Operations Manager who will confirm the emergency and ensure it is passed onto your family member.

### Can I send a letter to my family member in prison?

- Yes, you can.
- Mail is screened by prison staff.

### Can I send an email?

- No, you cannot.
- Prisoners do not have access to computers or internet services.

## Referrals

### State-wide Support Services

Family Drug Help	<a href="http://www.familyhelp@sharc.org.au">www.familyhelp@sharc.org.au</a>	(03) 9573 1770
VACRO	<a href="http://www.vacro.org.au">www.vacro.org.au</a>	(03) 9602 1366

### State-wide Services

Centrelink		13 10 21
Court Network	<a href="http://www.courtnetwork.com.au">www.courtnetwork.com.au</a>	1800 681 614
Financial and Consumer Rights Council		1800 134 139
Legal Aid	<a href="http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au">www.legalaid.vic.gov.au</a>	1800 677 402
Lifeline	<a href="http://www.wesley.org.au/programs/lifeline">www.wesley.org.au/programs/lifeline</a>	13 11 14

