

# **ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT/CALIFORNIA**

## **BYLAWS**

**Adopted by Steering Committee, June 30, 2005;  
As Amended at Annual Gathering of Facilitators, November 15, 2008**

### **ARTICLE I**

#### **Name, Organizational Status, Mission & Policies**

The name of this organization is Alternatives to Violence Project/California (AVP/California).

AVP/California is a regional organization of Alternatives to Violence Project/USA, Inc. (AVP/USA), within the meaning of the AVP/USA Bylaws (last amended May 30, 2004).

AVP/California's mission, adapted from the AVP/USA mission statement contained in the AVP/USA Bylaws, is as follows:

The mission of the Alternatives to Violence Project is to empower people to lead nonviolent lives through affirmation, respect for all, community building, cooperation and trust.

Founded in and developed from the real life experiences of prisoners and others, and building on a spiritual base, AVP encourages every person's innate power to positively transform themselves and the world.

AVP/California offers experiential workshops in personal growth and creative conflict management for adults and youth in and around the state of California.

AVP/California subscribes to the AVP/USA Policy Statement, last amended September 5, 1999, a copy of which is attached and incorporated herein by reference.

AVP/California does not discriminate in any of its policies, appointments or other activities on account of race, sex, sexual orientation, age or religious conviction. AVP/California does not engage in political action or lobbying and does not promote any specific political view as an organization. Members may not espouse a political position in the name of AVP/California or as AVP facilitators. AVP/California is nondenominational and does not promote any religious doctrine. The programs of AVP/California are educational in nature, and are not psychotherapy.

### **ARTICLE II**

#### **Tax Exemption & Reporting**

AVP/California is organized exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these bylaws, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or corresponding section of any future federal tax code). Upon the dissolution and winding up of this organization, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the organization, the remaining assets shall be distributed to a nonprofit fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated exclusively for the purposes specified in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which has established its tax-exempt status under that section.

Pursuant to the AVP/USA Bylaws, as a regional organization taking 501(c)(3) status from AVP/USA, AVP/California will submit a financial statement to the Finance Committee of AVP/USA annually in July.

**ARTICLE III**  
**Organizational Structure**

- 1. Membership.** Membership in AVP/California is open to all those who have completed an AVP Basic workshop or its equivalent, at least one AVP Second-Level workshop and an AVP Training for Trainers, and who are active in the work of AVP/California.
- 2. Annual Gathering.** The ultimate policy-making body of AVP/California is the Annual Gathering of facilitators. When practicable, input on matters known to be coming before the Annual Gathering for decision will be sought from facilitators unable to attend due to incarceration, and will be taken into account in the decision-making process.
- 3. Steering Committee.** The Annual Gathering will appoint a Steering Committee of at least six (6) people to facilitate the work of the organization during the year. The Steering Committee is empowered to act on AVP/California's behalf in furtherance of its mission and policies. Meetings of the Steering Committee are open to all members of AVP/California. At any properly called meeting of the Steering Committee, those members present shall constitute a quorum. A record of decisions made at meetings will be made available on the AVP/California website.
- 4. Officers.** The Annual Gathering or the Steering Committee may, as needed for the work of the organization, appoint Officers who are members of the Steering Committee, including at least a Clerk (presiding officer) and a Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall have custody of the organization's funds and keep accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the organization, and shall deposit all monies and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the organization in such depositories and with such right of withdrawal and access as may be designated by the Steering Committee. The Treasurer shall make proper vouchers for disbursements of organization funds and shall render to the Steering Committee or Annual Gathering, whenever they may require it, an account of all her or his transactions and of the organization's financial condition. The Steering Committee shall from time to time determine who shall be authorized on the organization's behalf to sign checks, drafts or other financial instruments.

**ARTICLE IV**  
**Decision Making**

Decisions of AVP/California shall be made by the consensus process that incorporates ideas from the entire group.

**ARTICLE V**  
**Fiscal Year**

The Fiscal Year of the Corporation shall be twelve months and shall run from April 1 through March 31.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended by the decision-making process described in Article IV, provided written notice of the proposed amendment has been given to the membership at least 30 days in advance of the date set for action on the amendment.

