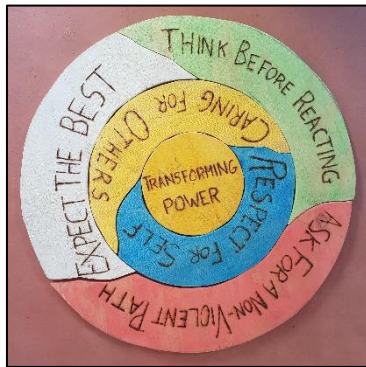


AVP WA NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2019

<http://avpwa.org>



Wooden mandala from Alice Springs Prison

The mandala is a spiritual and ritual symbol in the Indian religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the universe. In common use, “mandala” has become a generic term for any diagram, chart or geometric pattern that represents the cosmos metaphysically or symbolically, a microcosm of the universe.

~ Wikipedia ~

Upcoming workshops

- June 8-10: Acacia (Mainstream) Basic
- June 9, 16: Community T4F @ Helena College
- June 15, 22: Community Advanced @ Osborne Park
- June 18-20: Bunbury Regional Prison PRU Basic
- June 19-22: Basic @ Fresh Start, Northam
- June 24-26: Wooroloo Advanced
- July 5-7: Acacia (Protection) Basic
- July 16-18: Karnet Advanced
- August 6-8: Bunbury Regional Prison Advanced
- August 16-18: Acacia (Mainstream) Advanced
- August 24, 31: Community Basic @ Osborne Park
- August 26-28: Wooroloo T4F

25th Anniversary of AVP WA

SAVE THE DATE

21st September 2019

Jim Thom

This year marks the 25th anniversary of AVPWA. It's been quite a journey and largely a tale of success with us presenting about 50 workshops annually for the last 10 years or so.

If you'd like to be involved in planning this auspicious celebration, please let me know.

jjathom@bigpond.com or 0488 091 436

AVP NEPAL



2019 Australian National Training Gathering in New South Wales

John Steel



This year's national gathering for AVP was held at Mulgoa, located in the foothills close to the Blue Mountains, 66 kms west of Sydney, at the Edmund Rice Centre. The setting proved to be ideal for the gathering, with a relaxed and laid-back atmosphere. It was a bit out of the way; however, we were given a lift to the centre from the Penrith railway station, which made life a lot easier for us.

The centre is set in farmland and there were some nice walks around the site. There was also a labyrinth, which added to the feeling of tranquillity. The accommodation was good and we soon settled ourselves in well. We were not catered for the first couple of nights, however there was a nice little Thai restaurant about 2 kilometres away and it proved to be a pleasant walk there.



At the gathering there were representatives from WA, NT, NSW, ACT, QLD and Tasmania. Although there were about thirty people registered, not everyone could make it for the full four days, so the daily attendance tended to fluctuate. It was interesting to meet with facilitators from other states and



find out what other groups are focusing on, how they go about achieving their objectives and the issues they are facing. For me it was uplifting to find myself immersed in a group of positive, dedicated, passionate and caring people. Ironically, one of the presentations was on the subject of neurobiology and being involved with the group, using AVP processes and techniques, certainly brought home the positive effects on

the brain from being in a positive and stimulating environment. The AVP experience is not only beneficial for the group members, but also for the facilitators as well.

Some of the other states do not work in prisons and there was considerable interest as to how the WA group operates in the prison setting and facilitators were keen to find out what works for us and the issues faced with having groups run in the prison.

There was some discussion on AVP broadening its reach into different areas, as well as forming partnerships with other agencies so that resources and ideas can be shared. It was interesting to hear about some of the initiatives that are being explored in other states. Networking was seen to be a

useful tool for reaching out and spreading the AVP word to different organisations. There was talk about there being more contact between the states through electronic media in order to consolidate knowledge and learning and share ideas.

There was a range of presentations given during the gathering, including talks on refugees, trauma, non-violent communication, work in prisons, parenting styles and issues around funding for AVP. The talks were well received and there was a lot of input from the group on the subjects. Although there was a considerable amount of information shared in the gathering, there was also time set aside for people to get to know each other informally. This proved to be useful in establishing contacts, and for people who already knew each other, it was a good time for catching up.

As well as being informative the gathering was also very lively and a lot of fun. There was an impromptu session one evening on light and livelies, which gave people a chance to try out new ideas and at the same time to have a lot of fun. One of the facilitators gave a performance with Tibetan bowls which was also very entertaining.



