



Peaceful Pathways

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

Western Australia

June / July 2006 Newsletter

AVP-WA has employed a project officer

The Committee wants to boost the numbers of people signing up for AVP community workshops this year. We have noticed trends in the last few years which we consider have reduced our effectiveness: one is that potential participants are increasingly reluctant to give up whole weekends – our lives seem so busy, so complicated. This is of course, not peculiar to AVP!

However, because we were fortunate in getting a grant this year from a benevolent foundation, we decided to put it to good use, by employing a part time project officer.

We are very pleased to welcome Anna Alderson, the successful applicant, into our ranks, to follow up many of

the leads we think would be productive, but which we, as volunteers, don't have enough time to attend to diligently.

Too often we have a workshop planned, then we don't get enough registrations and have to cancel. This is very dispiriting. We see such a need for alternatives to violence in our community, and we know that most participants get such a lot out of our courses.

We're never short of ideas about what might be done to reach into more sectors in the community, but we are often short of the time to make the contacts and to do the solid work required to turn ideas into participants.

Planning in Progress !



L to R. Anna Alderson AVP project office, Sally Hertzfeld AVP volunteer, John Provost and Sue Theunissen of Hills Community Support Group planning session for Swan View HS workshop.

AVP-WA is committed to providing opportunities in schools . A workshop is being planned for a group of year nine boys at Swanview HS. It is hope that the workshop will help the boys build connections, a sense of belonging , a better understanding of their emotions, and skills to build healthy relationships.

AVP-WA Welcomes Anna

Anna is a facilitator of conversations. With Marie Martin, she operates a consultancy service to the education and community services sectors trading as Learning Conversations Pty Ltd.

Over the years she has worked in the public service in WA. NSW and the UK as a teacher in Sydney in educational research in government departments in WA and London as a tutor and/or lecturer and/or administrator and/or a consultant at all of the

universities in WA as a CEO in the not-for-profit sector and of a combined universities centre in a voluntary capacity as board member of organisations as diverse as small alternative schools, local and national education associations and community service agencies.

She's served on numerous advisory committees and working parties for all sorts of purposes – for governments (of both persuasions), for universities, and in the not-for-profit sector.

Despite all this sometimes frenetic activity she also has a private life! These days it is focussed on her two adult sons and her wonderful granddaughter who is almost one year old.

Anna is committed to talking through problems and looks forward to her work with AVP helping to promote AVP, build community and negotiate solutions to conflicts in WA.

Up and coming workshops and events

Acacia Workshops / Training
Contact Kelli on 93775560

Aug 4,5,6 T4f combined mainstream and protection blocks

Aug 12 Training at Acacia and possible interviews for new facilitators

Sept 30, Oct 1,2 Basic mainstream
Nov 10,11,12 Basic protection

Community Workshops
AVP Basic at the outback centre
19,20 August
Contact Kelli 9337 5560

T4f
272Oxford St Leederville
July 22nd,23
Sally Hertzfeld 9299 6788

Swanview High School
Dates to be announced
Contact Sally

Up and coming training

1st Tuesday of each month 7.30pm—9.00pm at the Quaker meeting house. Training is open to all who have done an AVP workshop.

- Topics to be announced for:
- 5th September
- 3rd October
- 7th Nov

Acacia training: 9.45-2.00pm

- Sat 12th August topic to be announced Kelli 93375560

Different workshop structures, some possibilities—an outcome of the April Training Night

This session was to consider ways in which we could make our workshops more accessible, appealing, convenient or marketable to the community. It was prompted by several cancellations in 2006. A commonly given reason for inability to participate is that the commitment of a whole weekend is too difficult.

In two groups we firstly brainstormed possible alternative workshop forms and then chose some to fill out in more detail.

Brainstorm:

Spread workshop content out over a longer period of time: 1 session for six weeks, 4 Saturday afternoons, 1 day on two consecutive week-ends, 2 hour sessions over several weeks

Cut the workshop content: Model to fit demand eg community building for an organization; One day abbreviated workshops

Offer through summer schools and learning centres; Offer residential workshops; A school camp activity; Return to the original 22 hour model - maybe 5 hours over four weeks; Do more intros and tasters at festivals, conferences etc; Offer single sessions to uni/TAFE students to stimulate interest.; Distance learning/Virtual AVP workshops.; (perhaps these last two were not suggested seriously!?)

Specific Models:

A) Workshop at a community learning centre

We need to have material, particularly promotional material, relevant to the group at which we are aiming. We could tailor the workshop for young parents, the newly retired or unemployed youth or other groups that are likely to be using a learning centre.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Great for parenting skills	Dwindling numbers over the length of the course
Shorter session better for childcare and accessibility	Intermittent attendance
This kind of group could form an informal support network	Interruptions from crèche
Could be on-going in offering workshops to similar clients	

B) A Residential Adults Workshop:

This may be most suitable for an advanced workshop and if fact may balance out a basic workshop split into several sessions. The experience of community in a fragmented basic may not be felt as strongly.

Advantages	Disadvantages
More bonding	More scope for conflict in the group
Able to cover the whole content	Worse come down - more difficult to return to reality.
No distractions	Getting people to commit to the whole time
More fun - more social interaction	Could be exhausting
More potential for flexibility	
Longer lasting sense of community	

Other considerations would be the cost, the accommodation and catering. It would probably need more organization on the part of the AVP-WA.

C) Four Saturday Afternoons at the Quaker Meeting House:

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Different workshop presentations continued:

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Possibly from 1.00 - 5.00pm and most likely a basic workshop.

