

# **AVP INDIANA POLICY STATEMENT**

Adopted February 24, 2016

Updated and approved at Annual Gathering July 9, 2016

## **1. Purpose and Methods of AVP Program**

The primary purpose of our AVP group is to offer individuals tools for personal empowerment, enabling them to live their lives with dignity and self-respect. Our AVP facilitators serve the community by leading workshops with the goal of enhancing individuals' skills for peaceful reduction of conflict.

Our method is experiential; we use a minimum of lecture. We believe that people have within themselves answers to their questions and problems. We encourage each other to search for solutions within ourselves, drawing on our own experiences and those of our communities. Workshops endeavor to break down barriers that prevent people from revealing their inner selves, thus enabling them to form friendships with other individuals, and to build a community.

## **2. Spiritual Basis of Program: AVP has a spiritual base. AVP promotes no religious doctrine.**

We believe that there is a power available to everyone which, if we are open to it, can transform violent situations. We call this Transforming Power.

The goal is to empower individuals to liberate themselves and others from violence by finding creative ways to resolve or manage conflict peacefully by being open to Transforming Power.

We build upon each person's human worth, inner strength and spiritual endowment. We strive to maintain a caring attitude toward ourselves and others.

## **3. Quality of Workshops: Maintaining high standards for AVP workshops is a primary goal.**

Another goal is that the workshops we conduct are similar enough in different regions that facilitators can easily be part of a team in different places.

### **General**

- We follow the outline for standard AVP workshops as described in the Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators manuals.

- Our facilitators will be thoroughly familiar with the underlying principles of AVP, including the concept of Transforming Power, and endeavor to demonstrate those principles.
- All workshop participation is voluntary.
- A workshop leading to a certificate should be 18 - 22 program hours.
- Workshops are conducted using AVP ground rules as outlined in the Basic manual. Facilitators are encouraged to develop new exercises and resources and to share these with the community of facilitators. Such exercises and resources shall not be published as AVP materials until they have been reviewed and approved by AVP/USA.

## **Content**

- Basic workshops include exercises designed to build self-esteem, mutual respect and community, and to facilitate learning the skills of listening, cooperation, communication and problem solving. Role-plays demonstrate how these skills influence creative nonviolent conflict resolution.
- Advanced workshops expand the skills presented in the Basic workshop, while focusing on situations in our lives or in society that are caused by or result in violence. Themes may be decided upon by participants during the workshop or may be designated in advance.
- Although the agendas outlined in the manuals for each of the three levels can be fine-tuned to each workshop, elements of affirmation, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution are to be included in every workshop.
- The concept of Transforming Power is to be communicated in every workshop.

## **4. Team Leadership**

- Team leadership is basic to AVP workshops. Workshops require more than one facilitator. This does not apply to mini workshops or presentations that do not lead to a certificate, although it is still strongly encouraged.
- Prison workshops must have at least one outside facilitator.
- Every workshop must have at least one experienced facilitator, normally designated as a lead facilitator. It is recommended that this person will have, as a minimum, completed all three levels of workshops, apprenticed as a facilitator, and been recommended as a lead facilitator.
- To receive a Certified Facilitator certificate, the apprentice must facilitate 3 or more workshops of any level and receive a recommendation from the Lead Facilitator.

- For programs beginning in new areas, the apprenticeship process may be abbreviated with the approval of the sponsoring program to enable an individual to function as an acting lead facilitator pending designation as a lead facilitator.
- A Lead Facilitator should be able to:
  1. Create a safe space for participants
  2. Craft agendas for all levels and be familiar with key exercises
  3. Model both the workshop Guidelines as well as the Guides to Transforming Power
  4. Show sensitivity to the needs of individuals and the group
  5. Feel comfortable with participants' emotions and have an awareness of emotional triggers
  6. Deal with conflict between and among participants or facilitators clearly and appropriately
  7. Keep records of participant attendance and coordinate logistics for the workshop
  8. Know what it means to 'trust the process'
  9. Maintain overview of entire workshop and make sure all details are taken care of

The above are key Lead Facilitator aptitudes. They are not exhaustive. Other useful qualities and knowledge may be found in the Training for Facilitation Manual - pg. 211.

- A person wishing to become a Lead Facilitator may reach out to the Core Organizing Group or may be approached by the Core Organizing Group to complete the process. A prospective Lead Facilitator must receive the recommendation of one of AVP Indiana's current Core Organizing Group Lead Facilitators as a part of the process. A process of mentoring may be requested by a facilitator who wishes to become a lead facilitator or may be recommended by the Core Organizing Group.
- A workshop team leader may be designated to lead the pre-workshop team-building session, write the workshop report, and may have other responsibilities assigned by the local group. The workshop team leader empowers all team members, encourages them to take responsibility for team functioning and the quality of the workshop.
- For each prison workshop, an outside facilitator will be designated to act as liaison with the prison staff for that workshop.
- We encourage facilitators to work with facilitators at other training sites and/or invite facilitators from other groups to participate on local teams at least once a year. This cross-fertilization stimulates learning and growth among facilitators.

- Prison facilitators are not paid for their work. AVP Indiana may reimburse any expenses incurred in conducting a workshop. AVP Indiana has decided not to pay facilitators a stipend for conducting community workshops.

