**RETURNING HOME**

**Life Coaching Program**

**Life Coach Manual**

Updated May 2017

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**Welcome from our Executive Director**

*Thank you so much for partnering with Returning Home by participating as a Life Coach. We all need help from time to time and your encouragement and support of Participants as they transition back into society from incarceration is invaluable. Please know that we are here to support you in this role. Thank you again for investing in the lives of others.*

*Nick Robbins*

**Description and Mission**

Returning Home seeks to improve the quality of life in Northwest Arkansas by helping to break the cycle of imprisonment. With partner organizations, The Returning Home Center provides a variety of services for men and women returning to our community from incarceration.

**Life Coaching Program**

The Life Coaching program is one part of the services we provide and works alongside the Participant’s case management.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**PARTICIPANT**

**Participant Name:**

**Phone:**

**Section 1: Overview of Life Coaching Component**

**TERMS**

**Life Coach** - a person who has a stable life and is willing to offer guidance and support to Participants.

**Participant** - a justice-involved adult who is willing to be coached as he or she transitions back into society.

**Life Coaching** - a relational process where Coaches provide consistent, non-judgmental, practical support and guidance to Participants as they transition from incarceration to the community and make positive lifestyle changes.

**PROGRAM MODEL**

**Type:** One-on-one. Each Participant is matched with Life Coach.

**Length of program:** One year.

**Begins:** Once Participant is released.

**PROFILE OF RETURNING HOME CLIENTS**

(Profile of all clients of Returning Home, not just those who participated in the Life Coach program.)

**The Face of Reentry in Northwest Arkansas: A Preliminary Brief Report[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Gender:** 30% Female, 70% Male

**Race/Ethnicity (%):**

* White/Caucasian 86
* Black/Afr. Amer. 2.3
* Hispanic/Latino 2.3
* Other 4.7
* Unknown 4.7

**Prior Offending Behavior (%): \***

* Drug offense 53.4
* Property offense 19
* Minor violence (simple assault, resisting arrest, etc.) 19.2
* Serious violence (robbery, aggravated assault, etc.) .07
* Other .14

\*Based on all self-reported offense histories. Not mutually exclusive.

**Quick Facts:**

* 32.1% of those with children report having custody of their children
* 74.4% have a felony conviction
* 46% have a high school diploma or GED; 33% have less than a high school diploma or GED
* 39.5% have been incarcerated in state/fed prison at least once
* 18.6% have been incarcerated in state/fed prison 2 or more times
* 93% have served time in county jail; 72% have serve time in county jail three or more times
* 25.6% are currently on parole; 37.2% are currently on probation
* 21% have served time due to a parole revocation; 60% of those revocations involved failing drug/alcohol tests
* 26% have been incarcerated due to a probation violation; 45% of those violation involved failing drug/alcohol tests
* 14% did not have access to a photo ID
* 44% did not have a copy of their birth certificate
* Only 21.6% have a checking account
* Only 18.8% have a savings account

**Behavioral Health Challenges of those Reentering our Community:**

* 51.2% report having a problem with drugs/alcohol
* 58% report being told by a professional that they have a problem with drugs/alcohol
* 53.5% report having entered a drug/alcohol rehabilitation facility
* 48.8% report that think they have a mental/emotional health problem
* 48.8% report that a mental health professional has said they have a mental or emotional health problem
* 42% have received a mental health diagnosis:
	+ 16.3% report receiving a bipolar diagnosis
	+ 9% report receiving a depression diagnosis
	+ 8.3 % report receiving an anxiety or other personality disorder diagnosis
	+ 6.9% report receiving a schizophrenia diagnosis
	+ 2.3% report having a PTSD diagnosis

**LIFE COACH**

**Life Coach Goal**

To work yourself out of a job.

**Life Coach Roles**

* **Role Model** of a prosocial life.
* **Friend** supporting their Participant during transition and helping to build prosocial relationships.
* **Guide** but not giving advice toward resources and strategies to help their Participant meet their transition goals.
* **Teacher** of skills and information in to assist their Participant’s meet their transition goals.
* **Accountability Partner** helping their Participant meet their transition goals.

