

WORLDWIDE PEACE IS POSSIBLE TODAY



ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

OVERVIEW

THE AVP MISSION

The Alternatives to Violence Project is a multi-cultural volunteer organization that is dedicated to reducing interpersonal violence in our society.

AVP workshops present conflict management skills that can enable individuals to build successful interpersonal interactions, gain insights into themselves, and find new and positive approaches to their lives.

The AVP program offers experiential workshops that empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation and trust.

THE AVP MODEL

We Learn by Experience

The AVP program teaches through experiential learning with a minimum of lecture. The AVP workshops consist of a series of structured experiences, or exercises. Intellectual knowledge is generally not very helpful in the midst of conflict but repeating nonviolent behavior that has been previously practiced is helpful. Role plays are a key focus of AVP workshops. They help participants discover new ways of dealing with conflict nonviolently, and it gives them an opportunity to practice new behavior.

The Best Way to Kill the Program is to Require People to Attend It

A fundamental requirement is voluntary participation in the program on both an individual and an institutional level. When the program is required or imposed by others, it is probably doomed to failure. Our workshops are about personal growth, and people can only grow when they choose to do so themselves. All our workshop leaders are volunteers, and we expect all our participants to be volunteers also.

The Process Works by Itself

Over a period of years, AVP has evolved a structure, a process, and a set of exercises for workshops that really work. If the leaders stick to the process, the process will work with good leadership and with ordinary leadership. It has been said that any organization can prosper with great and charismatic leadership, but only a great organization can prosper with ordinary leadership. AVP seeks to develop great leaders, but it is not dependent upon them.

The Way for the Program to Grow is to Train New Leaders

Much of AVP's growth and success is the result of empowering people and training them to be leaders. We believe that anyone who really wants to be a leader can learn to be one. We do not have "star" trainers. We have a team leadership model which discourages

“stars”. We insist that no one conduct an AVP workshop alone, not only because such leadership encourages “stardom”, but also because it fails to model the team leadership that we consider essential for teaching cooperative behavior patterns. One of the key functions of our lead trainers is to help other members of the team become better leaders.

The Program is Blessed with Good Training Manuals

In the beginning, AVP flourished and grew miraculously, even though we had little structure and no adequate training manuals to use. The underlying philosophy of AVP was (and is) very different from the average organizational philosophy. Drawing on human relations training and our own ongoing experience, we wrote our own training materials using the creativity of our own volunteers. Developed in this way, the manuals have become an organic part of the AVP experience. Every leader now has a clear, well-written training manual that he or she can rely on, and may even have contributed to. The manuals are in a constant state of evolution and updating with creative ideas. Every one of our trainers may contribute to this process as he or she strives to produce high quality workshops.

In Our Organization Power Seeps Up, It Does Not Trickle Down

Our organizational model is one of building from the grass roots up. We believe that this approach is essential to nonviolence training. Our decision making process is one of consensus. AVP is about community, about acknowledging and encouraging the potential of all of us to grow and develop, and about working together by agreement and without coercion. AVP is measured and tested by its adherence to these values.

Local Coordinators

Our system of workshop coordinators for each institution or community is essential to making the system work. The local coordinator is a volunteer who organizes workshop teams and arranges workshop schedules with the institution or in the community for which he or she is responsible. Most coordinators are lead trainers who lead by example. They conduct many workshops themselves and invite others to do the same.

The AVP Program is a “Win-Win-Win Model”

The participants, whether in prison or in the community, win because they get the training they need to cope with violence, both their own and others. The AVP facilitators win because they have an opportunity to improve their leadership skills, get new insights about themselves, other people, and a nonviolent life. Prison, school or organization administrators and staff win by hosting a program that will improve the level of cooperative and nonviolent behavior in their institutions, making their jobs more rewarding. Communities win and community life is enhanced when their members learn new skills to cope with violence, enhance their lives and families, and build community.

The AVP Process

AVP workshops are a process of seeking and sharing, and not of teaching. We do not bring answers to the people we work with. We do not have their answers. But we believe that their answers lie buried in the same place as their questions and their problems – within themselves. Our job is to provide a stimulus and a “seeker friendly” environment to encourage them to search within themselves for solutions. People come to us with lifetimes of experience behind them. We believe that all this experience is valuable, and that it can be built on to make new lives. We try to draw out those experiences and help people look at them. In doing so, we are ourselves in a constant process of learning, from each other and from them. We try to make AVP an opportunity to examine life and make it more worth living.

