

Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center

ERP Handbook 2021

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NOTE: To allow others to use this handbook, please return it to staff prior to release or movement to another wing.

Welcome and Program Philosophy

Welcome to the Wisconsin Women's Correctional System (WWCS). Our goal is to provide a safe and secure environment to allow for a positive experience to begin your preparation for re-entry to the community. We are glad that you are here as you look forward to your future. Our programs and activities are designed to help your transition from prison to the community. The program staff is invested in assisting you to set goals for your treatment and plan for your release.

The Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center's (MWCC) Earned Release Program (ERP) was established to address factors that contributed to your legal trouble and resulting incarceration. Understandably, many participants who enter the program are focused on getting their freedom back and see this as a path to get home. What they find is that the program provides much more than a way out of prison. It provides a way to stay out of prison. You will be given the opportunity to learn a new way of thinking, tools for coping, skills for interacting in a variety of challenging situations, and a method for problem solving. These skills will enable you to reconnect with family, achieve your personal goals, and become a productive member of your community.

In ERP you will learn more about yourself and your priorities. You will recognize your risks for a return to a lifestyle that could result in a return to prison. You will work with your counselors and peers to develop a healthier lifestyle and a plan for your success. The thoughts and attitudes that led to your illegal behavior can be replaced with values that will support a prosocial, positive future. You will learn ways to manage your emotions, cope with difficult situations, and abstain from drugs and alcohol. Finally, we will assist you in connecting with resources in your neighborhood. We will assist with developing a plan to support the treatment you started while in the program and reintegrate back into the community.

Mission

The mission of the Earned Release Program is to enhance safety in the community by providing treatment to eliminate illegal and substance abusing behavior for offenders eligible to participate in ERP. Our program utilizes gender-specific approaches that have been shown effective in reducing criminal behavior for those participants that apply themselves, practice the skills, and carry those skills into their day-to-day lives. If you have been given a prison sentence, it's likely time to consider making some changes. At MWCC we are available to assist you in making those changes.

Program Description

Change is never easy. Your active participation will help you learn the skills you will need to be more in control of your life and avoid criminal and/or addictive choices. You will learn a lot of new things and we expect that you will struggle as you learn. Our job is to model the skills, coach you in trying them out, encourage you to use them in your daily life, and help you identify areas of struggle. We will introduce you to a variety of practical skills that you can use to reach your goals.

You will be assigned to a Social Worker/Treatment Specialist to assist you in setting up a plan for your treatment. You will complete a few assessments to help us identify the needs that may be related to your problems. You will primarily be involved in group treatment, with bi-weekly individual appointments with your social worker/treatment specialist. There are core programming groups that will be assigned based on your recommended supervision risk level. The groups are designed to help you discover the risky thoughts and emotions that have led to your choices that resulted in negative consequences. Some of the groups offered are: Moving On: A Program for At-Risk Women, Helping Women Recover, Connections: A Shame-Resiliency Psychoeducational Curriculum, Seeking Safety and Dialectical Behavioral Therapy. These groups will provide you with strategies to take control over your choices and improve the consequences of your actions.

ERP Procedures

Many of the resources and rules are highlighted in the center handbook. To avoid confusion and repetitiveness, center rules should be consulted in the center handbook and/or the 303 disciplinary guide. The following are ERP specific rules.

Recreation

There are two areas for recreation, the outside yard and the workout area.

Outside Yard

When in the yard, you are a representative of MWCC to the community, and as such we request you sit at the table properly (feet under the table and on the ground), abstain from sunbathing (no rolling up sleeves or pant legs), and use language and volume that does not cause disturbance. **On Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays, participants may use the outside recreation area from 12:30pm until lights come on.** On the weekends, early time outside can be purchased by participants using incentive points during community meetings.

Workout Area

There are space limitations in the workout area. Please check that the room capacity is not exceeded. Help keep the workout area ready for the next individual. Remember to treat equipment carefully, clean your area when finished, and rewind exercise tapes. Please only sign yourself up for exercise slots, recreation, or any other groups. Also, please only sign up for slots you will use.

Inmate Accounts

Inmate Accounts operate the same as they do for GP, however, there are some specific ERP considerations relative to your account.

