

Getting through your first night

The first night in prison is often the hardest. Your mind races, your body goes into survival mode, and it can feel like the loneliest moment of your life. This guide is here to talk you through those hours, and remind you: you will get through it. Many of us have.

Breathe. Slowly. In through the nose, out through the mouth. Count if it helps.

Lie down and get under the blanket, even if you don't feel like sleeping. It gives your body a sense of safety.

Don't let your brain spin stories about what's next. Just get through the night.

Write down what you're thinking - even on the back of your canteen sheet.

If you feel unsafe or unwell, use the cell bell. You won't be the first or the last.

Repeat this quietly to yourself: I am not the worst thing I've ever done.

You don't have to figure everything out tonight. You just have to breathe through until morning.

Reassurances for the First Night

- You're not alone, even if it feels that way.
- For many women, the first night is particularly difficult. Adjustment takes time, and support can help.
- Many of us have cried, panicked, shut down. It's normal.
- There are people who care. Ask for a Listener or Samaritans phone if you need to talk.
- Your world has shrunk, but your future hasn't disappeared.
- Morning will come. Then you can start again.