



**FOCUS Ministries**  
**Women's Re-Entry Program**

December 27, 2018 Update (HLA)

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# FOCUS WOMEN'S RE-ENTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## PURPOSE

The FOCUS Ministries Women's Re-Entry Program (FOCUS WRP) provides a Christ-centered re-entry program for women reintegrating from a correctional facility in East Tennessee. For one year, students live in a therapeutic home while receiving opportunities for education, employment, relapse prevention, transportation, and mentorship. The purpose of this program is not merely to reduce recidivism, but to provide opportunities for our students to become productive members of our community who make meaningful contributions in family relationships, churches, community service, and the workforce.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The FOCUS WRP is a collaborative effort of three key ally groups: the Tennessee Department of Correction Day Reporting Center (TDOC DRC), the FOCUS WRP Team, and the local church.

### TDOC DRC

Students in the FOCUS WRP report to their Probation and Parole Officers at the DRC as well as receive education, skills, and support. The FOCUS WRP communicates with the DRC to monitor students' participation. Students who do not meet DRC requirements are ineligible to remain in the FOCUS WRP.

#### Phase 1

During Phase 1, each student builds a firm foundation for her new life and will attend DRC courses four days each week. Her program requirements include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Anger Management
- Substance Abuse Class
- Peer Recovery and Self-Help Strategies
- Health and Wellness Education
- Job Readiness
- Adult Education
- Community Service

#### Phase 2

During Phase 2, each student builds upon a stable foundation and develops new skills that will prepare her for employment opportunities. She will attend DRC courses three days each week. Her program requirements include:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Victim Impact
- Safe Class
- Substance Abuse Class
- Peer Recover and Self-Help Strategies
- Successful Parenting Skills
- Health and Wellness Education
- Job Readiness
- Adult Education
- Community Service

#### Phase 3

During Phase 3, each student maintains steady employment and refines the skills needed for successful independent living. She will attend DRC courses two days each week. Her program requirements include:

- Steady Employment
- Substance Abuse Class
- Successful Parenting Skills
- Peer Recovery and Self-Help Strategies
- Health and Wellness Education
- Adult Education

## **PARTNERSHIPS (CONTINUED)**

### **FOCUS WRP TEAM**

The FOCUS WRP Team facilitates a safe, structured, and supportive home environment called the FOCUS Hope House. In addition to case management, accountability, and transportation assistance, the caring staff and volunteers provide spiritual guidance and emotional support.

The **Executive Director** provides oversight and support to the Women's Re-Entry Staff and Program.

The **Women's Re-Entry Coordinator** oversees ally partnerships, operations, case management, volunteers, advancement of students, and discipline.

The **Women's Residential Coordinator** lives on site and provides a positive, Christ-centered presence in the home while leading the students to operate within the guidelines of the program.

**Volunteers** provide support for the Women's Re-Entry Program through maintenance of the home, administrative support, transportation, and HOPE mentorship. HOPE Mentors play a vital role in the successful reintegration of students during their time in the FOCUS WRP and after graduation.

### **CHURCH**

Church attendance is a key component of the FOCUS WRP. Students attend a worship service on the weekend as well as a Christ-centered recovery program once a week. As part of a church family, students can establish healthy connections, find hope in their spiritual journey, and have opportunities to serve in their community.

### **VALUES**

The FOCUS WRP instills HOPE values. With the assistance of FOCUS WRP Staff, each student develops a Personal Growth Plan that applies these HOPE values to daily life. FOCUS WRP Staff provides accountability and support to help students reach their personal goals in spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional disciplines.

**H**ave a new identity and purpose in Christ. I am who God says I am.

*This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17*

**O**nly God deserves first place in my life. I seek Him first.

*Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Matthew 6:33*

**P**eople are valuable. I treat others the way I want to be treated.

*Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Luke 6:31*

**E**xcellence is my standard. I work for God and do my best.

*Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Colossians 3:23*

## **ENTERING THE FOCUS WRP**

### **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for admission into the FOCUS WRP.

- Applicants must be female reintegrating from a correctional facility in East Tennessee with a remaining probation or parole sentence of no less than two years.
- Applicants must be placed in the DRC program on a mandatory or optional basis.
- Applicants must qualify for the TDOC/THDA Re-Entry Housing Program, which will provide funding for housing during the first ninety (90) days of our Program.
- Applicants must be willing to defer employment for the first ninety (90) days of our program so they may develop a firm foundation and complete all DRC requirements.
- Applicants must demonstrate a willingness to live in compliance with the FOCUS WRP Guidelines for one year.

