**8 Basic Rules - Volunteer Orientation**

**Belknap County DOC**

When working with inmates at this facility, the following rules will be followed. To do otherwise compromises the integrity of both the subject material to be shared and of the volunteer. Additionally, the security of staff, inmates and volunteers can be put at risk carelessly or unwittingly.

1. **DO NOT TAKE ANYTHING IN OR OUT OF THE FACILITY**

This includes any mail or messages. Any program materials must be cleared through staff.

1. **DO NOT MAKE BUSINESS DEALS WITH INMATES**

Volunteers should not become involved with inmates in any personal way. Care should be taken to not reveal personal information.

1. **DO NOT ASK ABOUT THE CRIME COMMITTED BY THE INMATE**

Keep focused on the program you are teaching or presenting. Inmates have attorneys or other professionals to deal with the criminal aspects of their lives. Do not engage in conversation with them having to do with their criminal charges.

1. **DO NOT MAKE PROMISES YOU CANNOT KEEP**

You can make a difference in an inmate’s life by bringing a well prepared program, by having genuine enthusiasm for your message and being consistent in appearing when scheduled. You are role models. Inmates must ultimately learn to handle life’s problems responsibly – not depending on others to “fix” things for them.

1. **DO NOT MAKE PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Hugs are never appropriate or acceptable. Handshakes - only when initiated by the inmate. Do not seek or encourage physical contact of any kind and be aware of your personal space and the personal space of the inmate.

1. **DO NOT TAKE SIDES AGAINST AUTHORITIES**

Never reinforce negative comments or attitudes of inmates towards authority. We do not want to encourage the “us” against “them” mentality.

1. **DO NOT HAVE SECRETS OR CONFIDENCES WITH INMATES**

Unless you are here in the capacity of a mental health counselor, you will not have any “secrets” or confidences with inmates. AND you will report any mention of an intent to harm self, or others.

1. **WHEN IN DOUBT – ASK**

Make no assumptions about inmate conduct, inmate behaviors, or rules or protocol within the facility. Clarify any matters that you may be uncertain about with a Correctional Officer, Jail Administration, or Programs Director. And if you witness anything, see anything or hear anything that seems out of place or out of the ordinary, please let a staff member know.