Empathy and Compassion cannot be taught from the lecture podium.

They cannot be garnered from assigned reading.

They must be Experienced.

The Alternatives To Violence Project/California Changes Lives



In a split second, Violence changes everything.

young life shattered. A prison locked down for months. A community living in fear. It doesn't have to be this way. Twenty years of experience teaches **us**.

There is an alternative. One that works. One that changes lives.

For over 20 years, we've brought our workshops and our community volunteers into California's prisons.

Ninety percent of prisoners will come back into our communities

The Alternatives to Violence Project gives people the tools they can use to change themselves and our violent society. Our participants learn new ways to react to potentially violent situations – new ways to respond to conflict and frustration.

We don't lecture or preach. Through our series of intensive workshops, we give people the life-changing experiences - the profound interactions with others -that unlock the fear and compassion, the hidden despair and the untapped strength they have inside.

Right now we have trained facilitators in 18 prisons. Prison staff calls AVP "the most successful program at reducing violence we have ever encountered."

Because our program model really works, we've been invited to bring it in to every prison in the state – and we could - *if we had the funds and the volunteers*. But, we don't work only in prisons. Every prison workshop includes **community volunteers** who have been trained in the community workshops we hold in towns across California.

Over the years, we've realized that AVP is a gift that **everyone** can use. Because all of us - free or incarcerated - are affected by violence, conflict and anger.

We have a dream: to bring the AVP program to every person in California who wants it.



Our community workshop program is expanding! Every day we get calls from neighborhood groups, from teachers, from churches, Communities who want who need - what AVP has to offer.

And our waiting lists for the prison programs are full.

Will you help us keep up with the demand? Will you donate today? Because we are a 100% VOLUNTEER organization, your contributions will go directly toward growing our program.

We also invite you to join us for a **community workshop.** You might find, as we did, that these workshops will change your life.

So now, please meet some of the people whose lives have been changed by facilitators, and AVP. Keep reading and you'll hear from prisoners, volunteers, and prison officials how AVP transformed their belief in what is possible.

The message they bring is clear. There is hope. There is an alternative.

Because violence is no match for love.





Reaching the streets

Do AVP workshops only impact prisoners?

I have never before in my career received outside calls from family members who took the AVP workshop on the "streets" wanting to thank me for offering it on the "inside" because now they are communicating better with their spouse or they now have a better understanding of their son's pain or the struggles their father has faced. And most of all, they have learned to forgive.

"No data or statistic can measure the variety and quality of "thank you," and "I appreciate you" from the participants for overseeing this program that I have received in the history of my career at CDCR.

I am constantly bombarded with requests from inmates to be added to the waiting list or to be put in the next workshop. I have never had as many phone calls from counselors, correctional staff, or educators commenting on a visible change in an inmate who has taken this workshop.

These comments will stay imbedded in me forever providing me with the motivation to continue believing this program does make a difference and people do change."

Kenya Williams, Ed.D., Principal of Vaca Valley Adult School in Solano State Prison and an AVP facilitator.



Incarcerated Facilitator-Volunteers

My name is Ryan Hammer.

"As far back as I can remember I have had a problem with my anger, but was in total denial as to its seriousness. That all changed for me in 1995 when that denial resulted in my present incarceration. Two innocent lives would be forever changed because of the anger I disregarded for so long.

Immediately following my incarceration, my journey of change began. It led me to the AVP program. This program had such a profound effect on my life. I had to sign up to become a facilitator

with the hope that I may be of use to the AVP program in my community here at Ironwood State Prison.

AVP has given me the necessary tools to live out my remorse and provided an arena where I can continually grow and learn from others. It has taught me to not only see the good in others, but also in myself."

"Happy Hammer" is an inside AVP coordinator handling the details for smooth workshops.



"AVP is the only program in which I have participated in that has given me the tools needed to fix and rebuild my broken life."



"In each workshop, there is a moment when the light that fills each of us shines through and it is at that moment I know another brother or sister has been added to the AVP family." My name is Kelly P. Scaffidi.

What AVP Means To Me ...

"In 1997, while incarcerated at Old Folsom prison, a friend of mine talked me into attending a Basic workshop..

Under the perpetually smiling eyes of Bodacious Bob I became Clean Cut Kelly and have been hooked on AVP ever since! To see the complete and total transformation of those I know from a prison yard, as well as a few complete strangers thrown in, that occurs because of AVP community, makes each workshop a magical experience for me."



Corrections Staff

My name is Jane Soria.

"My observation of inmate participation and my very own experience was extraordinarily moving as it provides a positive outlook both professionally and personally. I feel as though this is a "calling" of giving back even more to the community as I look closer into retirement. AVP would be one of the community connections I would consider participating as a facilitator."

Jane Soria, Manager of Community Partnership at California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation includes oversight of effective self-help, inmate leisure time activity groups at all 33 prisons. After 22 years with CDCR and receiving awards for her service to women in corrections, she was recognized for her volunteer service by Lions Clubs International as a Melvin Jones Fellow.



"My experience taking a Basic AVP workshop was awesomely rewarding."



My name is Nicamer.

"I work with these inmates on a daily basis and I can see the change after participating in AVP. They seem to have a more positive outlook on life, made amends with themselves, and more importantly, I see hope in their eyes. Working in a jail, I don't see too many of that among the inmates."

