



*Special Gathering Info See Center Pullout!*

The

# TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

**Reentry and AVP**

**In This Issue**

How AVP helped me when I got out... ..... **1**

AVP Truly is a family ..... **2**

Bylaws Changes ..... **2**

Reentry Gatherings and Brainstorms ..... **3**

Employer Perspectives: A Study..... **3**

Exercise: Moving Van (and handout) ..... **4**

**PULLOUT GATHERING INFO**

Why AVP workshops are valuable tools for parole: A Study..... **5**

Re-entry Relationships ..... **5**

Empathy: a core value in getting along? ..... **6**

Restorative Justice ..... **6**

Order Form ..... **7**

Resources for re-entry ..... **8**

A Publication of AVP/USA.

**“W**hen I first paroled on December 18, 2008, I was blessed to be able to go home with my mother and father. My younger nephew lived with them, as did his beautiful puppy, Roxie. I was thankful to be there with my mom and dad, yet I feel that a lot of my success with my reintegration into a society—that I was not accustomed to—is the fact that I had Roxie to spend time with. Whenever my communication faltered in other aspects of my life, I was able to be around Roxie, and just be accepted fully regardless of my state of being. That is, she was unconditionally accepting of me, in essence, a sanctuary. Yes, and if I ‘barked’ at her, she didn’t hold it against me and that made it easier to relax and be at peace. Sure, I still needed to learn to communicate better with the human beings I was connected to, but having this precious being around me, Roxie, made this process so much easier.”



- Guillermo Willie

**How AVP helped me when I got out...**

*By Jazzy Jodi*

I was incarcerated from 2005-2009. While serving my time, I completed every program available to me. I changed my way of thinking and had set positive goals for myself. I considered myself to be an intelligent, strong-willed woman and knew that I’d be able to accomplish my goals with little problems. During my first year after release, I had the eerie feeling that “FELON” was stamped across my forehead. I felt ashamed, humiliated and inadequate when around others. It didn’t matter that they didn’t know about my past... I felt that everyone knew. I had to force myself to look people in their eyes because my shame automatically took my eyes to the ground. I had to use what I learned in AVP to begin to socialize normally. I often found myself very angry—angry with myself for ruining my life.

First and foremost, I had to remember that I committed a felony but that’s not who I am; I am a good person who made a huge mistake. I also had to remember AVP taught me that everyone has good inside them and most people are kind and understanding. My feelings of inadequacy soon disappeared. However, I won’t lie, the feelings continue to arise from time to time, and I just have to go into my memory bank and pull out what I’ve learned. Before my incarceration, I had a very good work history with excellent references. Before I was released, I had no doubt whatsoever I would be able to get a job. I am an intelligent woman, hard working and loyal. I assumed that would get me work. We all know what assuming does. I am totally honest on all my applications; I have not had one interview yet. I am applying for everything from janitorial work to office work, sending literally hundreds of applications. Most companies are using the internet for applications now, and it’s extremely hard to get face-to-face with a hiring manager.

Gaining employment was one of the least of my least while incarcerated. Even though I can’t find employment, I consider myself to be one of the lucky ones. I have great family support. I don’t have

# The TRANSFORMER

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2 years ..... \$25  
3 years ..... \$35

## Group rate

Green Electronic Edition ..\$5 ea  
Paper Edition..... \$10 ea

First year as new facilitator is free (submitted by local coordinator).

Back issues may be found at www.thetransformer.us.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.



Continued from page 1

## How AVP helped me...

to be out on the street, homeless and hungry.

My whole family has been there for me. As much as I appreciate it, I also feel like such a burden on them. I have no income and therefore am totally dependent. It is such a humiliating feeling to have to ask others for your necessities. I've never been good at asking for anything; if I couldn't do it, then it just wouldn't get done. Now I have learned to humble myself and ask for what I need. I know other women from jail who have no family and are living on the street; I thank God that's not

me. In jail I was worried that it would take a long time to regain trust from my family—I was wrong once again. My family understands what happened with me, and our bonds are as tight as before, if not tighter.

AVP has taught me a lot, which helps me make it through every day. The communication skills are probably what I use most. I was never good at speaking about my feelings; however, every day I am getting better at it. There are many things that I am thankful for, and being a part of AVP is right there at the top.

