

# ADVOCACY GUIDE FOR MOTHERS

Steps to Take When You Have Concerns About Your Loved One's Care or Facility

*Know who to call, what to document, and how to advocate effectively.*

## **1. Speak to Your Loved One**

Ask them for as many details as possible: date, time, names of staff involved, and exactly what happened. Encourage them to document everything and file an internal grievance if possible.

## **2. Contact the Facility Directly**

Call the prison or jail and ask to speak with the housing unit manager or case manager. Remain calm and professional. Document the name, date, and what was said.

## **3. Request to Speak to the Warden**

If the issue is serious and unresolved, request to speak with or write to the facility warden. Be specific, factual, and firm in your letter or call. Retain a copy of any letter or email.

## **4. File a Complaint with the State Ombudsman**

Each state has a correctional ombudsman who handles complaints of mistreatment or facility issues. Find their contact information on the Department of Corrections website and submit a formal complaint in writing.

## **5. Contact the Department of Corrections (DOC)**

Email or call the DOC's central office and report the issue. Ask for a case number or follow-up protocol. Be sure to mention any serious safety, medical, or legal concerns.

## **6. Involve Your Elected Officials**

Reach out to your state legislators and ask them to inquire or intervene. Provide documentation, dates, and a brief timeline of what has occurred. Ask for oversight or investigation if needed.

## **7. Contact Legal or Advocacy Organizations**

If the issue involves abuse, medical neglect, or legal rights, contact a civil rights attorney, public defender, or nonprofit advocacy group like ACLU, Prisoners' Legal Services, or local reform coalitions.

## **8. Keep a Detailed Log**

Maintain a notebook or file with all correspondence, names, dates, times, outcomes, and next steps. This will help you advocate more effectively and follow up if escalation is needed.

## **9. Notify A Mother's Cry**

Let A Mother's Cry know what is happening. We may be able to assist, advocate, or connect you with someone who can. You are not alone.