The History and Focus of AVP

The program began in 1975 in the New York State prison system, and still continues to work there. Its first workshop was held in Green Haven Prison when an inmate group felt the need of nonviolence training in preparation for their upcoming roles as counselors in an experimental program in a Division for Youth institution for under-age offenders. AVP’s program of workshops has now spread to over 40 states and 40 countries, including parts of the world torn by political strife and human suffering, where AVP has been a beacon of hope and a path of strength.

For some years, the focus was on prisons and the major effort was to help people reduce the level of violence in the prison environment, to survive it, and at the same time to deal with the violence of their own lives. As time passed, it became more clear that the violence of prisons is merely a distilled version of the violence pervading the whole society. People unconnected with prisons began to seek AVP training, and it was recognized that the program was needed as much, or more, in the outside community as in the prisons. The program was extended to such varied groups as staffs of homeless shelters and foster care agencies, groups such as prison officers and developmentally disabled adults, and other groups generally interested in conflict resolution. At the urging of many incarcerated people, AVP has developed a strong and extensive youth component. Workshops have been offered geared to a variety of age levels and community settings such as schools, group homes and organizations supporting youth at risk. A separate AVP Youth Manual was published in 2000.

Workshops

There are three levels of workshops in the AVP program – Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators. The Basic workshop is 16 hours which can be divided in increments as needed, such as 2 hours, 4 hours, or 6, 5, 5. The workshop is most manageable when there is a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 20-24 participants. A fourth step or level is experienced when participants continue beyond the Training for Facilitators as apprentice facilitators, gaining experience and skill, while integrating the process and principles of AVP as an ongoing learning process and lifestyle. This fourth

level is critical because it is in sharing oneself deeply that true, lasting change is found, and it is through that sharing that others find nonviolent paths toward peace and happiness.

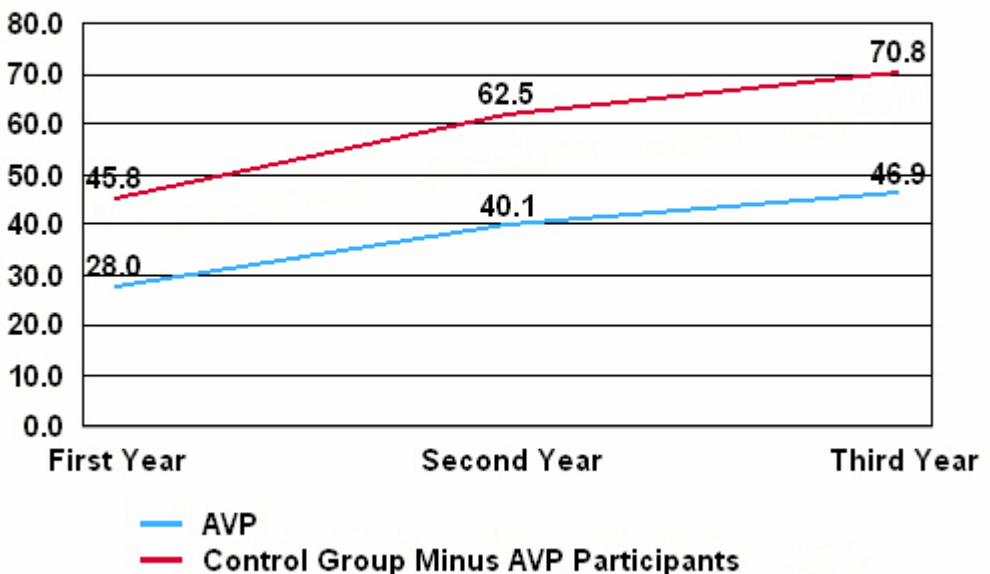
AVP IMPACT

Prison-to-Community Effect - California

- A man in prison took AVP, and his wife was impressed at his improvement. Her son had problems with his anger and had expressed a willingness to find a way to deal with it. He decided to take AVP himself, and changed his life. His incarcerated father was encouraged to see that he could still positively influence his family from behind bars.
- A man in prison, incarcerated for some 25 years, who had taken many programs as they became available, finally took AVP. His counselor was impressed by his sudden change of attitude, and upon seeing this, his wife decided to take AVP herself.
- A man incarcerated for years as a “lifer” at CMC, having taken many programs, took the first AVP workshop there when the program became available. He continued in the program, and trained as a workshop facilitator. His shift in attitude was noticed and he was given a release date. Upon arriving back in the community, he contacted AVP-California, and co-founded AVP-Antelope Valley. Not long after, he was instrumental in forming a chapter of Youth Build as well, helping youths to reclaim their lives through education and career building.