**Life Coach Responsibilities**

* Support the Life Coaching program mission and goals.
* Follow all program policies and procedures.
* Complete all trainings.
* Fulfill the roles of a Life Coach: Role model, friend, guide, teacher, accountability partner.
* Meet with Participant face-to-face weekly at an agreed upon day/time and place for a minimum of 1-hour over a one-year period.
* Notify your Participant a minimum of 24 hours in advance if you need to reschedule a meeting. Communicate as soon as possible in the case of an emergency.
* Call or text Participant between visits.
* Submit a monthly report to the Program Coordinator.

**PARTICIPANT**

**Participant Goal**

To successfully transition and prepare yourself to move beyond the Life Coaching connection.

**Participant Role**

Life Coaching is a voluntary partnership between two individuals, the Life Coach and the Participant. Each must be faithful to fulfill their roles and responsibilities for the match to be successful.

* **Learner.** Your role is to learn from your Life Coach’s wisdom, experience, and knowledge in completing your transition plan.
* **Friend.** Your role is to be a friend by helping to build trust, communicating honestly, ask for help when needed, and receive the support provided by your Life Coach.

**Participant Responsibilities**

* **Eager to learn and takes initiative.** Willing to ask for help and apply what is learned. Your life coach has been successful in living a prosocial life and this is an opportunity to learn from him or her. Ask specific questions that will help you meet your transition goals.
* **Open minded.** Willing to listen to your Life Coach.
* **Honest and open.** Tells the truth and communicates struggles and temptations when they first surface.
* **Faithful.** Fulfills program commitments and commitments made to your Life Coach. Keeps the Life Coaching relationship a priority.
* **Communicates.** Returns phone calls, texts, emails promptly and be on time for meetings.

**Realistic Expectations for Participants**

* Your Life Coach is NOT your ATM and Taxi Service but will provide emotional, social, and spiritual support in your transition. Do not expect financial or material gain from your participant in the Life Coaching Program.
* Your Life Coach is your friend, NOT your parent. You will be treated as a peer.
* Your Life Coach is NOT perfect and can’t fix what he or she doesn’t know. You will need to communicate your expectations and frustrations with your Life Coach about your relationship.
* Your Life Coach is NOT your junior parole officer, but may hold you accountable for short-term goals that you set as a way of helping you in your transition.
* Your Life Coach WILL hold what you say in confidentiality according to the program confidentiality policy.

**Section 2: Program Policies and Procedures**

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

*In order to build trust, Life Coaches are required to keep conversations with, and information about, their Participants in confidence. There are four exceptions to this rule:*

**Confidentiality Exception 1: Speaking with the program staff.** A Life Coach may talk to program staff at **any time** about **any information or issues** brought up in the Life Coaching sessions. Staff are there to help problem-solve and to assist individuals with the dynamics of the relationship.

**Confidentiality Exception 2: Conversations with fellow Life Coaches during staff-run Life Coach meetings.**  During Life Coach roundtables, Life Coaches are allowed to discuss their respective participants so that Life Coaches can receive feedback and suggestions from fellow Life Coaches and program staff. However, Life Coaches must maintain a “group confidentiality” –that is, they are not allowed to discuss anything about other Participants to anyone outside of the program.

**Confidentiality Exception 3: Receiving permission from the Life Coach to contact others about a specific problem.** The Participant may give the Life Coach permission to talk to others about him or her when a situation arises where the Life Coach is seeking outside assistance or support.

**Life Coaches should also make a report to program staff when the Participant:**

* Reports child or elder abuse, neglect or endangerment by him/herself or others
* Discusses drug use or intended drug use
* Indicates a possible violation of the terms of his or her parole or probation
* Indicates an intention of hurting him/herself or others, or of putting him/herself in danger
* Reports that another person has an intention of hurting him/herself or others, or of putting the mentor in danger
* Demonstrates a marked change in functioning (i.e. appears depressed or manic or has noticeable changes in hygiene, sleeping and/or eating).

**PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT**

**As a Participant in the Returning Home Life Coaching Program, I agree to:**

* Having my information shared with a potential Life Coach.
* Accept emotional, spiritual and practical support from my Life Coach.
* Accept being matched with a Christian Life Coach for one year.
* Not ask my Life Coach for money, material goods or transportation.
* Be humble and learn all I can from my Life Coach.
* Work toward building trust with my Life Coach.
* Be honest and open with my Life Coach.
* Be faithful to commitments made with my Life Coach and communicate 24 hours in advance of any changes to commitments.
* Communicate struggles and temptations with my Life Coach when they first surface
* Work hard to complete my Transition Plan.
* Contact the Program Coordinator:
	+ If my Life Coach violates any program policies.
	+ If my Life Coach is not meeting with me and contacting me weekly.
	+ With any concerns expressed to my Life Coach that are not resolved.
	+ With any concerns I do not feel comfortable talking with my Life Coach about.