## 5. Organization of Local Groups

### Definition

- Our Local Group is a group providing AVP workshops in an area as defined by the State of Indiana. We will also be working in the Midwest Region where opportunities arise for our facilitators.
- If our Local Group is unable to agree on the division of a geographic area, we will take the dispute to our Regional Organization or, in the absence of a functioning regional organization, to the Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG).

### Responsibilities

- The keystone of AVP operations is the Local Group. As a Local Group of AVP/USA we make decisions regarding managing our own resources and developing procedures that meet our needs as long as they are not in conflict with this Policy Statement or the Bylaws of AVP/USA, Inc. These decisions include, but are not limited to: finances; training and support of facilitators in our group; relationships with prisons served; pursuit of community applications of AVP; policies that govern facilitators, training procedures, workshop evaluations; job descriptions for organizational positions.
- Working within the policies outlined in this statement, AVP Indiana is responsible for maintaining standards for workshops including length of workshops, attendance required for certificates, adherence to ground rules, training required for facilitators, etc.
- All workshops are conducted under the authorization of AVP Indiana. Facilitators must work with a Local Group when setting up and/or conducting AVP workshops leading to a certificate.
- AVP Indiana will provide oversight of outside facilitators working in prisons within their area, and ensure that they understand the importance of abiding by Department of Corrections regulations.
- Formal orientation of facilitators by the prison where they conduct workshops is highly recommended.
- AVP Indiana will report annually to our Regional Organization or, in the absence of a functioning regional organization, the Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLARG) on our program.

- AVP Indiana group will appoint a contact person and notify our regional representative of the name of that person.

## **Governance**

- Consensus is the process for making decisions. AVP Indiana will endeavor to develop the community necessary to make this a viable way to govern itself.
- At such time that a Regional Organization is more established in the Midwest, AVP Indiana shall appoint a representative to the regional organization.
- All AVP Indiana meetings are open to active AVP facilitators and volunteers except when otherwise indicated. Individual groups may define 'active' for themselves.
- AVP Indiana has created its own organizational structure, as outlined in the Bylaws of AVP Indiana.
- Considerable effort, including holding AVP meetings inside prisons, will be made to bring inside prison AVP facilitators into the decision making process on policy matters. AVP Indiana members will also meet with inside facilitators, discuss concerns and bring insiders' points of view to outside meetings without being obligated to uphold that position.

## **6. Regional Organizations**

At such time as a Midwest Regional Organization is more established, AVP Indiana agrees to participate in that Regional Organization and uploads its Policy and Bylaws.

## **7. Relationships with Corrections Department (DOC) and Facilities:**

The goal of this relationship is to provide an environment where AVP programs can be conducted effectively within correctional facilities. Care will be taken not to compromise or surrender those aspects of AVP which are central to its success simply to win admission to a particular prison or prison system.

The following guidelines are expected:

- All participants in AVP workshops are volunteers.
- Participation is open to all inmates.
- Registration for AVP workshops is according to an inmate's sign-up date. A system needs to be devised to assure this happens.
- Participation in AVP workshops shall not be considered a requirement for any

DOC program.

- Inmates have excused absences from their normal program assignments to attend AVP workshops. Inmates may not be called out except for mandatory call-outs.
- Participating facilities will support the full range of AVP workshops.
- Facilities will work with AVP to accommodate the required 18- 22 program hours in each workshop.
- Facilities are expected to provide appropriate space for the workshops.
- In order to preserve the confidentiality of participants, DOC staff is not present in the workshop rooms without prior approval of the group. Of course, this should not interfere with the correctional facility staff's ability to perform their essential duties.

The appropriate AVP body conveys these guidelines to the participating facility or DOC, and devises with that agency the method used to communicate the guidelines to the facilities. Employees of DOC are encouraged to participate in and facilitate community workshops, but may not do so in prison workshops.

AVP Indiana will consider and implement ways of letting corrections staff know the philosophy and format of AVP workshops.

AVP Indiana will appoint an outside Prison Coordinator for each facility where they conduct workshops. Prison Coordinators are responsible for maintaining a good working relationship with local facilities and for dealing with problems as they arise.

Prison Coordinators, working with AVP Indiana, will ensure that outside facilitators are cognizant of prison regulations affecting volunteers and AVP workshops.

The content and process of AVP workshops remain within the province of AVP. Prison officials are not involved with AVP affairs.

## **8. Solutions When Problems Arise**

For the purpose of maintaining our integrity and effectiveness, we must promptly use our principles and methods to resolve our own conflicts. To promote harmonious relations among people involved in AVP Indiana, our AVP communities shall provide opportunities for community building.

To protect our community relations, AVP conflicts shall be kept out of public view; e.g., not to be shared with client agencies unless the local AVP group or groups involved agree. Some suggested methods (described in the AVP Basic Manual for conflict resolution) are:

- Direct conversation

- Clearness committees (C-11)
- Threshing sessions (C-11), and
- Mediation.

In addition the Basic Manual lists a number of exercises to reduce conflict such as: When Things Go Wrong (c-11), Six-point Problem Solving (e-47), Queries on What it Means to be a Member of an AVP Team (c-15)

When parties involved are unable to find a solution among themselves, they shall invite members of Local, Regional and/or national AVP groups to assist in the solution.

Persons unwilling to participate in conflict resolution until a conflict is resolved, shall be relieved of their AVP responsibilities until they engage or re-engage in conflict resolution. The relevant Local, Regional and/or national groups shall determine whether persons are actively engaged in the resolution process.