*2002-2005 Study
Delaware Maximum Security Prison*

Comparative Cumulative Back to Prison Rates



Youth-to-Community Effect - California

1. A high school student was experiencing problems at school and at home. His parents did not know what to do and psychological counseling was not helping. Being apprised about AVP's effect on attitudes, he and his parents cooperated in getting him to an AVP workshop. His step-father was impressed by an AVP video provided and shared it with his (future) boss. Upon completion of the 18-hour workshop, the young student shared with his counselor his enthusiastic support for bringing AVP to the rest of the students.

Professional Peer-to-Peer Effect

1. "Prior to the training, our receiving room on my shift [7-3] had 5 or 6 uses of force per month. Since the training [75% of his staff had training], there have been a maximum of 5 uses of force in the last 2 years."

Captain Edmonds (city prison system)

2. "I have personally seen such a major difference in the way they perceive themselves, the way they interact with each other, and the way they interact with support staff, whether they be social service, medical or maintenance. The rate of sick abuse or not coming to work has dropped and the overall attitude of the workplace has improved."

Captain Whitaker (city prison system)

Inmate-to-Inmate Effect

1. "I'd like to take this opportunity to express my support for and admiration of the Alternatives to Violence Program. **As a Warden** of a State Prison in Delaware I saw the AVP facilitate a dramatic reduction in the number of assaults between inmates in what had been a difficult maximum security unit.

"As the program continued to run and "graduate" more and more inmates, the overall climate improved to a point where the inmates were actually seeking out ways to positively effect their living environment.

"**As the Chief of Prisons** for Delaware, I've seen similar results in each of the prisons that have implemented Alternatives to Violence Programs.

"There have never been any security breaches and the staff and inmate population alike respect the AVP volunteers.

"I'd highly recommend the Alternatives to Violence Program to any correctional manager and especially to those experiencing a high level of inmate on inmate conflict."

*Stan Taylor, Commissioner
Delaware Department of Correction*

2. “Before AVP I only thought about violence, there was no second option. AVP saved my life, it gave me another option. The violence in my life got worse and worse. I spent most of my 11 years in prison in the hole. I am not a sensitive, caring, understanding individual, but this program has really had an impact on me. During my first basic *as a trainer*, there were a number of inmates there whom I had been very violent to before. I knew if I was to be a role model, to live AVP, I had to apologize to them for what I had done. **It was odd to apologize to someone I had defeated and who had pleaded for his life to me.** Some friends got out of maximum for having beat up some correctional officers and came to me anxious to get some action. I explained to them that type of activity was not me anymore...When I was a warrior I fought with all the tools I could fight with, I learned to be the best that I could be. Now to be a warrior for nonviolence, I had to learn the tools of AVP.”

Inmate Facilitator, USA

3. “I went into the workshop as a pessimist and I came out as a changed person. I was alive, I was actually alive. I liked what I saw in myself. It was a real high and I've been doing it for two years and I love that feeling. And to see other people awakened in the workshops, to see their lives changed.”

Inmate Facilitator, USA

4. "It's incredible, it's great. The wall came down. AVP makes real change from effects of communism, 70 years is hard to change. It breaks down barriers between employees. It's our first experience of freedom and what it means."

Community Participant, Russia

WHERE IN THE WORLD IS AVP?

AVP in the United States (www.avpusa.org)

Arizona – Phoenix & Tucson

California – www.avpcalifornia.org

Colorado – www.nfnc.org

Connecticut – Newington

Delaware – www.teamcrs.org

Florida – Miami & Tallahassee

Georgia – Albany

Hawaii – Kapa'au

Iowa – Iowa City

Idaho – Emmett

Illinois – Chicago

Indiana – Zionsville

Kentucky – Lexington

Louisiana – Shreveport & Zachary

Massachusetts – Amherst & Acton

Maryland – Derwood & Smithsburg

Maine – Gardiner

Minnesota – www.fnvw.org

Missouri – Columbia

Montana – Missoula

North Carolina – Marshall & Pfafftown

North Dakota – Bismarck

Nebraska – Lincoln

New Hampshire – www.avpnh.org

New Jersey – Medford

New Mexico – Santa Fe

Nevada – Reno

New York – King Ferry & New York City

Ohio – Yellow Springs

Oklahoma – Katoosa & Oklahoma City

Pennsylvania – Lancaster & Philadelphia

Rhode Island – Providence

South Carolina – Saint Helena Island

South Dakota – Vermillion & Springfield

Tennessee – Oakridge

Texas – Austin & San Antonio

Utah – Salt Lake City

Virginia – Harrisonburg & Richmond

Vermont – Middlebury

Washington – Seattle

Wyoming – Laramie & Landers

(other locations)