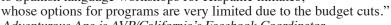
Nicamer Tolentino is a Rehabilitation Services Coordinator with the San Francisco Sheriff's Department at the San Bruno Jail facility.

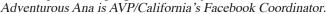
"I continue to support AVP conducting workshops at San Bruno Jail because of the transformation that takes place with the inmates."

Community Volunteer Facilitators — HomeBoys

My name is Ana Slinghuff-Barral.

"I took my first AVP workshop in 2005. It was a transformative experience and I have been involved with AVP since then, first with community and later prison workshops. AVP shows the way of how people from different backgrounds can come together and work as a team, in a respectful and enriching way. As an educator, I apply many of AVP techniques and principles to my interactions with college students. AVP is also a deeply spiritual practice for me. Currently I am mainly dedicated to Spanish language workshops for Hispanic inmates,







My name is Diana Couch.

"AVP has blessed my life for over 20 years. My path with AVP began by trying to find ways to help my children and step-children get along. But I quickly learned that I needed to help myself first. I took that first workshop in prison as there were no community workshops being held in my community. I became inspired by the inmates in that workshop and went on to become a facilitator. After 20 years of facilitating workshops, I'm still inspired. I facilitate in the prison, in the community and with youth. I have a wonderful circle

of awesome facilitators/participants/acquaintances from all over the world as friends and support. I'm retired now and my children all have children of their own. I'm still facilitating and growing. I'm always learning new ways to improve on my own non-violent activities."

Daring Diana Couch has helped open four prisons in Tehachapi, Corcoran and Chino; actively developing community facilitators and coordinators.

AVP local groups are partnering with local groups to offer workshops in communities. Here is an example:

"AVP/Los Angeles has been doing workshops with HomeBoy Industries (Under the direction of Father Greg Boyle) We now have two facilitators (from HomeBoys) and one of them is in charge of an AVP mini-session (1hr) every week at their facility. Her name is Nice Natalie and AVP has become important to her.

HomeBoy Industries.org hires people who have been active in gangs, in and out of prison. Once they go through a vetting process they get hired and paid. Depending where they are, they are helped to become responsible citizens.

HomeBoys has a diner, farmers' market, bakery, grocery, a silk screening facility, Homegirls Café and Catering and more.

AVP/Los Angeles is proud to give AVP workshops as part of their program." Nourishing Nancy, AVP/LA Prison and Community Volunteer Coordinator.

Formerly Incarcerated Facilitators



My name is Danny Contreras.

"I've seen AVP break down barriers and open people up!!!!! I believe it can make a big difference in someone's life, no matter who you are or what walk of life you come from.

I did my first Basic workshop in prison in Soledad, California at North Facility in 2006. I've seen a lot of barriers get broken down between gangs and races. I figured I could use this on the streets to help out everyone, but specifically young gang members and Mexicans. So I got trained to became a facilitator and

helped facilitate workshops and mini-workshops [inside]. After I paroled in June 2011, I got in touch with two outside facilitators about getting it started out where I was paroling.

We finally had our very first community workshop maybe a month ago in Santa Cruz County. I'm very hopeful that all of them will become facilitators and we can bring change to these streets. There was like 29 people who showed up and we got a waiting list. AVP is going to show kids and adults alike there's a better way of life, [how to] break down barriers to bring peace between people and groups."

My name is Sincere Sam Lewis.

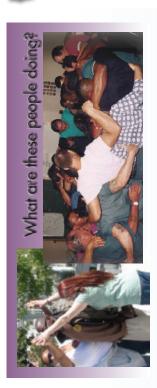
"At the age of eighteen I was tried, convicted, and sent to prison for a gang-related murder. I am now 43 years of age. While incarcerated and serving a term of 15 years to life, I was introduced to the Alternatives to Violence Project. This was what I had been searching for much of my life. I became a Facilitator in 1996 and a Lead Facilitator in 2010. While housed at Soledad Correctional Training Facility I served as the Chairman of the Alternatives to Violence Inmate Leisure Time Activity Group until my release in 2012.



After my release in January 2012, I have continued to work on my Bachelor of Science Degree, and have trained in fiber optics. I also have facilitated in two AVP mini-workshops.

Since my release, I have worked with two organizations that work with men and women being released from incarceration, helping them to transition back into society. I am currently a case manager for one of these organizations, Friends Outside. Helping people is what I truly want to do, and now I have an opportunity to do this. AVP has played and continues to play an important role in my successful transition.

My most memorable A.V.P. experience was the first Youth Work Shop we conducted in Soledad Correctional Training Facility – Central. Observing and being a part of the Transformation of these young men was truly magical. Words cannot begin to express the beauty of Transforming Power. "



Changing lives, theirs and others, by sharing, playing, listening and being there for one another in a community-building AVP workshop!

You can change lives, too...here's how:

Volunteer:

Take a workshop, sign up at **www.avpcalifornia.or**g Sponsor an AVP workshop through your group. Host community volunteers; provide housing and food. Put Alternatives to Violence Project/California on your FaceBook.

Donate:

Donate online at www.avpcalifornia.org
Designate AVP/CA through the CA State Employees Campaign.
Send a check to: AVP/CA
P.O. Box 3294

Call and talk to us 800/905-6765 about what works best for you. \$22,000 donations received from inmates in 7 years!!

Santa Barbara, CA 93130

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