- You may obtain up to 2 photos from graduation day or the graduation PowerPoint with a disbursement from. Only individual photos may be purchased. No group photos will be available.
- Due to the volume of accounts needing to be transferred from ERP to general population status after graduation, there will be a period when you will not have access to your account. Your account will be closed 2 weeks prior to AND 2-3 weeks following your ERP graduation ceremony. Please make sure you have enough hygiene items to last for this timeframe.

Work Assignments

SUD 2 and SUD 3 participants may be required to work center jobs in addition to ERP programming. SUD 4 participants are already at full-time status and are not eligible to work in the center.

Phone Calls, Letters, and Emails

Due to the number of individuals that need access to the phones, we require that phone calls be logged Monday-Sunday. This allows us to monitor the use of the phones to ensure fair access. Participants are permitted to call, write, or email people regardless of being on your approved visiting list. Communication will be monitored by security and treatment staff, so please leave all mail, except legal mail, unsealed when sending out. Failure to follow the phone use limits risks program discipline including potential termination.

- ERP participants are allowed 7 phone calls per week Monday-Sunday.
- Phone access is the same for ERP participants as it is for GP, but during program hours you're only able to use the phone during your designated Rec time.

Sick Cell Procedure

- Program Participants are not allowed to place themselves on lay-in. Authorization for sick cell is only provided by treatment staff or HSU
- If you are on sick cell status, you are required to fill out an HSU request slip to be seen by HSU.

- While on sick cell status you will not use the day space and will not use the microwave.
- You are responsible for making up any and all group work covered while you were on sick cell status.

Behavior Management System

The Milwaukee Women's Correctional Center and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections have a set of rules that are designed to create a safe, secure, and orderly environment. One method we will use to encourage you and hold you accountable is through a system of rewards and sanctions. The process of following the program rules will help prepare you for returning to the community. Approach these rules as if they are laws and parole conditions you will need to follow in the community. If you are able to find ways to follow rules in here, you will identify some methods that work upon discharge with all the requirements set by community supervision, employers, and society in general.

Consequences for rule violations are used by staff to reduce the likelihood of continued rule violations. Consequences are ideally applied in a consistent and timely manner. Staff makes every effort to monitor participants' behavior and apply consequences in a firm and fair way. The following list represents the general expectations for participants at MWCC. Following the list of expectations, the consequences for violations will be listed.

Please note: As a participants in the ERP program, you are also required to abide by all DOC policies and procedures as described in the center handbook.

Safety and Security Expectations

The following description of rules and guidelines are provided to orient you to the requirements of your stay at MWCC. You are expected to read and understand these items. You will be held accountable for the contents within this handbook. We strongly encourage you to get clarification on any items that you do not clearly understand.

- Engage in respectful and healthy interactions with peers, staff, and visitors:
 - Use appropriate language and respectful interactions – Use language or gestures that are free of profanity or threats. Use a normal tone of voice.
 - Be respectful of cultural/racial differences – Respect diversity including different religious observations. Verbal slurs or statements (racial sexist, homophobic, or ethnic) are not tolerated.
 - Use appropriate physical and verbal boundaries – verbal threats, intimidation, physical gestures, provocation, or physical aggression is not permitted. Physical interaction that is suggestive or sexual in nature is also banned. This expectation includes (but is not limited to): exposing oneself, non-discreet masturbation,

consensual or non-consensual sexual activity, physical touching, horseplay, or fighting/aggression.

- Refrain from gang-related gestures, paraphernalia, writing/symbols, signs, or activities.
- Respect others' property – residents are required to maintain their personal property. Lending/borrowing is only allowed when approved by staff.
- Respect personal information - refrain from asking staff personal questions or sharing private or confidential information of peers.
- Conduct appropriate self-care:
 - Respect for personal and other safety – alert staff to potential risk of harm to self or others. Follow safety plans; refrain from self-injurious behavior or tattooing.
 - Appropriate use of institution or personal equipment and property – use equipment as intended and with care.
 - Maintain hygiene and cleanliness, showering at least 2 times weekly.
- Follow Schedules and Attend Assigned Activities
 - Follow the posted schedule and routines – adhere to the routines of the institution and program, limit non-emergency interaction with social workers/treatment specialists to prescribed times.
 - Attend scheduled treatment or educational activities – make all group or individual appointments as assigned.
 - Meet employment expectations – follow work rules and maintain attendance and productivity.
- Abide by all safety, security, and program operations regulations:
 - Safety compliance – refrain from tampering with or ignoring safety alert systems, intercoms, machinery, or electrical components.
 - Take care of physical property and facility – use property and facility features with care.
 - Follow staff direction – comply with any reasonable request that staff person makes directly to the resident.
 - Remain substance free (illicit or prescription drugs, alcohol, tobacco, solvents, or any other intoxicants).
 - Keep the environment free of contraband – contraband is any item not listed as allowed property that is on the resident's person or room. Serious contraband examples include: weapons, drugs/alcohol, paraphernalia, illegal items, or incendiary devices (i.e. lighters, matches, flammable liquids, etc.). Minor contraband examples include: group room supplies, magazines, food, extra bedding, and items over the limit on allowed property.
 - Comply with movement and count requirements.