AVP in Australia (www.avpq.org.au & www.avp.org.au)



ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT QLD

www.avpq.org.au

With its first workshops conducted during 1990 in Queensland and New South Wales, AVP held its first workshop at Moretown Correctional Centre in Wacol, Brisbane in 1991. That workshop was very successful and AVP Queensland incorporated in 1992. Since then AVPQ workshops have been held in Queensland at Moreton B, Borallon, Sir David Longlands, the Brisbane Women's Prison, Woodford, and Toowoomba jail, and in the Brisbane area.

AVP in China (www.avphk.org)

Hong Kong News



AVP & HIPP



In 2002, people from New Zealand and South Africa conducted the first AVP workshops in China at The White House in Shatin and AVP-Hong Kong held workshops with the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society, a Hong Kong NGO. They continued to facilitate workshops with HKSAR Social Welfare Department, AVP-Hong Kong became a licensed charity in 2003 and celebrated its 5th Anniversary in 2007, at Youth Square in Tseung Kwan O.

AVP in New Zealand (www.avpaotearoa.org.nz)



AVP Aotearoa

In 1991, people in New Zealand invited AVP to introduce workshops in Auckland West Prison and Auckland community. In 1992, Alternatives to Violence Project – Aotearoa was established in Auckland. AVP Aotearoa Facilitators have assisted with introducing AVP to Tonga, South Africa and Hong Kong.

AVP in Africa (www.aglionline.org)

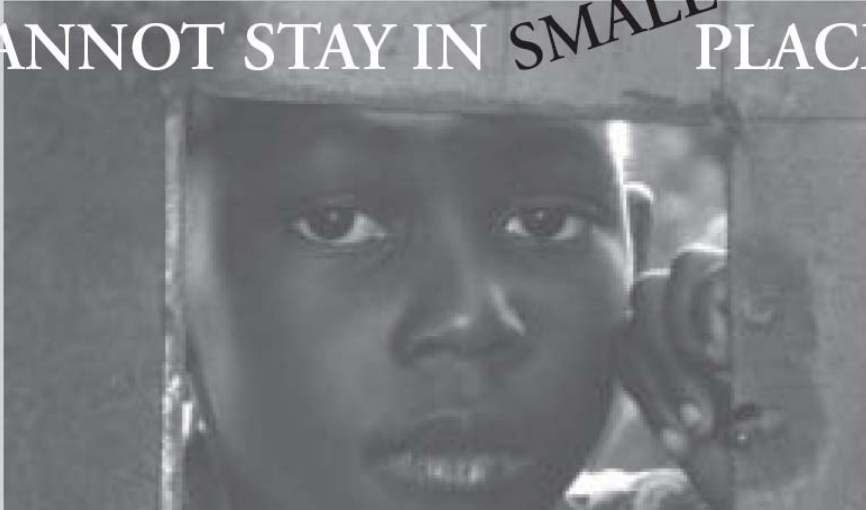


African Great Lakes Initiative

Burundi Congo Kenya Rwanda Uganda

AVP Annual International Gatherings have been held in Nigeria & South Africa. AVP groups are also found in the Republic of Namibia, and Tanzania. The 2008 Gathering will be in Kenya.

PEACE CANNOT STAY IN SMALL PLACES



From “Peace Cannot Stay in Small Places” – an evaluation:

“Peace cannot stay in small places,” said Ndagijimama Abdon, an elder Gacaca judge in Gisenyi, “it is good when peace reaches everywhere.” Abdon’s message of hope and expectation is characteristic of what we found as we traveled Rwanda to evaluate the impact of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) on Rwanda’s slow recovery from genocide. As we interviewed more and more people, we began to feel that AVP is gaining momentum here in Rwanda. Again and again, interviewees issued a clarion-call for AVP to continue, to reach into every corner of the country, into every heart. Every person needs AVP, interviewees said again and again. Blanket our communities, reach every Gacaca judge, every leader, every genocide survivor. Go into the prisons and work with those who have been accused of genocide. Take AVP to our neighboring countries and help our region find peace. To the participants in this evaluation, AVP is not just a series of workshops that stays confined to small meeting rooms. Though AVP starts as a short three-day workshop, it inevitably ripples outward reaching small corners of each life in unexpected ways. Now in Rwanda, 4 years after the program was introduced here, AVP is beginning to feel like a movement: a movement of hope, of healing, of slow reconciliation, of possibility.