Advantages	Disadvantages
More convenient in a time starved world	Could have a detrimental effect on the process of community building
Not so tiring	Less time for social interaction
Frees people to fit in other weekend commitments	Could be a more superficial experience. More intellectual and less emotional.
Gives time for learning and to try out strategies learned the previous weekend	Loosing the exhaustion element may interfere with the inner work
Less expensive - no meals required	Decreased frustration within the group - could lose some of the "meat."
No afternoon sleepiness as can happen in the standard workshop	
Could be deeper since people are fresher and more alert and attentive.	

Other considerations were: - Would people commit to four consecutive Saturdays? We should give at least a month's notice to allow people to leave their dairies clear. We would need to design the agenda so that each afternoon was complete in itself.

The general feeling from the group was that all these formats had potential and should be given a try when an appropriate opportunity

A sample of what our inmate and outmate facilitators are doing at Acacia

Workshop at Acacia June '06.

This was the largest group we had ever had, 23 participants started and completed the workshop. The great mixture of nationalities and life experiences made for enriching discussions and everyone participated to the full. There was no 'passing'. All facilitators left feeling tired but greatly uplifted by the community feeling that developed. It is hoped that workshop participants who experience the bonding and friendships made during the weekends can meet together during following weeks to exchange stories and experiences.-

Come on, make a date for some peace making

If you have completed your T4F and would like to co-facilitate an AVP workshop then check out the up and coming workshops on page 1, call the contact person and register your interest . The contact person will provide any information needed and answer any questions. Calling sooner then later is recommended so don't leave it till the last minute generally we like to know that we have a committed team together some weeks prior to the workshop. Being part of a facilitation team for the first time or after a break can be a daunting prospect just remember you will be part of a team, a very supportive team at that . Training nights (see page 1) are an excellent opportunity meet other facilitators, hone old skills and acquire new ones and build facilitation confidence. So we hope to see you there. Training nights are open to anyone who has done a basic , advanced, or T4F workshop

A letter from Dan an inmate facilitator

To the AVP community

I would like to sincerely thank all at AVP for helping me put the final pieces together. One tough young fella said in one of our workshops, that he was so tired of coming and going and that each time he left Prison he destroyed the community, but now he would like to try building instead of destroying. There have been many instances like this and I know there will be more. Sometimes we have seen a miss but mostly we have had hits and that is what AVP is all about.

I guess there is a lot more I could or should say, but for now, I trust AVP will have a long association with Acacia. Before I close, I would appreciate if you could pass to my fellow facilitators, Kelli who is (apart from my wife) a great inspiration. Sally is solid as a rock and newcomer Shane whom I hope we will see a lot more of.

Take care all, Sincerely, Dan



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MANDALA AND ME

In the mid- 1990's I attend an AVP basic workshop, then advanced and T4F a year later. Still I didn't really understand Transforming Power or the whole mandala significance. I just thought it was a good idea for "teaching others".

When the mandala was first presented to my group during my basic workshop, I felt so anxious - "What will they ask me to do here?" I read Transforming Power upside down, the mandala being on the floor facing away from my side of the circle. Incorrectly I read Transferring power - no transformation in that!

Some time later, I began to consider how to make this part of my life, one

Mandela and me continued...

piece at a time:

1 expect the best - my change of attitude was difficult. 2. I already cared for my parents - too much in fact, but I couldn't 3. respect myself. That's how I came to view my situation. 4. Think before reacting I thought and thought and thought - too much before reacting, and sometimes said or did nothing at all. 5. Asking for a non-violent solution - I'm still learning.

Many years and workshops passed when the mandala's value became real to me. I could easily reverse the circle to read "CARE FOR ME - RESPECT OTHERS" - Bingo! Transforming power at last! I had been programmed to give away my personal power to others who I perceived to be sharp or in authority somehow. Willingly, I transferred power instead of transforming it.

I had felt a little like a puppet with others giving me life. T.P. was/is a slow process, yet at times, the freedom to live without this kind of control leaves me wonderful choices. The advantage is comfortable relationships, depression lifted, and more vitality. I'm busy - but I've got my life and that feels so good. Thanks to TP and AVP!

Beautiful Brenda.

Helen Douglas

Character isn't inherited. One builds it daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, action by action. If one lets fear or hate or anger take possession of the mind, they become self-forged chains.

Jims highlights of the national gathering –2006

- The fact that it happened. I am keen to see the continuation of a national identity of sorts.
- Clearing the air and establishing good communication with AVP-NSW and meeting Maxine and Heather from AVP-Q.
- The degree of activity in NSW with 20 multi-faith workshops in 2006 and prison workshops in the Blue Mountains happening every few weeks.
- Katherine Smith's training manual developed for new facilitators with clear, simple instructions.
- John Michaelis' meditation song "Come Weep with Me"
- The "Journeys Poster" – a diagram of an AVP boat with an associated talk of how AVP is not for any specific group nor for people at any special stage of development, but will pick you up at whatever stage of life or state of mind you happen to be.
- Touching and AVP adaptations to multi-faith in general. AVP NSW now assume that all groups are multi-faith and are cautious about exercises that involve touching or other potentially culturally difficult issues. However, how much should we sacrifice and adapt AVP? Do we risk losing some of the richness?
- Seyfi Seyit's interfaith video and the effort that went into the project last year.
- AVP-NSW use buddies in workshop and were surprised that we had dropped it. Should we re-visit?
- Two directional pattern balls!
- In NSW song is a regular part of workshops. Great for fun and community building.
- In the guidelines (actually called Safety) AVP-NSW have listed "Share the voice space" which may be useful when wanting to rein in over participants!

The phrase "cultural sensitivities."

"I have 10 experiences a day that touch my heart. That is my secret for longevity."

***Ms Kazue Kato,
the first woman member of the
National Diet of Japan,
on her 100th birthday***