

## **Read this carefully, there really will be a quiz...**

### **A few of the practicalities of going into a CDCR prison:**

How you behave while in the prison reflect on the AVP/CA program, so the Steering Committee has created this list of things to remember and to prepare you for a satisfying experience when you first go inside and as a reminder on future visits You are expected, of course, to commit to the workshop and its requirements.

#### **Clothing:**

Don't wear anything blue, even shades such as turquoise, or anything denim – even black denim.

Be conservative in your dress, not seductive, but comfortable.

Especially be comfortable. Dresses at the knee are not comfortable for sitting on the floor for Construction exercises or for having men sit across from you.

Layer. Air conditioning or lack thereof, coming out to a cold night, all need to be taken into consideration.

If possible, a waistband, belt or something you can attach the alarm call pad, which is the size of a large cell phone and attached with a clip or snapped on or sometimes you can put it in a pocket.

Wear comfortable shoes. Sandals seem to be ok.

Arrive clean and odor-free; a professional appearance is expected.

I like to wear colorful clothes and jewelry because it brings in a good cheer. And I like to wear different clothes every day just for variety for the prisoners. And on the last day, I tend to dress up a bit for graduation. George Lakey's comment to a group of advanced social activist trainers: "If you want high energy in your workshops, wear high energy clothing!"

#### **What to NOT to take in:**

Anything that could be made into a "shank" knife – metal silverware

Glass

Cell phone or anything electronic

Wallet or any identification that includes your address or contact information except ID you will carry on your person.

Keys on a key ring, take only your car key if you have driven to the prison, but do not take the remote clicker, if possible.

Anything to give to prisoners, which is not part of the AVP kit. You cannot give or receive **anything** to/from prisoners. Including a letter to mail to his mother or a lovely card given to you. And obviously no drugs, alcohol

**What to consider taking in:** Any bags you take in will be inspected at the gate.

•Take in only what you need for the day.

•Develop a small container that you can carry on your person such as fanny pack or glasses case with pockets in which you can hold:

your identification which you should carry on your person.

your car key (if you don't have a car in the lot, don't take any keys in. If you have a car in the prison lot then take in one key, don't take in the "clicker".)

personal items such as lipstick, chapstick, medication, glasses

•You may also be picking up an alarm pad and/or keys so need pockets or space in the above for these

•Also plan to carry in a larger bag (not a backpack), such as a cloth grocery bag where you can put the following (I keep this stocked and ready to go so I don't have to think about it every time):

Jacket/sweater (You may need to wear it in if you aren't allowed to carry it)

AVP Manual (Bring a Basic, Advanced and T4T in case the workshop has been changed, if you have them. You can leave the ones you don't expect to need in the car and retrieve them if needed.)

Plastic cup and plastic silverware

Water bottle, granola bars,

I have a little kit of gum, aspirin, chapstick, lipstick, aspirin, comb, Kleenex/hanky etc.

- **Lunch**(*nuts, dried fruit and granola bars are clean/quick to eat while planning*), dinner (*Talk with your lead to determine what you need in terms of meals*). We cannot accept anything from or take any food in to prisoners, seldom do we have any way to heat and chill the food we eat inside, so plan on ready-to-eat meals or a soft-cooler. At Blythe in the hotel we have microwave and fridge.

### **BRING for the night (if you are not going home at night)**

All the things you need to spend the night away from home

If you are staying at someone's home or are receiving donated lodging, consider bringing a little gift for the host and a sleeping bag so they don't need to make up the bed.

For **hotel-donated lodging**, plan to leave a tip for the housekeepers of no less than \$2/day/each guest.

Food for the weekend or discuss with team lead as to how much you will be dining out.

AVP/CA or the local council does have a reimbursement policy, see [www.avpcalifornia.org](http://www.avpcalifornia.org) for more information on this under Facilitators Only.

### **BIG DON'Ts FOR THE CDCR:**

- **No touching** between outsiders and the incarcerated. If you have a question the appropriateness on how you can touch a prisoner, then don't do it until you talk with your team. Shaking hands is ok,; hugging is not. Don't think that you can sidestep this rule, because no custody staff is looking. All the men in the room are aware of your behavior. Be aware of this with the opposite sex in some exercises, too. Know that this is a red flag issue for the department and must be observed or you endanger the program and your own system-wide access to prisons.
- **Overfamiliarity** – This means you cannot visit a prisoner and facilitate a workshop in the same prison, nor can you provide them your home phone or address. Do not write to those in prison. Another red flag: If you are feeling especially drawn toward one person, be sure to discuss this with your team and your local council ...
- **Don't yell or shout.**
- **Don't run.**
- **Don't treat anyone with anything but the greatest respect and appreciation.** COs are people too and do not like to be called "guards." Don't lose patience with the bureaucracy. Be aware that the only consistent part about prisons is the inconsistency. Don't stress over making sense of something; you probably don't have all the facts.

**IF YOU HAVE A BROWN CARD** you have additional responsibilities:

- **Keys:** You now can be responsible for keys. If you are not given a Chit (a round brass fob with your name on it which you exchange for the keys), then ask for two or have them made. Keys should always be on your person, do not even set them down in a bag. Know where they always are. This is a special trust.
- **PAD- Personal Alarm Device** has a button on it that you can push if you have a problem with an inmate. The PAD is coded by the area in which you are, GPS has not reached the prison so COs won't know exactly where you are but they will know the building. Be careful that wherever you put this that you do not place it, so it can accidentally be pushed. If it is pushed, then correctional officers will come running. No one in California has yet pushed this by intent, but don't hesitate to use it if you feel in danger. A number of us have pushed it by accident which is embarrassing. Putting the PAD in your pocket with the button toward your skin is the safest way to prevent this.
- **Whistle.** Often when you receive a Brown card, you will be given a whistle. It is advisable to take a whistle in with you.

### **WHAT TO DO IF THEY SHUT YOU DOWN**

Stay where you are told, until you are given further instructions. If you are with a group of workshop participants and can move around, then continue on – this is a chance to try those exercises you have never had time for.