www.aglionline.org/PDF/AVP%20Rwanda.pdf

From “I Still Believe There is Good in All People” – an evaluation:

In February 2001, the Quaker church in Rwanda began a joint project with the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI), in which they brought the highly successful Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) to Rwanda. For the past two years, AVP-Rwanda has been a pilot project. After an initial training cycle and subsequent capacity building, AVP-Rwanda began working within the Gacaca system. Beginning in October 2002, it has provided training for over 300 Gacaca judges and administrators. As the Gacaca system is about to start in more parts of the country, AVP-Rwanda has been asked to serve the thousands of judges who can benefit from this training.

www.aglionline.org/PDF/Rwanda%20Gacaca%20Evaluation.pdf

Armenia	Germany	Nicaragua
Australia	Haiti	Nigeria
Azerbaijan	Hong Kong	Palestine/West Bank
Brazil	Hungary	Russia
Belarus	India	Rwanda
Bosnia/Hertzegovina	Indonesia	Singapore
Burundi	Ireland	Slovenia
Canada	Japan	South Africa
Caucasus Region	Jordan	Spain
Colombia	Kenya	Sudan
Congo	Lithuania	Sweden
Costa Rica	Macedonia	Tanzania
Croatia	Mexico	Tonga
Cuba	Namibia	Uganda
Dominican Republic	Nepal	Ukraine
Ecuador	Netherlands	United Kingdom
Georgia	New Zealand	United States

AVP



UNITED KINGDOM

<http://www.avpbritain.org.uk/>



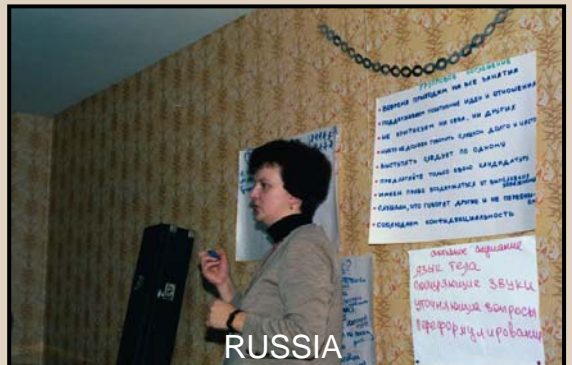
ARMENIA

<http://www.astro.ucla.edu/~chris/raffi/raffi.html>



CROATIA

http://www.pcusa.org/missionconnections/letters/kurtzs/kurtzs_0312.htm



RUSSIA

<http://www.astro.ucla.edu/~chris/raffi/raffi.html>

The Alternatives to Violence Project in Delaware

A Three-Year Cumulative Recidivism Study



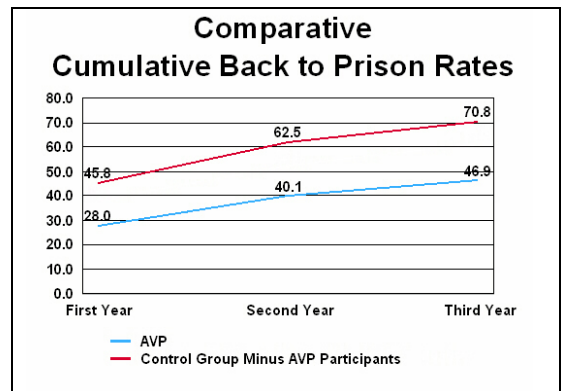
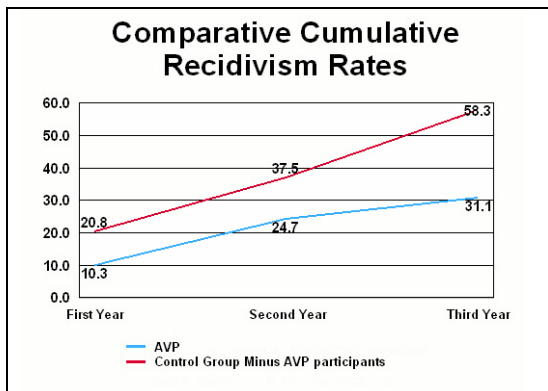
September 2005

Evaluation funded by the Drane Family Fund
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Excerpts and paraphrasing by Doug Couch by permission of:

Marsha L. Miller, Ph.D. & John A. Shuford, M.B.A., Ed.S, FACHCA

Recidivism statistics were developed for a random sample of Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) participants from 1993 to 2001 at the Delaware Correctional Center, the state's largest correctional institution, which houses male inmates with the most serious offenses. The AVP sample consistently performed better each year for three years both in recidivism and in the rate of return to prison for any reason. These striking results suggest that AVP is effective in reducing the likelihood of recidivism... The goal is to be able to examine the resumption of criminal careers apart from the consequence of rules violations that involve discretion and may be treated differently over time.



