

PREPARING FAMILY AND SUPPORTERS FOR CONTACT

Why Others Become Part of the PSR Process

Many people assume the PSR investigation focuses only on them. In reality, probation officers often speak with family members, employers, and others who know the person being investigated.

The probation officer is gathering information to verify what has been said and to understand family dynamics, support systems, and potential risks. What others say can influence how the PSR is written.

I've seen people undermine their own preparation because they didn't realize how important it was to prepare the people around them.

What Probation Officers May Ask Others

Probation officers may ask family members or supporters about:

- » Your background and upbringing
- » Family relationships and responsibilities
- » Substance-use history or treatment
- » Employment and financial stability
- » How your conviction has affected those around you
- » Whether you accept responsibility and are taking steps to change

These questions are designed to check consistency. When answers align with your narrative and documentation, credibility increases. When answers conflict, skepticism grows.

Why Inconsistent Statements Create Problems

Inconsistencies don't have to be dramatic to cause damage. Small differences in dates, descriptions, or emphasis can lead a probation officer to question accuracy.

For example, if you describe yourself as a primary caregiver and a family member describes limited involvement, that discrepancy may influence how family responsibilities are portrayed. If you report a substance-use history and a supporter denies it, eligibility for certain programs may be affected.

Most inconsistencies are unintentional. They come from lack of communication, not dishonesty.

How to Prepare Others Without Coaching Them

Preparing family members and supporters does not mean telling them what to say. It means helping them understand the purpose of the PSR and the importance of accuracy.

You can:

- » Explain what the PSR is and why it matters
- » Let them know a probation officer may contact them
- » Encourage honesty and clarity
- » Ask them to speak from their own experience, not assumptions

This approach respects integrity while reducing the risk of conflicting information.

Why Tone and Professionalism Matter

Family members are often emotional when speaking with probation officers. That's understandable. But anger, blame, or defensiveness can create problems.

Encourage those around you to remain calm and respectful. The goal is not to argue your case, but to provide accurate information that helps the probation officer understand context.

Professionalism supports credibility.



Coordinating With Counsel When Appropriate

In some cases, it may be wise to coordinate contact through your attorney, especially if there are sensitive issues or appellate considerations. That decision should be made thoughtfully and in consultation with counsel.

What matters most is that the people around you understand their role in the process and approach it responsibly.

Why This Preparation Protects You

The PSR becomes a single, consolidated record. Probation officers rely on patterns and consistency when writing it. When your statements, documentation, and the words of others align, the report is more likely to reflect reality.

Preparing family and supporters is not about control. It's about awareness.

What Comes Next

In the next lesson, I'll walk you through the structure of the PSR itself, explaining the major sections and why some parts of the report require extra care.

Understanding how the document is organized will help you anticipate where information will appear and why accuracy matters so much.