### **ASSESSMENT**

A woman who is interested in entering the FOCUS WRP must have her representative contact the TDOC DRC Knoxville Location for assessment. Her representative may include a Judge, attorney, Institutional Probation/Parole Officer (IPPO) or Forensic Social Worker (FSW). The DRC will process her application and help her determine if the FOCUS WRP is a good fit.

### **ARRIVAL**

Applicants who receive approval through DRC and FOCUS enter the FOCUS Hope House on a first come, first serve basis. Students enter the FOCUS WRP directly from a correctional facility and may not be transported by a friend or family member to our facility. Students are drug tested upon arrival.

### **CONDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP**

Students who enter the FOCUS WRP are not required to pay an admission fee of any kind. Instead, each student receives a conditional scholarship of \$500 to cover her program fee for the entire year. If a student is dismissed from the program or voluntarily leaves before graduation, her program fee is charged upon exit. However, when a student graduates from the program, she may keep the \$500 program fee for herself to be used to establish independent living.

## **PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **RESIDENCE**

The FOCUS Hope House operates in a manner similar to a family home. Each person has value and works together to create a safe, stable, and supportive home environment.

#### **Meals**

Students enjoy a family-style dinner every evening, taking turns preparing the meal. This structure promotes unity and an atmosphere of fun within the group. It also allows ladies to relax in the evening and only cook one night per week. HOPE Mentors assist with cooking duties as well as meal-planning.

#### **Responsibilities**

Students have household responsibilities that include maintenance of personal and shared spaces within the home, assistance with yard work on the premises, and meal preparation. FOCUS WRP staff and students communicate expectations and work together to enjoy a peaceful, orderly environment.

#### **Schedules and Shared Spaces**

Students adhere to the timelines for curfew, quiet hour, lights out, and transportation. They demonstrate respect for other housemates regarding light, sounds, and scents that may cause disturbance to others. Students show respect for themselves and other housemates by wearing appropriate attire and maintaining personal hygiene. Students may not use the personal items of others without permission or take items belonging to FOCUS Ministries without permission.

#### **Supervision**

All rooms and student belongings are subject to search. FOCUS WRP staff confiscates prohibited items, and the responsible student receives disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.

#### **Language and Media**

Offensive language and inappropriate media have no place in a Christ-centered home.

#### **Conflict Resolution**

To maintain an environment of mutual respect, we adhere to the conflict resolution method mentioned in Matthew 18:15-35. Rather than allowing miscommunications and misunderstandings to escalate, we speak the truth in love and avoid gossip. We attempt to seek forgiveness, understanding, and unity. The FOCUS WRP does not tolerate acts of aggression, abusive language, or insubordination.

#### **Visitation**

Visitation with family members or approved friends may take place during Student Passes, not at the residence, except for special family events. No person may enter the residence or its premises without permission from the FOCUS WRP Team. Family members or friends who wish to deliver personal items to a student at the FOCUS Hope House must coordinate through a FOCUS WRP staff member.

## **WEEKLY HOPE HOUSE MEETINGS**

Each week, FOCUS WRP staff and students meet together for a FOCUS Hope House Meeting. During the meeting, the team discusses the previous week's successes and growth opportunities. Relevant information for the upcoming week is communicated, and any questions, comments, or concerns are addressed. Because every person on the team has value, every woman has a voice during these meetings.

## **WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY/COMMUNICATION SHEETS**

Students and staff maintain open communication through the use of the Weekly Accountability/Communication Sheets. These sheets provide students with an opportunity to share questions, comments, or concerns with the FOCUS WRP team. Additionally, the FOCUS WRP staff members encourage or coach students in a clear and concise manner that can be referenced for future use.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The FOCUS WRP provides transportation assistance for students to attend the DRC, church, FOCUS outings, and other key appointments. FOCUS WRP Staff also transports students to the store on a consistent schedule. Students communicate their transportation needs with FOCUS WRP staff well in advance. Students may not accept transportation assistance from anyone other than a FOCUS WRP team member without permission.

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

The FOCUS WRP strongly advises that each student focuses on her own recovery and development rather than engaging in romantic relationships. Experience shows that students who do so have a higher reintegration success rate and enjoy healthier romantic relationships long term. In alignment with the FOCUS Ministries Statements of Belief, the FOCUS WRP does not condone sexual relationships outside of the holy institution of marriage. Sexual and romantic conduct of any kind is prohibited at the FOCUS Hope House or any FOCUS outing.

## **FOCUS WRP PRIVILEGES**

Students obtain additional privileges through the FOCUS WRP over time as they complete program requirements, model respectful behavior, and demonstrate trustworthiness. Irresponsible behavior, insubordination, or violations of program guidelines may result in a delay or revocation of privileges.