- Follow the dress code.
- Remain free of any form of gambling.

The rules are divided into categories related to the seriousness of the behavior. In general, serious rule violations are behaviors that are generally illegal or pose a threat to safety. Moderate rule violations are typically behaviors that threaten the security of the facility. Minor violations are behaviors that interrupt the orderly function of the facility. In general terms, violations of the guidelines described above fall into the high or moderate categories, depending on the specifics of the behavior. We will be describing the guidelines related to the daily operations of the facility; violations of the rules contained in this section comprise primarily minor rule violations.

The following guidelines are important in reducing the obstacles, conflicts, and establishing a routine for all to follow. Failure to adhere to any of the guidelines listed below will result in a minor rule violation.

ERP Expectations

All participants are expected to follow the center handbook rules and DOC 303. Failure to follow center rules can result in program sanctions. These are rules that apply only to ERP participants.

1. Participants are allowed to use the dining room with staff approval to work on treatment assignments.
2. Be respectful of the privacy and well-being of others on the unit. As such, we require you avoid participating in gossiping. Gossiping is sharing rumors or assumptions about the private or personal matters of another individual. Whether the information is true or not, this practice may result in unnecessary confusion, harm, or distraction for those involved.
3. Due to confidentiality concerns and in the interest of maintaining a safe, supportive group environment, issues discussed in group should only be discussed with other group members.
4. Treatment schedules may change from time to time based on center space and program needs. You'll be given a schedule by your facilitator for you to follow during program.
5. Each participant is assigned a storage lock box and a blue or gray storage bin. The storage bins are to remain in the assigned room and is not allowed in the day space or other common areas of the facility. This box is meant for storage of group documents and group crafts only. You are only permitted to go into your own lock box, wardrobe cabinet, bin, or closet.

6. Radios and TV's may only be used with headphones at all times. TVs and radios are not permitted to be on during program hours (7:30 AM – 11 AM, 1230PM – 3:00PM). PIOC who are on waiting to start program, but not in programming or in pretreatment yet may use their personal electronics with headphones all day.
7. During program hours, participants are to be in their state greens. **Participants not active in programming** may wear their grays. During completion ceremonies, please wear state greens.

Repeated Violations

Any resident that receives a fourth violation in the minor category within one week may receive a moderate level sanction. For the moderate level category, the third violation in one week may result in a high level violation. Sanctions for any level violation will be considered on a case by case basis.

Sanction System

Major Rules	Sanctions
Threats or Intimidation – physical or verbal Use of Offensive Slurs or Statements Sexual Behavior Gang-Related Activities Stealing or Vandalizing Property Failure to Report Safety Risk Failure to Abide by Safety Procedures Use or Possession of Substances Serious Contraband Gambling Sharing Confidential Information of Peers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Termination (T) 2. Major Conduct Report (T & S) 3. 4-7 days privilege restriction or room confinement (T & S) 4. More than 30 days of building confinement (T & S) 5. Program Extension (T) 6. Extra duty-more than 30 hours (T & S) 7. Transfer to Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) (T & S)
Moderate Rules	Sanctions
Unapproved Lending/Borrowing of Property Misuse of Institution or Personal Property Failure to Attend Scheduled Activities (program or employment) Failure to Comply with Staff Directive Minor Contraband Failure to Comply with Movement or Count Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2-3 days of privilege restriction or room confinement (T & S) 2. Extra duty 2-30 hours (T & S) 3. Minor Conduct Report (T & S) 4. Verbal Redirection (T & S) 5. Warning (T & S) 6. Carey Guide &/or BITS Assignment (T & S) 7. Behavior Contract (T)
Minor Rules	Sanctions