Inmate Comment: "I always thought there were two kinds of people, strong and weak. When I learned the difference between passive, assertive and aggressive, it totally changed my perception. That was the turning point for me. Strength is now something that comes from within."

Prison Official Comment: "Your program has been a mainstay contributing to the lowering of violence in the Facility. Time and time again, we have witnessed the effectiveness of the Alternatives to Violence Project through changed behavior of inmates, who might otherwise have committed violent acts which would have lengthened their period of incarceration. It is my sincere hope you are able to continue providing the Alternatives to Violence Project here at Eastern. We have no substitute program; we must rely on you and your staff for this vital support." [Philip Coombe, Jr., Superintendent, Eastern Correctional Facility, New York.]

"AVP starts by establishing a sense of dignity or self-worth in participants. This serves to instill a willingness and ability to communicate. Participants first have to see themselves as worthy of being communicated with, in order for them to initiate the process. As they begin communicating, they develop affective trust [cognitive trust is believing that others are competent to carry out a particular task, whereas affective trust is believing others will support and help you as part of your friendship]. As trust builds, they begin to share feelings and learn that others are more like them than they are different. This leads to the recognition that others are 'OK.'" [page 19, **Sloane, Stanton (2002)**. *A Study of the Effectiveness of the Alternatives to Violence Project Workshops in a Prison System*, Ph.D. Dissertation Case Western University.]

As affective trust increases, participants begin to see others as having value, which is the foundation for empathy. The result is that pro-social behaviors begin to develop rather quickly. As their self-confidence and self-esteem develop, they are less affected by the negative influences in their housing units and in the institution in general. This is reinforced by the high level of visibility of this positive "community" in the institution and the fact that other graduates tend to reinforce what they have learned from AVP. It also creates curiosity in new inmates who are apprehensive about prison life and are drawn to the AVP community.

Of long term significance is the relationship of these changes on maturation. Two very important skills or abilities of adult maturity are being able to develop meaningful relationships and make healthy decisions. Prison, by its design, arrests the development of these two skills. AVP effectively re-engages this maturation process by:

- Fostering the development of empathy. AVP increases participants' self-awareness and self-knowledge. When they look into themselves, they discover their "innate health," which we all have. This increases their self-acceptance, which allows them to be more accepting and risk taking with others. This is the basis of empathy, which is necessary for meaningful relationships with significant others.
- Empowering participants through interpersonal and intrapersonal skills development and attitude change. Inmates typically feel themselves to be victims, powerless and alienated. AVP helps them realize they are co-creators of their lives, which with positive attitude change, leads to responsible and healthy decision-making.

The low recidivism rate of AVP participants should make this program attractive to Departments of Correction. In addition, an earlier study (Sloan 2002) showed that AVP has a positive effect on prison discipline.

It seems likely that the impact could be even greater if AVP were combined with a full service re-entry program after inmates are released, one that would help them avoid problems that lead to rule violations that result in returns to prison. AVP Delaware is currently exploring the possibility of developing a re-entry program that would provide a positive support community and assist with participants' many logistical and survival needs. Another possibility might be to combine AVP with other existing inside inmate programs as well as programs that provide transition services.

<http://www.avpav.org/fullstudy.pdf>

TRANSFORMING POWER & CARING

A Chance Encounter *Lorig Charkoudian, Ph.D., Executive Director, Community Mediation Maryland*

An account given by Lorig Charkoudian, Ph.D., one life changed in California as Karen Cauble spread AVP to the west coast. Diana Couch, a cofounder of AVP – Antelope Valley, was mentored by Karen and Lorig in the early 1990s...and the ripple continues.

A chance encounter with Karen Cauble changed the entire course of my life. I was 18 and a freshman at Pomona College. I had just started attending meeting at Claremont Friend's meeting house. I was looking around at the brochures and I picked up one that looked sort of interesting -- the AVP brochure for the area.

The contact was Karen Cauble, who at the time was living in San Diego. I called her and said I was interested in the program and asked if she would be willing to come to Pomona College to lead a workshop for students there. She came within a few months and blew us all away.