## AVP Truly is a Family

For many in prison, "reentry" may have a totally different perspective than getting back on the streets.

by Larry "Bodacious Bratt"

I have been an AVP facilitator for nearly 14 years. During that time, I have been transferred at least ten times to various Maryland prisons. Instead of feeling dread at being uprooted, wondering how I was going to earn a paycheck (I'm a divorced orphan, so no outside money sources) or who I would associate with, I embraced each transfer with the mantra, "Everything happens for the best."

My latest transfer took me from a prison in numerous programs. Along with a facilitators, I facilitated monthly resolution, community building and and affirmation techniques. new residence the prisoners were that I felt like an outsider, even down for 26 years of my life

Although taken aback by instinctively knew there was

where I participated crack cadre of AVP workshops in conflict communication Unfortunately, at my clannish to the point though I had been sentence. this behavior, I a brotherhood I could contact. I sent word to the AVP community that I wanted to meet with them and hopefully facilitate workshops. These men did not brush me off. Instead, the leadership of Wonderful Wood, Radiant Ron, Amazing Al, Magnanimous Muhammad, Tenacious Thomas and Spiritual Sino met with me. I showed them my certificates and demonstrated my skills. I was welcomed into the Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) AVP community and now facilitate regularly.

AVP has empowered me to find the strength to take root in fertile soil in which to plant seeds of Transforming Power, no matter where I am sent. As long as AVP exists in a prison anywhere in the state of Maryland, any facilitator is able to find a community where he can continue to share his AVP light.



## BYLAWS CHANGES

Bylaws (and Policy) changes have been recommended for consideration at the 2011 Annual Gathering. We are eager for comments and additions to these changes from all interested facilitators, inside and outside.

For more information, go to: <http://www.avpusa.org>.  
No Internet? Call the AVP office and we'll send you the info.  
Deadline for suggestions: March 1.

## Employer Perspectives

The following is a summary of employers responses in focus groups regarding hiring ex-prisoners.

### Skill Requirements

Although employers viewed technical skills as being important in the selection process, they reported **non-technical ("soft") skills as being most important.** Many employers reported technical skills would be a bonus but indicated a willingness to train individuals who possess good communication and interpersonal skills, have the ability and willingness to learn, pay attention to detail and consistently show up for work on time. Interpersonal skills and the ability to get along with others was the overwhelming preference for non-technical skills.

**Computer knowledge** was a top priority for technical skills. While administrative and data entry jobs obviously require computer proficiency, many positions that traditionally did not require technological skills now do. Such positions include hotel housekeeping, transportation and delivery; even fast food counter help require some level of computer know-how. Applications often are required to be completed online as are other routine job functions such as completing time cards. In addition to computer skills, employers cited data entry, typing skills and mechanical ability as important, as well as physical strength for manual labor positions.

### Hiring Considerations

Prior to the focus groups, the 28 employers completed a brief survey about their *application process*:

- 19 employers reported receiving applications from ex-offenders;
- 20 asked about prior convictions on their application forms;
- 15 have company policies for hiring individuals with a criminal record; and
- 10 of the employers conduct criminal background checks.

During the discussion, most employers reported that a hiring decision depends on the individual circumstances of the applicant. For example, employers representing financial services reported that they would never consider a candidate with a record for embezzlement while health services (in pharmacy and anesthesia) reported never considering a candidate with a drug conviction. Some rule out all candidates with a history of violent crime while others have hired such individuals. Additionally, many companies have legal requirements to meet. For example, the financial services industry is required to comply with Security and Exchange Commission regulations requiring criminal background checks, credit checks and fingerprinting for all new employees. The health care and human service industry in Massachusetts is required to comply with the state's Executive Office of Health and Human Services regulations that can disqualify

broad classes of offenders from employment.

For those employers that do not regularly hire ex-offenders, a hypothetical question was posed, asking if they would consider hiring an individual with a prior conviction for drug possession and distribution. Some indicated they would consider the applicant if he or she posed no risk to the company or to other persons. For others, it depended on the length of time that had elapsed since the commission of the crime. The opportunity to use random drug tests was attractive for others. However, one woman summarized by saying, "I think they would be considered . . . but realistically [one with a record] is not as attractive a candidate." Another stated, "If they put it on their resume . . . chances are they're not going to be [considered] with the 200 [other] candidates . . . But let's say this comes up at the second or third interview, and they're definitely the best candidate . . . that would be considered."