Failure to adhere to any of the Operations Expectations	1. Any of the above including, verbal &/or written warning
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***T: Treatment Staff; S: Security Staff**

Reinforcement of Desired Behavior

To encourage behaviors that contribute to a safe, secure, and positive environment, we have a system to identify and reward those behaviors. In order to recognize those behaviors, we have a point system. Points may be accumulated and used on various privileges and special activities. Once you earn a point, you cannot lose that point. There are a variety of ways you can earn a point. Not all instances of these behaviors will earn a point. Points are awarded at the sole discretion of staff. If a behavior is new for an individual or poses challenges for them, they may earn a point when it is displayed. While this system is developed for the operation within MWCC, participants are encouraged to apply the principle of rewarding their own positive behaviors now and upon return to the community. People work harder if they are working towards something desired.

Behavioral Recognition System

Earning Points

Participants will be given an incentive tracking sheet. Any points earned or awarded will be given at the discretion of staff only.

Examples of Behaviors to Earn Incentive Points	Point Value*
Assisting an Officer	1
Completed extra assignment (for someone who struggles in this area)	1
Active participation in group (for someone who struggles in this area)	1
Volunteers to do extra role plays	1
Open and honest in group—Taking risks	1
Receptive to feedback (for those who struggle in this area)	1
Appropriate/team player during group projects	1
Taking on extra tasks	1
Helping a peer, as appropriate	1
Avoiding and/or shutting down high risk situations	1
Being assertive and holding peers accountable	1
Taking on an appropriate leadership role	1
Demonstrating empathy	1
Demonstrating respectful behavior	1
Excellent work on an assignment	1
Setting appropriate boundaries	1

Consistently hand in homework during a set period of time	1
Volunteering to clean appropriately	1
Coming out of their comfort zone (i.e. not isolating)	1
Taking care of health appropriately	1
Using conflict resolution skills effectively	1
Marked decrease in problem behaviors	1
Giving good feedback	1
Consistently have good behavior (no warnings, conduct reports, or consequences from facilitators) for a set period of time	1
Consistently having a positive attitude (specific period of time)	1
Other: (must be approved by Program Supervisor)	

*point values determined by staff

Incentive List

Cashing In Points

During community meetings each week, participants will have an opportunity to utilize earned points for incentives. Planning ahead how your points will be utilized is also the responsibility of the individual and/or group members receiving the incentive. At the end of each community group, participants will first notify the facilitator of individual or group incentives they wish to redeem. The facilitator will then sign off on the points used on the incentive tracking sheet. Group incentive points can be utilized by *any* group of people in any current group. Any individual requesting to redeem points must be in good standing for the week (Saturday-Friday). PIOC will be notified as they receive warnings. Participants may not cash in points if they have any ERP major behavioral violations (see attached sheet) nor if they have received any verbal or written warnings from staff. As part of the program requirements, individuals must hold themselves accountable for any and all ERP majors and warnings.

INDIVIDUAL INCENTIVES	
Extra dessert ticket (max 2/program)	7 points
Two Extra laundry tokens (max 2/program)	7 points
Extra Phone call	7 points
Morning to sleep in (up by 745am)	7 points
Certificate of behavior	3 points
Wear grays or jeans all day (1 day)	5 points
Make up one hour group time	7 points
Bring drink other than water to group	3 points
Late night on weekends	5 points
Use of straightener/curling iron for visit	7 points

Use of radio during paperwork time	3 points
Nap during group hours (paper days only)	7 points
GROUP INCENTIVES **Everyone in the selected group must participate in these activities in order to use the Group incentives. Total points required for group incentives are per group, not per PIOC**	
Free morning (paper days only)	10 points
Play bingo with group	15 points
Card / Scattategories / Cribbage etc. tournament with group	15 points
Pick a movie to be viewed by your group - pick from the collection any day of the week	10 points
Physical activity with group (such as a volleyball or basketball game)	15 points
Extra outside time on weekend from 8am-12pm	15 points
Group Grays	12 points

***** Any requests outside of this policy MUST be approved by ERP Staff*****