Attendance at the AVP gathering has whetted my appetite for the organisation as well as giving me a deeper understanding of the principles and core values of AVP. It has also given me hope that with so many positive and caring people out to make change in the world, it has the potential to be a transforming power in the world.

[Ed note: John and Selene appreciated the sponsorship by AVP WA which made it possible for us both to attend the ANTG. Full report soon.]

What is VIOLENCE / NON-VIOLENCE?

From a brainstorm at a recent Acacia Prison T4F

VIOLENCE		NON-VIOLENCE	
<i>Fighting</i>	<i>Mental</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>Sharing</i>
<i>Yelling</i>	<i>Alcohol</i>	<i>Peace</i>	<i>Resting</i>
<i>Anger</i>	<i>Manipulation</i>	<i>Hugs</i>	<i>Humour</i>
<i>Religion</i>	<i>Video games</i>	<i>Friends</i>	<i>Affirmation</i>
<i>Abuse</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Friendship</i>	<i>Music</i>
<i>Physical</i>	<i>War</i>	<i>Family</i>	<i>AVP</i>
<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Poverty</i>	<i>Kindness</i>	<i>Respect</i>
<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Financial</i>	<i>Happy thoughts</i>	<i>Religion</i>
<i>Gangs</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Caring</i>	<i>Meditation</i>
<i>Silent treatment</i>	<i>Humour</i>	<i>Compassion</i>	<i>Selflessness</i>
<i>Passive aggressive</i>	<i>Jail</i>	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Being nice</i>

Inside Out Expo at Karnet Prison

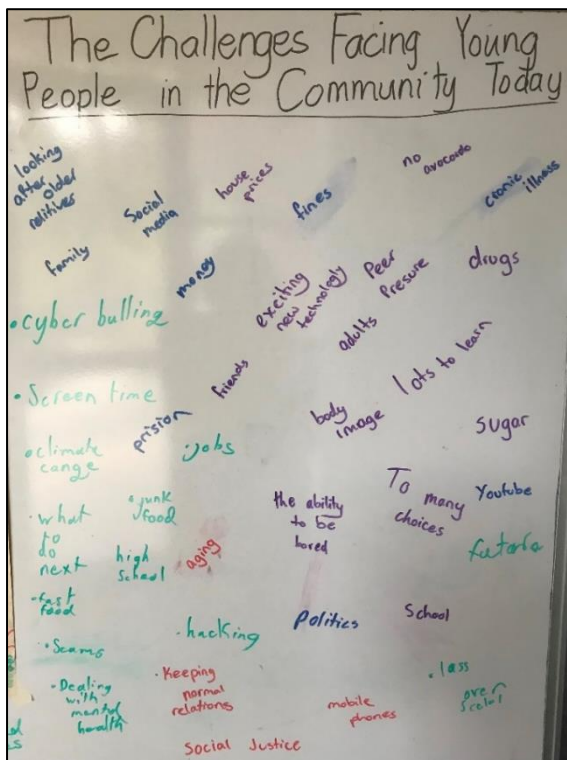
Sally and Niki

It was great to catch up with our Karnet facilitators who are obviously doing a good job in enthusing others to do AVP as there is a long waiting list. Networking with other programs was valuable, but for me (Sally), the best part was meeting our old friend, Wes Ford with whom I have done a few workshops, both inside and outside prisons.

Expos are a good way to share with others in the industry what AVP does so the networking is important. There are a number of agencies providing assistance to ex-prisoners e.g. employment, mental health, drug rehabilitation, Centrelink, housing, St Bartholomew's, driver training. The journey on the outside can be very difficult.



This was an opportunity to network. The local MLA, who had not previously been to Karnet, gave a speech, and the Governor stressed the rehabilitative aspects of incarceration at Karnet.



Training at Helena College with the HIPPsters after the AGM

Four Year 5 facilitators from Helena College led a lively training evening before the AGM in March this year.

After presentation of an empathy exercise in which they conducted a brainstorm on The Challenges Facing Young People in the Community Today, the HIPPsters guided us to empathise by speaking about how we would feel if we were facing one of those challenges.

It was a fun and moving training night and we were proud of our young people as they honed their leadership skills.

Richard's Story

My name is Richard. I was locked up on the 4th of September 2010. I just want to talk about a little bit of my life. I came from a poor family. We first came to Darwin in 1989. I was about 5 or 8 years old. I was not the perfect boy who grew up in Darwin but I loved to play rugby and basketball. Anyway, since I've been locked up, I got involved with a program called Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). I had waited about a month when I did this AVP Basic workshop program in September 2016.

