



Preparing for prison

A guide for families of someone taken to prison

Remanded in custody

Some people may be remanded in custody after arrest. This means they will stay in prison while the outcome of their court case is decided. This can happen whether or not the person has been found guilty.

If your family member is sentenced to imprisonment, any time served in custody may be taken into account.

Sentencing day

It's best to prepare for your family member to go to prison even if you have been told it is not likely.

It's a good idea to have a support person to court with you. Try to plan ahead and think about how you will get home from court and if you have children in your care decide who will collect them from school that day.

First days in prison

When someone goes to prison it is not unusual for family members to have fears for their safety. Corrections takes care to assess whether a new prisoner is at risk from others or themselves.

If you have real concerns that the person may harm themselves call the main reception at the prison to let them know. Prisoners can also ask to see a Chaplain, Fautua Pasefika or Kaiwhakamana. When a person goes into custody they are allowed to phone one person to let them know where they are.

After this they will make phone calls using a phone card which can take a while to set up. This will need to be done again if they are transferred to a different prison.

Try not to worry and imagine the worst if you don't hear from your family member when you expect to. Demand for the phone is high and other appointments may come up.

The practical things

As well as the emotional impact there will be practical things to be taken care of while your family member is in prison. This may involve childcare, property, housing, cars, pets, and debt.

If you are feeling pressured or unsure of your responsibilities, you can talk to Pillars.

Be informed

You can find out about prison visits and other arrangements by calling the prison or checking the www.corrections.govt.nz website. Even if you have had a family member in prison before, it pays to check.

Rules change and can differ between prisons. Corrections' website has information for families about prison life and rules. If you don't understand a term, ask prison staff to explain it.



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Get support

Having a family member in prison can be extremely stressful. Many people report feeling as though they are serving their own sentence in the community.

It is natural to want to keep the situation private and not tell anyone. However, trying to cope on your own can be very challenging and have consequences for your emotional and physical health. It's up to you how much you tell people.

Some people find it helpful to tell a trusted friend, counsellor or religious leader.

When someone is incarcerated there is a lot of focus on the person in custody. It's important to make sure there is also time and a safe place to focus on you.

Who can help?

Pillars - Pillars has a range of services including a free and confidential helpline for anyone who is affected by the imprisonment of a family member or friend. Phone 0508 PILLARS (0508 7 45 527) or visit www.pillars.org.nz

Family Budgeting Service - Free confidential budgeting advice over the phone or face to face. Phone 0508 BUDGETLINE (0508 283 438) www.familybudgeting.org.nz

Department of Corrections - Information for friends and families of people in prison. www.corrections.govt.nz

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