

## **Wyoming Department of Corrections GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS**

- Be prepared to invest your time.
- Live up to your commitment.
- Be patient; miracles don't happen overnight.
- Hear what is being said. It's easy to talk, but the real art is listening.
- Respect others; it forms a basis for positive relationships.
- Be a good role model. Lead by example.
- Be prepared to work with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Be an image builder. Many offenders have low self-esteem. Each person has value and is important.
- Never force your opinions on others. Help others acquire the ability to make the right choices.
- Do not engage in gossip.
- Never show preferential treatment. Everyone must follow the rules and regulations of an institution.
- Keep your word. Do not make promises that you can't keep. Irresponsible behavior communicates bad faith on your part.
- Be objective and do not be tempted to take sides.
- Do not let your emotions put you at odds with an institution or with an inmate.
- Follow the dress code of the facility in which you are volunteering.
- Inform your program coordinator of a family relationship or friendship that you have with an inmate.
- Avoid potential conflicts.
- Report any problems that arise.
- Do not engage in activities that could compromise your integrity or effectiveness as a volunteer.
- Refrain from using inappropriate signs of affection; they may be misinterpreted.
- Learn to discern. Listening does not mean that you have to believe everything you hear.
- Check the facts. Do not be manipulated.
- Do not probe into an inmate's criminal history. Respect an inmate's privacy.
- Do not prejudge. We all have prejudices; make a conscious effort to overcome your biases.
- Be supportive, not subversive. Offer suggestions, not criticisms.
- Conduct yourself in accordance with institutional roles.
- Be an asset, not a liability. Cooperate fully with staff.
- Do not allow your activities to conflict with smooth operation of a facility.
- Use appropriate language. (If you hear an unfamiliar term, don't be afraid to ask for clarification.)
- If you cannot keep an appointment, notify the person in charge.
- Be ready for setbacks. Don't give up. Growth comes with perseverance.
- Be yourself.
- We all make mistakes. Don't be afraid to admit yours.