

The Philosophy of ParentingPLUS is to provide incarcerated parents with knowledge about how divorce and violence impact children and how to remain (or become) effective parents to their children. Whether the separation is due primarily to incarceration or divorce, a child is likely to experience loss and fear, which is enhanced when violence or abuse are involved. ParentingPLUS stresses the value of co-parenting so that children can love both parents freely without feeling guilty or taking sides. Our program reinforces the fact that children never belong in the middle of an adult situation and offer ways to lower conflict and increase effective communication.

The Goals of ParentingPLUS:

- Strengthen parental competency in positive communication
- Teach parents about the harmful effects of divorce on children
- Provide parents the ability to address children's fear and loss
- Strengthen parenting skills and increase their capacity to parent effectively during change
- Educate the parent on how to successfully help their children cope with the separation or divorce
- Successful co-parenting that includes a positive non-blaming parenting approach after separation.
- Decrease family conflict
- Educate the parents on the dynamics and impact of domestic violence on each other and specifically on the children
- Enhance child adjustment to life changes and establish healthy parent-child relationships

Program Design

ParentingPLUS will provide 19.5 to 23 hours of education in 1.5 to 2 hour intervals; one to two times per week as permitted by Sussex Correctional Institution security. (Each housing area may have differing space and time allowances). Locations to be used include:

Multi-Security Building Classroom or Chow Hall @12:30p (days as available)

Pre-Trial Classroom @8:30a or 5:30p (days as available)

Boot Camp Classroom (time and days as available)

Merit Building Classroom (time and days as available)

The program will be presented in a manner that is sensitive to the educational, cultural and social-economic differences of the inmates.

The sessions will relate directly to the dynamics of separation and divorce as well as domestic violence. The focus will be on minimizing potential harm to the children.

Each session will begin with a recap of the previous week. The program will include a period of time for discussion with questions and answers at the end of the session.

All available locations within Sussex Correctional Institution are physically accessible to persons with disabilities. Interpreter services will become available as needed.

Other Program Criteria for ParentingPLUS

Participants will be provided with referral information on local services during the final session. The information provided will include pertinent phone numbers and services for domestic violence, child abuse, legal services, counseling programs and support groups.

A list of books that can help children and adults dealing with a separation or divorce will be provided during the final session.

The Department Child Abuse reporting DVD will be made available to inmates upon their release from incarceration.

Safety and confidentiality concerns are addressed in the first session and repeated as necessary. Security is available at all times within Sussex Correctional Institution. The probability of former partners' attending this program is not a concern at this time.

A binder containing a list of all participants and their status of completion for the ParentingPLUS program will be maintained in the Mental Health Office for a period of two years.

Upon completion, each participant of the ParentingPLUS program will receive a certificate stating the name of the program, date of certification, the participant's name, date of birth and their Delaware Court Case number. A copy of the certificate will be placed in their Delaware Department of Correction chart.

Instructor Qualification for ParentingPLUS

All ParentingPLUS educators will have at least a Master Degree in social work, psychology, family therapy, community counseling or related field.

Most ParentingPLUS educators will maintain a LPCMH or LCSW.

All ParentingPLUS educators have experience leading adult groups. Some have experience in Domestic Violence.

ParentingPLUS educators are clinicians trained to work with multiple issues that include divorce, family restructuring, impact of divorce on children and child development.

Current résumés attached. New résumés will be submitted as necessary.

Safety Issues and Confidentiality for ParentingPLUS Program

The ParentingPLUS program will take place within Sussex Correctional Institution. Security staff monitors the entirety of all activity within the facility.

Any violence or other unacceptable behavior is handled expeditiously by Correctional Officers.

Identified victims of Domestic Violence will attend separate groups as needed.

See attached participation agreement for confidentiality policy:

PARENTINGPLUS PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

This group is a voluntary group. You must make a commitment to the group in order to participate. Once you have decided to participate in this group, you are expected to attend with consistency and to participate in a constructive manner. Consistent attendance includes being present when the group begins and staying until the group is ended. You will be expected to submit completed homework and discuss your answers to various questions.

How much you get out of this group is up to you. The modules are based upon some of the very best sources currently available, but even the most perfect group experience won't do a thing unless *you* do the work, and take the work *inside*, into who you are as a man or woman.

There are several ground rules that are basic to this group:

- Safety. Everyone must be treated with dignity, respect, and nonaggression, inside and outside the group. No one can learn if they're worried about their personal safety.
- Confidentiality. What is said in the room needs to stay in the room. You may not share information about each other outside of the group, including personal information you may have learned or information disclosed during the course of the group. You can talk about the handouts, management strategies and homework outside of the group with your friends or with other group members.
- Safety. Yes, there are two safety rules, and the second one trumps the first. If the group leader learns that the security of the prison or the safety of an individual is being threatened or compromised, the leader will have to report this. Specifically, information shared during the group sessions will not be shared except in situations when the group leader believes that you may be: suicidal; homicidal; at risk for injury to self or others; or at risk for escape or creating management problems within the facility. Mental health staff also has a legal duty to report to appropriate authorities any unreported suspected abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, and in some cases disabled persons.

Please read the enclosed statement and sign the agreement if you are willing to keep an open mind and make a commitment to yourself to get what you can from this

group. If you do, you may just find that something in this group turns your life around.

My records are protected under Federal and State Confidentiality regulations. The agency may not disclose to any person outside of the agency that a participant is/has been in for services, or disclose any identifying information **unless:**

- *The disclosure is made to qualified personnel as part of research, audit, or program evaluation.**
- *The disclosure is required by court order**
- *The disclosure is made to medical personnel in a medical emergency**
- *The disclosure is made to state or local authorities about suspected child abuse or neglect**
- *The disclosure is made to state or local authorities to prevent or report a threat or a crime committed by the client against any property or any person**

Read and agreed to: _____
Participant Signature

Participant Name printed

Date of Birth

SBI#

Delaware Court Case # (if applicable)

ParentingPLUS Program Size

The ParentingPLUS program class size will not exceed 20 participants with two ParentingPLUS educators and will not exceed 12 participants with one ParentingPLUS educators.

Cost of ParentingPLUS Program

The ParentingPLUS program will be provided to incarcerated inmates at Sussex Correctional Institution free of charge.

Referral Process

The ParentingPLUS program will be provided as needed at Sussex Correctional Institution.

Sussex Correctional Institution Mental Health Staff are contracted by the Delaware Department of Correction.

The Mental Health staff provides quality mental health services through a variety of clinical practice modalities and multidisciplinary team collaboration. They maintain effective communication and work collaboratively with the client, the medical provider, and institutional administrative staff.

The Mental Health staff applies ethical and legal principles to the treatment of inmates with mental health problems in a correctional setting, ensuring that inmates receive appropriate mental health care. We comply with all security regulations and directives of the assigned facility as well as uphold all rules and regulations governing mental health confidentiality.

Mental Health services at Sussex Correctional Institution include, but are not limited to comprehensive mental health evaluations, diagnostic and therapeutic services, risk assessments, psycho-educational groups, and crisis interventions.

The Mental Health staff follows Universal Precautions at all times.