Some program privileges may include:

- After one month of successful participation in the FOCUS WRP, students are eligible to request permission from FOCUS WRP Staff to access a mobile device or social media account. Students who have a mobile device prior to arriving at the FOCUS Hope House give the device to FOCUS Staff at intake and may only use it under the supervision of FOCUS staff and only on rare occasions after demonstrating trustworthiness. Students who need to make or receive phone calls may use the FOCUS Hope House phone or the phone of a FOCUS Staff Member with permission.
- After one month of successful participation in the FOCUS WRP, students are eligible to begin submitting Student Pass Requests and may gain greater freedom with passes over time. Please see the Student Pass Request section for a full list of Student Pass Privileges.
- After six months of successful participation, students who have a valid driver's license are eligible to drive a vehicle to approved locations with permission from FOCUS WRP staff.

## **SUBSTANCES AND MEDICATION**

### **ILLEGAL DRUGS**

Students are prohibited from using and possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia for the duration of the FOCUS WRP, whether at the FOCUS Hope House or any other location. Students are tested for drugs by the FOCUS WRP weekly and at random. Every student who fails a drug test is dismissed. The FOCUS WRP Staff shares the drug test results the student's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within 24 hours.

### **ALCOHOL**

Students are prohibited from consuming, purchasing, and possessing alcoholic beverages for the duration of the FOCUS WRP, whether at the FOCUS Hope House or any other location. Students are also prohibited from consuming products with alcohol content in a manner against the recommended use. Students may be subject to alcohol testing. Every student who consumes, purchases, or possesses alcohol is dismissed. FOCUS WRP Staff shares the reason for dismissal with the student's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within 24 hours.

### **TOBACCO/NICOTINE**

Students may not use or possess tobacco or nicotine products while at the FOCUS Hope House, DRC, Church, FOCUS Ministries Office, or any other FOCUS WRP outing. If discovered, FOCUS WRP Staff confiscates the product, and the student receives disciplinary action.

### **MEDICATIONS**

Students are permitted to use over-the-counter medications or prescription medications if the medications meet all parole/probation requirements. Students report all medications and take them only as directed. FOCUS WRP Staff monitors the use of medications to ensure students remain in compliance.

**Prescription Medication:** Students authorize the release of prescription medication information to FOCUS WRP, and all prescription medication must be taken as directed by the physician. Taking prescription medication in a manner that is more than the recommended dosage or outside of the prescribed method is prohibited. Students may not receive the prescription medication of another person or give their prescription medications to anyone else. Students who wish to stop taking their prescribed medications or want to modify their medications in any way must do so under the direction of their physicians.

**Over-the-Counter Medication:** Students remain in compliance with probation/parole requirements even regarding over-the-counter medications. All medications must be reported to the FOCUS WRP and must be taken as directed for the intended purpose.

Students who do not comply with medication guidelines may be dismissed. The FOCUS WRP shares the reason for dismissal with the student's Probation or Parole Officer in an Exit Report sent within 24 hours.

## STUDENT PASS REQUESTS

Students are not permitted to leave the premises of FOCUS Hope House, DRC, church, or other FOCUS WRP outing location without permission from FOCUS WRP staff at any time, for any reason. After thirty days of successful participation in the FOCUS WRP, students are eligible to begin submitting Student Pass Requests to spend time with loved ones. Students are expected to attend a weekly worship service and adhere to the FOCUS WRP Guidelines even while on a pass. Student Passes are privileges that are subject to delay or revocation as part of disciplinary action.

### SUBMITTING A REQUEST

- All students who wish to leave on pass must submit a Student Pass Request to FOCUS WRP staff no later than Monday evening at 6:00 pm for the following Saturday or Sunday.
- Student Pass Requests must include a full description of the student's transportation arrangements, all whereabouts, planned activities, and persons with whom the student will interact. Deviations from the Student Pass Request are strictly prohibited.
- Omission or misrepresentation on Student Pass Requests is a serious guideline infraction and results in disciplinary action that may include dismissal.
- Student Pass Requests are reviewed by the FOCUS WRP staff first and must also be approved by the student's Probation or Parole Officer.
- The approval or denial of each pass is communicated to the student by Wednesday evening at the Hope House Meeting. Students must return from pass no later than 6:00 pm on the scheduled date of return.

### LENGTH OF PASSES

- Day Passes must take place on a Saturday or Sunday and may be no longer than eight (8) hours.
- Overnight Passes may take place on a Friday or Saturday, beginning at 6:00 pm and may be no longer than twenty-four (24) hours.
- Weekend Passes may begin at 6:00 pm on Friday and may be no longer than forty-eight (48) hours.
- Two Day Passes may be used on consecutive days, but Day and Overnight Passes may not be used on consecutive days, as it then becomes a Weekend Pass.