Signed:

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Pat Hardy, Clerk (President)

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Stephen Matchett, Treasurer

## AVP/USA, Inc., (AVP/USA) POLICY STATEMENT

Adopted January 16, 1994

Amended September 4, 1995

Amended September 8, 1998

Amended September 5, 1999

### I. Purpose and Methods of AVP Program

- A. The primary purpose of AVP groups is to offer individual tools for personal empowerment, enabling them to live their lives with dignity and self-respect. AVP facilitators serve the community by leading workshops with the goal of enhancing individual skills for peaceful reduction of conflict.
- B. 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.
- C. Workshops endeavor to break down the barriers that prevent people from revealing their inner selves, thus enabling them to form friendships with other individuals, and to build a community.

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

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

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

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

#### A. General

1. We follow the outline for standard AVP workshops as described in the Basic, Second Level and Training for Trainers manuals.
2. Facilitators need to be thoroughly familiar with the underlying principles of AVP, including the concept of Transforming Power, and endeavor to demonstrate those principles.
3. All workshop participation is voluntary.
4. A workshop leading to a certificate is a minimum of 22 program hours. In unusual circumstances and after serious consideration, a local group may reduce the time to no fewer than 18 program hours.
5. Workshops are conducted using AVP ground rules as outlined in the Basic manual.
6. Facilitators and local groups are encouraged to develop new exercises and resources. Such exercises and resources shall not be published as AVP materials and should only be distributed for testing purposes until they have been reviewed and approved by the AVP/USA Education Committee.

#### B. Content

1. 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.
2. Second Level 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.
3. 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.
4. The concept of Transforming Power is to be communicated in every workshop.

### C. Team Leadership

1. 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.
2. Prison workshops must have at least one outside facilitator.
3. Every workshop must have at least one experienced facilitator, normally designated as a lead facilitator. This person will have, as a minimum, completed all three levels of workshops, apprenticed as a facilitator, and been recommended by other lead facilitators and approved by the local group for qualification as a lead facilitator.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. For each prison workshop, an outside facilitator will be designated to act as liaison with the prison staff for that workshop.
7. We encourage facilitators to work with facilitators at other training sites at least once a year. This cross-fertilization stimulates learning and growth among facilitators.
8. Development and improvement as a facilitator are significant parts of the program. Local AVP groups will establish a process to enable facilitators to learn more about themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, skills and growth, and the place of Transforming Power in their work and their lives.
9. Prison facilitators are not paid for their work. AVP may reimburse any expenses incurred in conducting a workshop. Local groups may decide whether or not to pay facilitators a modest amount for conducting community workshops. Local groups may also decide whether or not AVP paid staff may conduct workshops from time to time as part of their job.

## IV. Organization of Local Groups

### A. Definition

1. A Local Group, as defined in the AVP/USA, Inc., By-Laws, is an organization that conducts AVP programs in a defined geographic area.
2. Within any state or Region, Local Groups may be formed where there is a sufficiently large number of trained and experienced facilitators to conduct AVP programs on an ongoing basis.
3. Any new group that is formed will have a mentor designated from an established AVP group to give support and guidance in the process. Local groups unable to agree on the division of a geographic area will take the dispute to their regional organization or, in the absence of a functioning regional organization, to the Committee of Local and Regional Groups (CLRG).

### B. Responsibilities

1. The keystone of AVP operations is the Local Group. With a minimum of oversight, each Local Group makes decisions regarding managing its own resources and developing procedures that meet its needs as long as they are not in conflict with this Policy Statement or AVP/USA, Inc. By-Laws. These include, but are not limited to: finances; training and support of facilitators in their group; relationships with prisons served; pursuit of community applications of AVP; policies that govern facilitators, training procedures, workshop evaluations; job descriptions for organizational positions; oversight of any paid staff.
2. Working within the policies outlined in this statement, Local Groups are responsible for maintaining standards for workshops including length of workshops, attendance required for certificates, adherence to ground rules, training required for facilitators, etc.
3. All workshops are conducted under the authorization of an AVP Local Group. Facilitators must work with a Local Group when setting up and/or conducting AVP workshops leading to a certificate.
4. Local Groups 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.

5. Formal orientation of facilitators by the prison where they conduct workshops is highly recommended.
6. Local Groups will report semi-annually to their Regional Organization or, in the absence of a functioning regional organization, the Committee of Local and Regional Groups on their program and their financial situation.