I learned how to communicate with others and co-operate and I got taught how to use the Mandala card and how to trust and solve conflict problems. It was good to do the course because I got to meet other people and we talked about how we can solve problems without getting violent towards other people. I learned a lot from the last program and it changed my life and I was rewarded with a certificate for attending the Basic workshop for training in nonviolence.

Now I have waited another three months to do the second level – the Advanced workshop program. I started this on Monday 27th of March 2017. The common themes that I had to explore were Power and Powerlessness. It was based on Fear, Anger, Self Esteem, Stereotyping, Empathy and forgiveness. I had a good time because we had fun. This program goes until Wednesday lunchtime and when I have done all the courses and completed the program on Friday, I just hope in the near future, that I will become an Apprentice Facilitator. Then someday I will be able to help young people who need help. I am Richard and I am 37 years old. This is my story on how this program has changed my life and I hope it will change yours. Thank you.



Year 12 T4F participants leading a Yr 7 group with Broken Squares. These two Yr 12 students are doing the last parts of Peaceful Pathways as an endorsed subject for their WACE.



Virus Communication with 29 Year 4 participants.

AVP WA Training Day Saturday 4th May

Jim Thom and Merrill Stokes

Why are people violent?

Mark presented literature review on factors contributing to violence.

- 1) Purposeful Violence – this is violence that is motivated by material gain or other advantages. Also for revenge or punishment
- 2) Self Enhancement – this is violence to cultivate fear in others, or violence against those one fears.
- 3) Emotion driven – eg. Young men who find it hard to deal with emotion can use violence to release emotional pressure giving them some sense of control.
- 4) Impulsive violence – violence that doesn't fit into any of the above categories. Perhaps there is a genetic component.

Other aggravating factors are:

- Normalcy of violence – growing up in a violent environment.
- Situational – the severity of a dispute, the time of day, involvement of alcohol or drugs, mental instability, presence of a third party (unless it's a child in which case this is more likely to calm the situation).

Implications for AVP:

- We should have an awareness of different beliefs and values.
- We should have a willingness to challenge beliefs as they arise.
- We present emotional regulation strategies.
- We provide an alternative view of normal.
- We look for the good in others.

Interestingly Mark noted that out of WA's current prison muster of 7000 only 20% are imprisoned for violent crimes.

Anyone who would like more detail can contact Mark.

Core Values

In small groups we considered core values 3 and 4.

3. Alternatives – *the belief that we always have options and choices in any given situation.*

Some of us had concerns that this was a little too trite and did not recognise that choices are often difficult and hard to recognise and perhaps even absent e.g. when one is young. The word "always" is too much of a generalisation. Also that we may have to learn that we have choices. We would prefer:

As adults, we have choices. We may have to learn this and the choices may be difficult. They will be affected by our background and genetics but there are usually alternatives. We can choose how we respond.

4. Inclusiveness – *the conscious effort to acknowledge and consider without prejudice, all natural and social differences, perceived or otherwise, in the AVP community. We seek common ground by identifying and embracing differences.*

We decided that AVP fulfils this value in many ways e.g.

- Gatherings.
- Affirmations in 2s and 4s.
- 'In common' exercise.
- Demonstrating teamwork.

- Being an international group with universal themes and agendas.
- Facilitators can be very different.
- We have many mixed racial, mixed ideological groups.
- We are aware of language barriers and sensitive to cultural differences.
- The team act as participants in the workshop and do not lecture.

New Exercises

After a shared lunch we looked at three new exercises.

Transforming Power revisited. Sally presented a fun way of re-introducing transforming power with small groups presenting a small role play or mime to re-introduce the mandala (or Key) aspects.

I want, I want. Mark introduced an exercise which emphasised the difference of two people asking for something – firstly by discussing together and secondly by taking turns talking and listening. This clearly demonstrated the power of listening before responding.

U Choose. Jim picked this exercise which is in the Sydney concise manual. It is a process to be used in workshops when the team feel that some of the participants are not fully engaged. It should be done at the end of the first day. It asks them to consider what has happened during the day, reminds them that the learning from the workshop comes largely from their input and that participation is voluntary. They are given time to reflect, assured that their presence is valued, but also that they are free to be absent the next day without any ramifications for their record.

Blue Sky Festival

Greg Rusha

In March, we had a very successful stall at the Blue Sky Festival in Mundaring. Many thanks to Greg, Liz and Bheena. We had 18 good conversations about AVP and handed out 21 AVP WA leaflets.