The workshop created such hope for us about the possibility of non-violence in a very real way. And Karen created such hope and excitement for me about the possibilities that lay for adventure in a life that's dedicated to non-violence and peace and people and humanity. Under Karen's wing, I became a facilitator and Karen then connected me with folks in New York, where I had an opportunity to do workshops when I was home over the summer and enter prison for the first time. When I returned in the Fall, 19 years old, Karen started taking me into prison and I had a chance to experience Karen and those that she had trained in a new way, watching how powerful her love for the inmates was. I saw her commitment to peace and non-violence and how it transformed a group of inmates. Karen mentored me and I became a facilitator. And it was through my work as a facilitator and through connections that I made through being a facilitator, that I eventually got also connected to people doing community based mediation work -- conflict resolution and violence prevention at a grassroots level, which is what I am still doing today. I credit Karen for opening the doors that brought me this and I credit Karen for creating hope and vision for me.

15 years later, I still volunteer as an AVP facilitator as well. And it's still the same powerful amazing work every time I do a workshop. I now run a state-wide program in Maryland, Community Mediation Maryland, which supports the work of 17 grassroots centers around the state doing non-violent conflict resolution, community based mediation, and violence prevention work. And so in a lot of ways, the work that I'm now doing in Maryland now, leads back to seeds that Karen planted.

Karen has planted many seeds over the years and inspired so many people who have gone on and continued planting seeds and continue doing powerful peace work throughout the country and throughout the world. Karen is, in some ways, a Johnny Appleseed for peace, and I'm honored to have had her as a mentor and to have her as a foundation in my life.



ladies in
Tennis Shoes
Are **SOLE** Volunteers



Two great ladies, “Kind Kit” and “Eager Ev” Pilgrim have spent a decade as the sole community volunteers for the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) at Eastern Correctional Institution.

Over 10,000 prisoners have been housed at ECI this decade, and during that time, 2,000 prisoners have completed AVP only due to these amazing ladies, who have introduced and promoted AVP here despite innumerable obstacles.

Filling a niche at Eastern, “Kind Kit” and “Eager Ev” bring AVP to prisoners, showing them techniques that provide “win-win” solutions which generate loving respect and a sense of community. By debriefing role-plays, deconstructing the decision-making process, and analyzing communication feedback, AVP shows prisoners how to use

“Transforming Power” to change the outcome of possible conflict.

“Kind Kit” and “Eager Ev” have helped reduce inmate-on-officer, inmate-on-inmate, and parolee violence and recidivism, working with murderers, rapists, and others, by promoting ethics and values in a valueless environment.



Adapted from a letter by an inmate



Living AVP Principles in Prison

A New Zealand Offering
THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES
That Must be LIVED & BREATHED!
Dashing Dynamic Dave, NZ

I guess you could say I had a very violent childhood with what was done to me – and I did to others. I have been in and out of institutions since 1974 when I was five, in prison since I was a teenager, on a charge of murdering someone I was falsely led to believe had

abused a little boy I cared about. Most of my family judged – and generally rejected me for this, all except for my youngest sister, who never wavered from her love for me.

It was very hard to later hear news that she had been sexually abused by my older cousin, who has almost the same name as I do – I had never met him. He was convicted of this offense, and came to jail, into a separate voluntary segregation unit for sexual offenders, afraid of meeting me and facing possible revenge..

Because I've been inside for a long time, and developed trust here, I was put onto a carpentry work crew, and was doing some building down at this unit. I was working on the roof of the building when I saw my cousin walk into the yard – someone pointed him out to me. He hadn't seen me, but I followed him from up on the roof – my builders' hammer and chisel in my hands, my anger building up inside my mind about what he had done to my sister. We were in a part of the compound that was just him, me and one of my friends. I was close enough to touch – or spear – him, and I called his name.

