

Do not be nervous when answering questions. You've already done the time. The psych isn't there to judge you. Be honest, confident but not cocky. Do not act as though you are smarter than the psych, always make eye contact, do not interrupt and listen well so you can provide the best answers. **Be sure to give more than just yes and no answers.** The psych really wants to hear about you. Never be confrontational with any psych.

Always take **responsibility** for your actions and every part of your crime and even those issues that led up to your crime and thereafter. You must take responsibility for your co-defendants actions, if you had one. Never speak on what you did not do or who made you do what (this is called minimizing-never do this), unless you are asked about it. Your concentration should be on what you did. Do not blame another soul for your crime. Never make yourself out to be the victim.

Always comment and stick to what is on record. The board goes by the recommendation of the psychologist report, your probation report and the appellate court decision, if your case was appealed. If not they will also go by the decision rendered at the conclusion of your trial. **It is very crucial that you stick to the script and not deviate from the facts of your crime.**

If you do so, the commissioners at your board hearing and the psych will label that as **minimizing** your role in your crime, which translate to you not taking full responsibility for your actions and until you change this they will not grant you a parole date.

**If a weapon was used in the commission of your crime**, never say you did not mean to stab the person or the gun went off by accident when we all know weapons do not kill people, people kill people. Instead, stick to the facts and give the panel the real reason behind your actions. **This is a must.**

**Insight:** One of the most important things you must have is insight into your life and your crime, why you acted the way you did, why you committed your crime, what gave you the right to commit your crime and who you are today. Without placing blame, if there was some inappropriate behavior you learned, alcohol or drugs were involved, make that known. You may even want to take it all the way back to the steps you took leading up to your crime. **You must stick to the script or you will be hit with the**

**whip...denial of parole.**

**You must know there is a solution for every problem.** You must know exactly what type of person you were in your past and the type of person you are working towards being, know what you want out of life.

Even though it may seem difficult, you must find a way to put together a parole plan packet, including everything listed in this guide; employment offer(s) residence, etc. not only the psych but the board also want to know that you will have a stable residence and employment that will keep you out of trouble before they grant you a parole date. Having realistic **parole plans** are a true factor in the decision making to grant you parole so, you must do all you can to put together realistic plans.

When family, friends, neighbors, etc, write a support letter on your behalf, you must guide them on how it should be done. These letters can be crucial to your parole plans; as they suggest a history of a loving family and friends who will support you upon your release in whatever manner they can. Ensure they include the following in their support letter: **their personal relationship to you, how long they have known you, the positive changes they see in you, how often the two of you keep in touch, and what, if any, support they are willing to provide to you: the use of a vehicle, assistance in finding employment, mentor, etc.** The more precise the support letters the better. Make sure it is not a simple letter only saying, he's my brother and I love him. That is not a believable support letter. There is no real feeling in it.

Do not accept a place in a transitional home when your job offer is located in a different county. This shows poor planning on your behalf. *I made this mistake* because I was not thinking. You have to think everything out, including what you will do after the one year re-entry home residency runs out (most re-entry homes are only for one year) to what you will do if your job offer falls through.

Even though some of the guys around you may hold pertinent information about re-entry homes, may only share it with one or two other individuals or perhaps, a small circle of individuals; a circle you may not be a part of, you must gain that information from some one. Your freedom may depend on it. Not having solid or realistic parole

plans has proven to be a reason for the parole board commissioners to deny an individual a parole date. So, you must make it a point to network and gain addresses to re-entry residences you **should** write to for an acceptance letter upon your release.

If you have job offers it would be a good idea to have the potential employer to type that offer using a company letterhead. They should add the following: **your position, duties, rate of pay, full or part-time, and benefits.** The parole Board Commissioners and the Psyche would like to see more independence from the parolees and less dependence on the parole department when it comes to income, housing and health benefits.

Say you have family who is willing to allow you to live with them upon your release. Maybe you have a girlfriend or a wife and you feel you are all set in the residence department, etc; no re-entry residence assistance needed, right? **Wrong!**

Neither the psyche nor the Commissioners that will preside over your parole hearing will see it this way; your way. They will not stop you from going to your girlfriend, mom, or wife's house but they will attempt to dissuade you.

**They will reason against such a move simply because of those small minor facts that you overlooked. Not only have you been locked up for many years; decades perhaps, in a controlled environment but perhaps you were a teenager when you were arrested and therefore, you have never taken on the responsibility of having your own place or paying bills, other than the *beeper* bill you handed the money over to your mom, sister or girlfriend to pay for you.**

**Another reason they will be against such a move is, a re-entry residence will be very beneficial to an individual who has been out of society's circulation for years.**

When you move in with another individual whether it is your girlfriend, wife or mom, there is that immediate financial burden you will bring just by your appearance; where a re-entry residence can give you that hands on experience you will need to successfully transition into society, such as how to use public transportation, getting an I.D/license, saving money, opening a savings account, etc. maybe your love ones do not have time for any of this. Why not go equipped?

When contacting any transitional residence, be sure to get a copy of your classification status record, through your institutional records department. This record contains your arrest history. Some transitional residences require you to send them a copy of this form.

This form will be used to check your record for sex offenses and or any arson before they offer their assistance, so it is crucial that you be honest so that you will receive the assistance you seek.

Always use your, real, full name. No alias. Age, Sentence, Parole Board hearing, groups you attended, Certificate(s) of completion, Education, etc.

The more you show you are trying to help your self, the more assistance you will receive. It is okay to mention your resume. Most reentry homes offer employment or assistance in locating employment.

List any employment experience you have and a short description of who you are as a person, what your goals are

Be sure, when applying for transitional assistance that you list any medication you may take. You do not want to accept an offer in a place where you may need medical assistance and it may not be provided for you.

Good luck and good hunting. Locating a reentry residence can be exhausting and stressful, especially doing so from the inside, but a task that must be taken on by you.