

**The goals and objectives below are meant to serve as a guide for individuals or groups working with the Fair Shake Reentry Packet; please adjust as needed according to your group or individual needs.**

**Goals and Objectives:** The goals and objectives of this section are to provide tips that will assist the participants with the challenges of being rejected or excluded as they transition back into society. The participants will have a comprehensive understanding of the importance of addressing these feelings effectively.

**Discussion:** You may use the paragraphs and questions below for discussion, but we encourage you to develop your own questions that correlate to the Dealing With Rejection section of the Reentry Packet. This is to provoke personalized thoughts and experiences so that the material is as effective as possible for each participant.

### **Terrell's Experience:**

Being rejected is not a good feeling and it is easy to be negatively affected when we're faced with it. It is a part of the human experience from early childhood throughout the course of our adult lives and it is important to find ways to address those feelings in a constructive way. Whenever we relate with other people, pursue our desires or compete with others we risk being rejected. If we don't learn how to deal with this feeling in a manner that will serve us, it could easily become a toxic experience.

In my past, I found myself so set on avoiding rejection that I missed valuable opportunities. Although it is still something I struggle with at times, understanding that I am a work in progress, and accepting that regardless of how protective I am of my feelings, there will always be situations where I'm vulnerable to rejection.

Once I decided to intentionally allow myself to be vulnerable and practice effective responses to being rejected, I began to grow. I found value in analyzing the pain of rejection, my interpretation of the meaning, and, wherever possible, getting a clear understanding of why I was rejected. This was especially helpful in my personal relationship because it provided opportunities for growth for both me and my partner. I could get feedback on why I was being rejected and give her feedback on her style, including the language or tone she used. With every experience I found that I felt increasingly comfortable.

### **Sue's View:**

It is good to be discerning. We cannot allow everything. We go to the fruit stand and reject many apples before we pick the one we want. Employers want just the right person for the job; they know their organization depends not only on the skills and knowledge required to do the job, but the bonds between the employees which play an equally vital role in the success of the business. Plays and movies require just the right actor to tell the story powerfully; many actors are rejected searching for the right one. We can avoid some rejection by getting better at assessing if a relationship - employer, romantic, backgammon game - is the right 'fit'. Don't be afraid to differentiate yourself! You **will** pay a price...in rejection, being alone, standing out in a crowd; but you will be rewarded for your authenticity and honesty in the long run, and you will find the 'best fits' are the ones that nourish your soul *and* grow your network.

**Quotes:** Quotes are *Fire Starters*. We suggest asking the group to provide a quote for dealing with frustration and discussing it. Examples:

*When you give yourself permission to communicate what matters to you in every situation you will have peace despite rejection or disapproval. Putting a voice to your soul helps you to let go of the negative energy of fear and regret.* - Shannon L. Alder

*Sometimes I feel my whole life has been one big rejection.* - Marilyn Monroe

*I am good at walking away. Rejection teaches you how to reject.* - Jeanette Winterson

**Discussion Questions:** We provided these examples as guides. Consider breaking up in to groups to answer the questions, or share individual responses and see if a larger answer can be created that includes many voices.

**Examples:**

- What are some effective ways that rejection can influence a person's life?
- What are some examples of rejection you may face upon reentry?
- What are some effective ways to handle those rejections?
- Must we risk failure and rejection to feel the power of success?

**Worksheet**

**This worksheet is to serve as an example and may be used by individuals or groups. It is designed to assist learners in understanding how they currently deal with rejection and how to consider different perspectives to create better outcomes**

1. Think back to a situation where you felt rejected and write it in the space provided below.

2. What emotions did you experience?

3. How did those emotions affect your judgement?

4. Do you think the overall outcome for the situation would have been different if you would have considered a different perspective and/or processed your feelings differently?

5. Do you feel it is important to consider the source of the rejection? (For example: being rejected as a finalist in a poetry contest vs being rejected by a person with whom you'd hoped to develop a deeper romantic relationship) Why or why not?

6. Do you think that learning why you were rejected is important? Why or why not?

7. If the same situation you identified above occurred today would you do things differently? Why or why not?

8. Can you remember or imagine a situation where you were rejected and, although it felt crummy at first, you soon (or eventually) realized that it was the best decision for everyone? Explain.

9. Now remember a situation where you had to reject something someone offered you, or someone for a particular role or responsibility you were looking for. How did you feel being the person who had to choose one and reject many?

10. Were you willing and able to understand the impact your decision had on those who were rejected? Did you supply reasons for rejecting things or people?

11. Explore how rejection is not about the quality or character of the individual, but about the ability to fill the role, take on the responsibility or address specific qualities needed for the position, relationship or duty.

12. Consider and discuss how you can set yourself up for rejection by not seeing a situation clearly enough.

13. Consider and discuss how people who are and have been rejected must explore their level of sensitivity when they are rejected, and how they can become less hurt by understanding more about their feelings.