Darwin correctional centre – November 2013 to April 2019

Elizabeth Kwan 21 April 2019

In November 2013 members of the Commissioning Team for the Darwin Correctional Precinct Team began reaching out to the Darwin community to involve them in the Darwin Correctional Centre. It was being privately built for the NT Government to operate from mid-2014 at Holtze, about 30 minutes south of Darwin: a minimum to maximum prison to hold 1,048 female and male inmates, 80 percent of them being Indigenous.

AVP (Darwin) received two invitations:

- To offer AVP Workshops at the prison. Many inmates were said to be serving sentences due to alcohol and drug fuelled violence, and, once sentenced, would be put to work. The Department hoped that, where inmates or the prison could not pay for the workshops, organisations would offer a discounted fee or no fee.
- To attend a forum, whose purpose was 'to provide information on...the prison's capacity, infrastructure and culture, based on the NT Department's mission statement of building Safer Communities through reducing recidivism'. The aim was to establish 'a successful community partnership between Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services and your organisation or industry area'.

AVP (Darwin) had few facilitators and none had experience with workshops in prison. We looked to Sally Herzfeld in AVP (WA), who had been coming to Darwin to help facilitate community and refugee workshops and had extensive experience in prisons. But it would be difficult for AVP (Darwin) to cover Sally's return flights to Darwin every month, or more likely every two months. However, Elizabeth Kwan, as Coordinator of AVP (Darwin), found, in the initial interview with the Manager of Offender Development at the prison, that \$400 could be paid per workshop, as happened in some of the WA prisons.

Sector 5, the men's maximum security sector, was to have the workshops, since it had fewer programs than other sectors. Perhaps the workshop size of 12 to 15 participants was considered appropriate. The workshops began at the end of June 2016 with 11 participants from four different security sectors, including Sector 5, and two prisoner support officers from Sector 5 as participants, and no security officer. The facilitators' report noted that 'the men were very appreciative and respectful and participated very well. All wanted to do the Advanced.' To our surprise we found there were advantages in being older women facilitators: male inmates said they found it easier to share personal stories with a grandmother because she is non-judgemental. We also noticed their concern for us in boisterous Light & Livelies: someone would shout, 'Look out for the old girls!'

From March 2017 the workshops moved to Sector 2, the Education Sector, which, unlike the workshop room in Sector 5 had tea and toilet facilities. Most participants were from sectors other than maximum security Sector 5. But there were occasionally Sector 5 inmates escorted in handcuffs by security officers. Inmates had to return to their blocks for lunch and muster. There were delays in inmates being released from their blocks in mornings and afternoons. As well, we lost the use of Wednesday afternoons to staff meetings. Sometimes, too, there were lockdowns when inmates were kept in their blocks. The resulting loss of workshop time led to the giving of certificates for a shortened Basic or Advanced. The T4F and interviews needed three days.

To make the most of the AVP (WA) facilitator, Sally Herzfeld's visits, especially during the peak tourist mid-year dry season, when flights could be up to \$700, we would offer 2 workshops during the week at the prison and a weekend workshop in the Darwin Community, as we tried to increase the number of local facilitators. Booking flights in the build-up and wet seasons, with cyclones about from November to April, was chancy.

In late 2018, the new Commissioner of Prisons in the NT, Mr Scott Nairn, began to introduce a greater emphasis on rehabilitation at Darwin Correctional Centre, and a closer working relationship with Indigenous Elders, who regularly visit Indigenous inmates in Northern Territory prisons.

The Acting General Manager of the Darwin Correctional Centre, Mr Mark Kruit, increased the number of hours for our workshops by allowing us to use Wednesday afternoons, and to allow inmates to stay in Sector 2 for their lunch and muster. No longer did we have to wait for inmates to be released from their blocks in afternoons.



The NT Thunder Football Club in Darwin received a painted AFL football, which was kindly donated by an inmate at the Darwin Correctional Centre.

The two main facilitators at the prison, Sally and Elizabeth, indicated to the prison that they hoped to have other facilitators to take their place by the end of the year. That is the challenge: to find enough local facilitators in Darwin.

Over nearly three years, Elizabeth and Sally have offered 27 workshops at the prison, most for the different mainstream male sectors, but also for Protected inmates, and those in the Complex Behaviour Unit, with support on three occasions by 1 or 2 Darwin facilitators and on 20 occasions by 11 different inmate facilitators.

Editor's note

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



Misty morning at Mulgoa, New South Wales



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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