C. Governance

1. Consensus is the recommended process for making decisions. Local Groups will endeavor to develop the community necessary to make this a viable way to govern themselves. If a Local Group fails to reach consensus after persistent efforts, the modified consensus decision-making process as outlined in the AVP/USA, Inc. By-Laws may be the alternative method.
  2. Local Groups shall appoint a representative to their regional organization.
  3. All Local Group meetings are open to active AVP facilitators and volunteers. Individual groups may define 'active' for themselves.
  4. Local Groups may create their own organizational structure, deciding on officers and committees that will best meet their needs.
- D. Considerable effort, including holding AVP meetings inside prisons, should be made to bring inside prison AVP facilitators into the decision making process on policy matters. Local Group members could also visit inside facilitators, discuss concerns and bring insiders' point of view to outside meetings without being obligated to uphold that position.

V. Regional Organizations

A. Definition

1. A Region is made up of Local Groups within a state or contiguous group of states.
2. Regional Organizations provide support to Local Groups and facilitate communications among their Local Groups and with other regions.

B. Responsibilities

1. A Regional Organization supports its Local Groups by sharing information, exercises, camaraderie and visions for the possibility of nonviolence. It may, with the agreement of Local Groups, negotiate with the prison system of the state(s) where it is located. It may organize retreats and/or conferences that provide opportunities for development of trained facilitators and reaffirm AVP's spiritual base. It encourages intervisitation and AVP outreach to new areas. When asked, it may work with Local Groups within its area to help resolve disputes (see section VII).
2. Each Regional Organization appoints a representative and an alternate to the Committee of Local and Regional Groups. The representative acts as liaison between the CLRG and the Regional Organization and Local Groups.
3. Each Regional Organization will report semi-annually to AVP/USA on the activities of Local Groups within its Region.

C. Governance

1. Consensus is the recommended process for making decisions. Regional Organizations will endeavor to develop the community necessary to make this a viable way to govern themselves. If a Regional Organization fails to reach consensus after persistent efforts, the modified consensus decision making process as outlined in the AVP/USA, Inc. By-Laws may be the alternative method.
2. Each Regional Organization will appoint a recorder for its proceedings.
3. The Regional Organization will create governance structures that help it meet its responsibilities.

VI. Relationships with Corrections Department (DOC) and Facilities: The goal of this relationship is to provide an environment where AVP program can be conducted effectively within correctional facilities. Care should 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.

A. The following guidelines are expected:

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

5. Inmates have excused absences from their normal program assignments to attend AVP workshops. Inmates may not be called out except for mandatory call-outs.
  6. Participating facilities will support full range of AVP workshops.
  7. Facilities will work with AVP to accommodate the required 22 program hours in each workshop.
  8. Facilities are expected to provide appropriate space for the workshops.
  9. In order to preserve 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.
- B. 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.
  - C. Employees of DOC are encouraged to participate in and facilitate community workshops, but may not do so in prison workshops.
  - D. Local Groups and Regional or statewide organizations should consider and implement ways of letting corrections staff know the philosophy and format of AVP workshops.
  - E. In order to maintain AVP's program integrity and autonomy, we do not accept funds from DOC, except for provision of meals and certain supplies during workshops. Funds that come from inmates or that are controlled by them are welcome.
  - F. Local Groups 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.
  - G. Prison Coordinators, working with the Local Group, will ensure that outside facilitators are cognizant of prison regulations affecting volunteers and AVP workshops.
  - H. The content and process of AVP workshops remain within the province of AVP. Prison officials are not involved with AVP affairs.

#### VII. Solutions When Problems Arise

- A. For the purpose of maintaining our integrity and effectiveness, we must promptly use our principles and methods to resolve our own conflicts.
- B. To promote harmonious relations among people involved in AVP Local Groups, AVP committees should provide opportunities for community building.
- C. To protect our community relations, AVP conflicts should be kept out of public view; e.g., not to be shared with client agencies unless the local AVP group or groups involved agree.
- D. Some suggested methods (described in AVP Basic manual, C-6 & C-7) for conflict resolution are:
  1. Direct conversation
  2. Clearness committees
  3. Threshing sessions
  4. Six point problem solving, and
  5. Mediation.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.