### STUDENT PASS ALLOWANCES

The following chart shows the monthly allowance options for Student Pass Requests. Students may choose to exchange an Overnight or Weekend Pass for a Day Pass.

**MONTHLY PASS ALLOWANCE**

| # Months  | Day Passes | Overnight Passes | Weekend Passes |
|-----------|------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1 month   | 2 Day      | 0 Overnight      | 0 Weekend      |
| 2 months  | 4 Day      | 0 Overnight      | 0 Weekend      |
| 3 months  | 3 Day      | 1 Overnight      | 0 Weekend      |
| 4 months  | 3 Day      | 2 Overnight      | 0 Weekend      |
| 6 months  | 2 Day      | 2 Overnight      | 1 Weekend      |
| 10 months | 0 Day      | 2 Overnight      | 2 Weekend      |

## **FINANCES**

With the assistance of the FOCUS WRP staff, each student will learn fiscal responsibility, establish a personal checking account, and fund a Student Savings Account to prepare for independent living.

### **FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS**

Students may not enter into financial agreements with third parties without the permission of the FOCUS WRP.

### **PERSONAL CHECKING ACCOUNTS**

Students establish personal checking accounts during the first ninety (90) days of the FOCUS WRP. FOCUS WRP has access to view banking activity to provide assistance and accountability.

### **RENT**

Each student is required to gain employment at ninety (90) days and begin paying rent of \$120 per week. A student who starts working but does not have a full work week yet will pay a prorated amount.

### **SAVINGS**

The Student Savings Account provides a method for students to prepare for independent living successfully. Upon employment, students begin funding their Student Savings Account according to the Student Savings Schedule. Funds may be accessed for independent living expenses with approval by FOCUS WRP staff. Students must budget and use their checking account for regular expenses or special family occasions, not their Student Savings Account funds. If a student follows her student savings schedule, meets all requirements, and does not access her savings account for emergencies, she will have over \$845 for her independent living expenses upon graduation. Students may set aside more money in their savings account if they choose.

#### STUDENT SAVINGS SCHEDULE

|                         |               |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter | \$0 per week  | \$0 total savings   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter | \$20 per week | \$260 total savings |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter | \$20 per week | \$520 total savings |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter | \$25 per week | \$845 total savings |

### **PAYMENT**

Students' rent and savings payments are due on a weekly basis. Failure to provide required fees may result in dismissal.

## **DISCIPLINE, DISMISSAL, AND VOLUNTARY EXIT**

The FOCUS WRP attempts to assist every student toward a successful reintegration and maintains open communication about expectations. When corrective action is needed, most students require only a coaching conversation to get back on track, but when a student is unwilling to cooperate, a disciplinary consequence is carried out.

### **DISCIPLINE**

A student who does not comply with the guidelines is given a written notice of the guideline infraction, a redirection, and a consequence. Consequences may include loss of a current privilege, delay of gaining a new privilege, additional responsibilities, or dismissal.

### **DISMISSAL**

A student who is dismissed from the FOCUS WRP receives a verbal notification of the dismissal and a written notification when possible. A FOCUS WRP staff member supervises her departure, and she is not permitted to return to the home without the express consent and escort of a FOCUS staff member. FOCUS WRP sends an Exit Report to her Parole or Probation Officer within twenty-four (24) hours. When a student is unavailable to gather her personal belongings, FOCUS WRP staff gathers her belongings for her. The funds from the Student's Savings Account, minus her \$500 program fee and due rent, are given to her in the form of a check.

### **VOLUNTARY EXIT**

A student who chooses to leave the FOCUS WRP voluntarily before graduation follows the same departure procedure as a dismissed student.

## **GRADUATION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING**

After a student has completed all DRC Levels and has met the requirements of the FOCUS WRP for one year, she must submit her application for graduation. Her application includes her approved independent living plan and a testimony of what God has done in her life during the past year, which she shares with the other students in a formal presentation.

Upon graduation, she receives her graduation certificate and assistance in implementing her independent living plan, with *guided* access to her Student Savings Account. She may keep her \$500 program fee as a reward for graduation that is to be used for independent living expenses ONLY. Her exit to independent living may not take more than thirty (30) days, and she must comply with all guidelines during her stay.

Graduates are encouraged to maintain relationships with HOPE Mentors and FOCUS WRP staff during independent living and are always considered part of the FOCUS Family.