Signature of Participant Date

**LIFE COACH PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT**

**As a Life Coach in the Returning Home program, I agree to:**

* Complete the initial Life Coach training and attend any required ongoing trainings. If I miss a mandatory training, I will contact the Life Coach coordinator as soon as possible to make up the training.
* Support the mission and goals of the Life Coaching program.
* Abide by the program’s confidentiality policy and procedures.
* Meet with my Participant(s) at least once a week for a minimum of one hour, or once every other week for a minimum of two hours, over a one-year period.
* Try to develop a relationship of trust and respect with my Participant(s) by going slow, being flexible, and allowing them to make their own decisions—and by not presenting myself as an authority figure.
* Notify my Participant(s) at least 24 hours in advance if I must miss a coaching session or as soon as possible in the case of an emergency.
* Respect all Participant regardless of race, sexual orientation, religion, and criminal charges.
* Never give or loan to my Participant or his/her family money, gift cards or material goods.
* Never accept money, gift cards or material goods from my Participant or his/her family.
* Never handle money, checks, or material possessions for my Participant because this can put me at risk for trouble including lawsuits.
* Never provide transportation to my Participant unless it is to facilitate our meeting times as part of the Life Coaching Program or with approval of the Program Coordinator.
* Never drink alcohol when with my Participant or meet with him/her under the influence.
* Never carry firearms or weapons on my person or in my car, even if I have a license to carry. If I get pulled over by the police, having a weapon could put my Participant in danger of violating his or her parole/probation.
* Never commit a sexual act, sexual abuse or sexually harass my participant.
* Never push a “personal agenda” (i.e. faith, politics) during interactions with Participants.
* Complete and submit the monthly reporting form.
* Contact the Life Coaching coordinator if:
* I feel overwhelmed and need help.
* I am unable to fulfill my roles/responsibilities in the Life Coaching program.
* My Participant attempts to manipulate me.
* I or my Participant violates any program policies.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Life Coaching Do’s and Don’ts**

* **DO** keep your promises. Participants have been let down by most people in their lives, and not keeping your promise will be a barrier to building trust.
* **DO** praise your Participant for their progress every time you meet together.
* **DO** make every meeting.
* **DO** call it like it is. Don’t accept excuses. Teach responsibility.
* **DON’T** pressure them to be perfect. Like you and me, we all make mistakes. Be patient, encourage and give grace.
* **DON’T** criticize parole officers and criminal justice system. What your Participant is saying maybe true but blaming does not help them to move forward. Refocus the conversation to what how they can respond.

**LIFE COACH REPORT LOG FOR ONE-TO-ONE COACHING**

Fill out the “coaching log” directly after each communication/meeting with your Participant and email it to nickrobbins@returninghome.org at the end of each month.

**Life Coach’s Name:** **Participant’s Name:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Dates and Times** | **Activities for Meetings** | **Comments and/or Areas of Concern** |
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**Exercise 1: Ideal and Worst Life Coach and Participant**

*Fill in the boxes by identifying the ideal qualities and characteristics of a Life Coach and Participant. Identify worst qualities and characteristics of a Life Coach and Participant which are NOT the opposite of the ideal qualities and characteristics.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **IDEAL** | **WORST** |
| **LIFE COACH** |  |  |
| **PARTICIPANT** |  |  |

**Exercise 2: Realistic and Unrealistic Expectations**

1. **Make a list of your expectations of yourself as a Life Coach.**
2. **Make a list of your expectations of your Participant.**
3. **Place a check besides expectations you believe are realistic.**
1. This report is based on assessment information gathered at Returning Home Transition Center, Springdale, AR during March-April, 2017 (N=43). Date was collected and analyzed by The Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas, for use by Returning Home. For more information, contact Dr. Mindy Bradley, mwbradl@uark.edu [↑](#footnote-ref-1)