

The mum guilt guide

Being a mother in prison comes with a very particular kind of pain. The guilt, the worry, the helplessness - it's real. This support sheet is for any woman inside who is carrying the weight of being a mum while also serving time. You're not alone. And your love for your child is not cancelled by your sentence.

Coping with the Guilt

Remind yourself: feeling guilty means you care. That love hasn't gone anywhere.

Separate the crime from the mothering. You're still a mum. That role continues.

Write to your child if it's allowed. Even short notes can build a bridge.

If contact isn't possible, write letters to keep for them later. It's still connection.

Don't let shame silence you. Your story isn't over - it's still being written.

Staying Connected (When Possible)

Phone calls, video calls, letters - keep them age-appropriate but consistent.

Ask family or carers to send photos, updates, or drawings when they can.

Create a routine around contact, like writing every Sunday or calling after dinner.

Keep a diary or memory book that you can share with your child later.

Remember: consistency matters more than perfection.

Self-Kindness & Reflection Prompts

- What would I say to another mum in my situation? Can I say that to myself?
- What do I want my child to know about me - now and later?
- How can I honour my role as a mother from where I am today?
- What small act of love can I offer to myself this week?
- What does being a mother mean to me, beyond proximity?