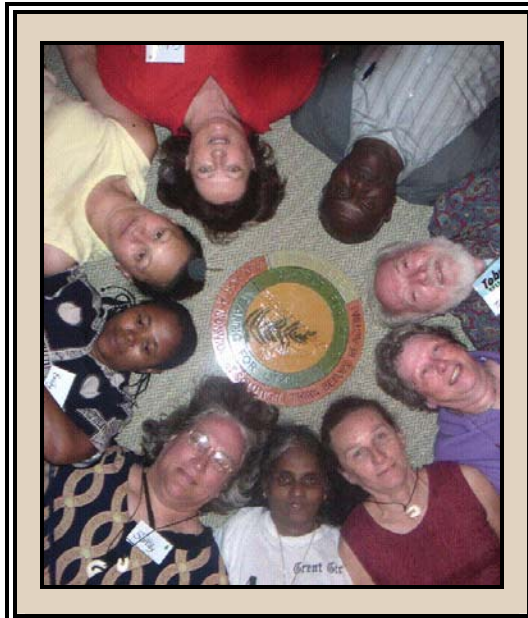
He stopped, looking up and trying to see who I was. I saw first recognition dawn in his eyes, then shock, eventually fear – he was trembling visibly – as he let my reputation sink in, knowing I was capable of killing him.

For what seemed like many minutes we stood staring at each other, I had so many thoughts. The old me would have just jumped down and killed him, and those ideas were battling inside me. I thought of how killing him would only add more time – and that I could have got revenge for him hurting my sister. But I also thought of all I had achieved, my changes, the people who trusted me who I would let down – and I cried. I thought of what had happened just two days before, when a cousin of the man I had murdered suddenly told me that he forgave me for what I had done...how could I accept his caring and yet so much wanted to hurt my cousin. I thought of all I would have lost, and I cried. I knew that if I'd got down off the roof, and taken one tiny step, I wouldn't be able to turn back, and would be sitting in Maximum Security prison right now. In those agonising moments, I realised that my journey with AVP and Christianity had changed me, because the old me would have said “bugger the consequences and just do it”. But I'd thought before reacting – and turned away. I saw him go off into a building. I put down my hammer and chisel and sat for a moment, realizing that the old me had died – it was an awesome realisation.

A few weeks later I was playing in the church band in the same unit, when I saw my cousin walk into the room. It freaked me out, because all the feelings started coming up inside me again. I told Padre – who said for me to bottle it up and control myself. But I couldn't, especially when I had to stand and sing a song called “Jesus Please Hear my Heart”. So, I thought of an alternative...I stood up at the front of the church and poured my heart out to my cousin. I told him how much he had hurt me, how a part of me wanted to kill him for what he had done – I shared the way we do in AVP with the talking stick, to all the other inmates there too. I shared about AVP and my commitment to trying to find a non-violent way of sorting my desire for revenge out. People came up at the end of the Service and shook my hand – then I saw my cousin standing there – tears rolling down his cheeks. I took pity on him and we sat down together, introduced ourselves and talked man to man.

I found that sharing like that took my anger away, and my heart started to heal because I'd released the pain and anger in a positive way, where it had helped to heal more than just myself. That, more than anything else, helped me realise that there are alternatives to violence, and those alternatives have to be lived and breathed, not just picked up now and again.

I know I can never undo the past, or bring back the life of the man I killed – but it has helped me find my humility, and a desire to be loving and giving. I know how precious and beautiful life is – and how great it feels to be able to share with – and care about others in a loving way.



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GUIDES TO TRANSFORMING POWER

1. Seek to resolve conflicts by **reaching common ground**.
2. **Reach for that something in others** that seeks to do good for self and others.
3. **Listen**. Everyone has made a journey. Try to understand where the other person is coming from before you make up your mind.
4. **Base your position on truth**. Since people tend to seek truth, no position based on falsehood can long prevail.
5. **Be ready to revise your position** if you discover it is not fair.
6. When you are clear about your position, **expect to experience great inward power to act** on it. A response that relies on this power will be courageous and without hostility.
7. Do not expect that this response will automatically ward off danger. If you cannot avoid risk, **risk being creative rather than violent**.
8. **Surprise and humor** may help transform.
9. Learn to **trust your inner sense** of when to act and when to withdraw.
10. Work towards new ways of overcoming injustice. **Be willing to suffer** suspicion, hostility, rejection, even persecution if necessary.
11. **Be patient and persistent** in the continuing search for justice.
12. **Help build “community”** based on honesty, respect and caring.

- ◇ Build your own self respect.
- ◇ Respect and care about others.
- ◇ Expect the best.
- ◇ Ask yourself for a nonviolent way. There may be one inside you.
- ◇ Pause – give yourself time – before reacting. It may make you open to Transforming Power.
- ◇ Trust your inner sense of what's needed.
- ◇ Don't rely on weapons, drugs or alcohol. They weaken you.
- ◇ When you have done wrong, admit it, make amends if you can, so that you can forgive yourself, then let it go.
- ◇ Don't threaten or put down.
- ◇ Make friends who will support you. Support the best in them.
- ◇ Risk changing yourself.