

AVP WA NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2020



Editor's note: There may not be any face-to-face workshops happening at the moment (hoping to resume soon), but there is a lot going on in the AVP world. Read on for some of the exciting things that are happening and how you might like to become involved.

Letters to and from Inmate Facilitators

As you can no doubt imagine, things are even tougher than usual for many prisoners during this time of lockdowns. The committee has been in touch with all our inmate facilitators from Acacia, Wooroloo, Karnet and Bunbury prisons, and have also heard back from a few of them.

This is an excerpt from a letter from Tony, a Wooroloo inmate. Clearly, AVP has a huge impact on these men's lives.

Not having the AVP workshops here has been tough on many of us I admit. I'm not sure if outside facilitators and the committee are aware of the impact that AVP has on us prisoners. Often here in prison we are segregated due to many different factors including race, gang / club affiliation, type of offence to name a few, when we arrive on day 1 [in an AVP workshop] we arrive as strangers and in some instances enemies. By day 3 we walk out a community and at the very least with common respect for one another. It's not unusual for me to see a fellow prisoner formerly estranged to see me, smile, call me "Tony the Tiger" and give me a big hug. This may seem like something small, but these are the things that start to change the circle of violence and mistrust to the circle of the AVP mandala.

Online Basic Workshop

Selene Moonbeams

One of the best things that has come from this time of C19 for me, is my involvement in an online version of our Basic workshop. Jim Thom and I have joined Graeme Stuart and Rob Duncan from AVP Newcastle to create this exciting experimental workshop. We have thirteen participants in our current workshop, which is taking place in eight 2 ½ hour sessions over four weeks...20 hours overall.

We are doing our best to create a safe space for participants to share and the facilitators are spending a lot of time making sure we are using the Zoom platform to fit in with AVP rather than the other way around.

This is challenging, but it is also very rewarding and comes with its own benefits, such as linking people in different geographical areas who would not otherwise be able to do a workshop together. We are getting some wonderful (and useful) feedback from participants.

One of the things that is so wonderful about this group is the diversity amongst the participants and facilitators. We are all so different and from different locations throughout the East and West coasts of Australia, and yet we have managed to create a bond as strongly as if we were in the room together.

In a very rich group brainstorm where we asked “What helps us to communicate well?” this was the result.

- Being focused.
- Avoiding distractions.
- Acknowledging the other person - body language so they know you are engaged.
- Eye contact.
- Asking questions - open ended, enhance understanding of what the person is talking about.
- Developing listening skills - let the person do more of the talking, don't but in.
- Speak calmly.
- Don't cut them off.
- Don't assume they are about to say something.
- Clarify for understanding - don't assume intent - just ask.
- Don't project your own experience.
- Be aware that your tone can alter their understanding - tone can make a difference to how things come across.
- Leave phone alone.
- Open calm, neutral body language.
- Take time to respond.
- Stop, think and listen before you start.
- Empathy - tune into a person's feelings.
- Timing - stay in time with the person - allow person time to think - maybe slow down.
- Don't insult someone.
- Give undivided attention.
- Be aware of imitations when on Zoom or phone.
- Don't put down or disregard.
- No negative feedback.
- Don't finish someone's sentence - this is really annoying.
- Don't engage in conversation if you are not prepared for it - call back / contact later.
- Don't engage if you are not prepared emotionally - make time later.
- Use simple language.
- Don't talk down to people - can happen with kids - don't patronise.
- Be aware of people's culture - what the other person is comfortable with.
- Be clear of boundaries.
- Consider you may be mistaken.
- Be honest but not brutal or rude.

Importance of communication to avoid violence

- Making sure people are being heard.
- Mutual respect.
- Violence is a form of communication - not a very healthy one.
- Consider - are there other ways so that violence can be avoided?

As a cooperative exercise, we explored making group drawings in silence in breakout rooms (that's Zoom-speak for small groups!). Here are some of the amazing artworks that resulted from this activity. 😊



Maybe this could be the beginning of an alternative way of offering AVP workshops post C-19.

Helena College Facilitators

Sally Herzfeld



Last year while in Yr 11 these lovely young ladies, did the three levels of AVP and kept a journal about the workshops and experiences they had in solving conflicts peacefully. 55 hours earned them 1 point for the WA Certificate of Education which they receive at the end of Year 12. They have just been presented with a WA AVP mug.

L-R. Charly-Ann, Aria and Caitlin

FACEBOOK

During this time of isolation and no face-to-face workshops, one of our major ways of staying in contact with each other and reaching the broader community, is through our Facebook page. We are posting every day on our page ([Alternatives to Violence Project WA](#)), and it would be really helpful if you could visit the page often, and "Like", "Share", "Comment" and "Tag" so that our message can be spread as widely as possible. This is our major form of marketing at the moment, so your help with this is greatly appreciated. 😊

Online Library

Katherine and Dawn - AVP International Education Committee

Friends, Facilitators, Awesome AVP people! We are so thrilled to be able to finally open our Online Library where you will find priceless Workshop Manuals at your fingertips! It's a tremendous start to the New Year! It's taken several months and a great deal of careful sifting and sorting, organizing

and checking to put all these resources together and make it easily accessible to you. Huge thanks to all the facilitators who helped!

To access the Online Library, you must register at the AVP International website. Registration is Free! If you are not already registered, please go to www.avp.international and 1. Select **Log in** on the top right hand corner of the Home page. 2. Select **Register** and fill in the form. 3. You will be sent a confirmation email with your login details. Use these details to log in to the website. Once you're logged in, on the Home page, click on **Resources**. On the right column you will see the heading **Online Libraries**, select **AVP Workshop Activities Library** and...voila!

The current manuals in the Online Library are all in English but, worry not! You can easily get translations using the Translation button you'll find on each page. Yes, we're very grateful for this feature.

Folks, we trust you'll find the Online Library useful. We'd love to receive your feedback so that we can make it better and even more useful to you. You can give us your feedback by using the feedback form you will find on every page you view. Also, if you feel you'd like to contribute to the Online Library, please contact us. We'd love to have your input.

Finally, Share the Love! Folks, you can have gold but if no one knows about it, it'll be wasted. Please share this golden resource with all your AVP groups and teams. Thank you and happy excavating!

Editor's note

A newsletter is published every quarter. If you have any news, photos, or new things you've tried in workshops, including inmate contributions, please send them to our newsletter editor Selene Moonbeams. selenemoonbeams@gmail.com

Need more information?

For details of upcoming workshops or training, to volunteer to help facilitate a workshop, or just to find out more about AVP, please contact our administrator Mark Newhouse.
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