### Companies that do hire say

For companies that do hire ex-offenders, employers described benefits such as employee enthusiasm, desire to succeed and appreciation and loyalty for being given a chance. Some employers described pre-release job seekers as the "best candidates" since they're drug tested, in at night and not coming in hung over in the morning. As another participant stated, "They're dying to show up at work . . . they're eager, on time and motivated." Employers described some challenges, including restrictions on employee hours due to probation or transitional living rules, spotty attendance and drug use and theft in some cases. However, there was no indication that these employers discontinued hiring ex-offenders as a result. As one employer stated, he has hired "maybe two bad ones out of maybe ten good ones." *Excerpted from Employment of Ex-Offenders: Employer Perspectives by Jennifer Fahey, Cheryl Roberts and Len Engle, Crime and Justice Institute, sponsored by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety.*

## Reentry Gatherings and Concentric Circle Topics

Something I am looking forward to when I get out  
 Something I am worried about when I get out  
 Someone who I hope will be there for me when I get out  
 Something I am working on to prepare myself to be successful when I get out  
 Something or someone(s) I'm going to miss when I get out  
 Something or someone I should avoid like the plague when I get out  
 I am determined to do \_\_\_\_\_ when I get out  
 Now, I am helping myself become a more educated person by....

### Reentry Brainstorms

Personal characteristics for successful reentry  
 What employers look for in employees  
 Reentry pitfalls  
 Do's and don'ts of being a good renter  
 Financial management  
 What does reentry success look like to me?  
 Factors in successful & unsuccessful reentry  
 Personal characteristics for successful reentry



# Exercise: Moving Van

## Purpose:

When we look into a mirror, we see what we look like on the outside. This exercise helps us to see what we are like on the inside of ourselves.

Change of any kind frequently brings stress. We need to be conscious of our choices of our values and our activities. We need to plan ahead so changes go the way we want them to.

**Materials:** Handout and pencil for each person.

**Time:** 20- 30 minutes

## Process/explanation:

“When we move to a new location (or make a big change in our lives), we can’t or don’t want to take everything with us. Choices must be made based on what is important to us:

What is most valuable to us? We are not talking about moving our furniture, books, or clothes. We are deciding what is most important in terms of these categories: our values, beliefs, habits, ideas, goals, responsibilities, relationships, and activities.

For example: ‘I will definitely keep my relationship with my daughter,’ or ‘I will continue my habit of writing or calling some family member every week,’ or ‘I will keep my goal of staying positive even when I’m in a conflict situation.’

This paper is for you to keep, and add more ideas as time goes on.”

## Step 1

Each person writes down his/her answers on the handout. Be specific.

- \* What will I definitely put in my moving van to take with me wherever I go?
- \* What will I throw away or leave behind?
- \* What new things will I start/acquire/learn when I get to my new place?

## Step 2

Going around the circle after everyone has written, each person reads aloud a couple of items from the first column on their their list to the larger group, sharing only what they want. As others read their list, you can add things to your own list that are mentioned by others and which are right for you. Continue around the circle, sharing from the second column, then the third.

## Step 3: Discuss:

What surprised you about this exercise?

What did you learn?

How does this apply to AVP?

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## Create Your Own Moving Van Handout

When we move to either a new physical location or a new situation, we can’t or don’t want to take everything in our lives with us. Choices must be made about what is important.

IDEAS  
ACTIVITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES  
RELATIONSHIPS

VALUES  
GOALS

BELIEFS  
HABITS

- 
- What will I definitely put in my moving van to take with me wherever I go?
  - What will I throw away or leave behind?
  - What new things will I start/acquire/learn when I get to my new place?

**Annual Gathering Partial-Scholarship deadline is March 26.  
Register Early and Save \$55!!  
Pull out centerfold of this newsletter or go to [www.avpusaconference.org](http://www.avpusaconference.org)**



# **MOVING FORWARD!**

**Building Our Communities**

**Welcoming Diversity**

**Exploring New Tools for the Future**

## **Announcing the 2011 AVP/USA National Gathering May 27-30 at Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) in Belmont, CA—just south of San Francisco**

AVP is touching more people and reclaiming more lives than ever. And, you are at its heart. Please join us for the 2011 National Gathering to explore vital new ideas, participate in exciting workshops and breakout groups, hone your facilitating skills and reconnect with old friends while making new ones.

With San Francisco, just 20 minutes north, be sure to plan an extra day or two for cable cars, The Golden Gate, Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, great food and so much more.



### **Notre Dame de Namur University**

The Notre Dame de Namur University campus is settled in the peaceful, wooded community of Belmont, California—just south of San Francisco, at the northern edge of the Silicon Valley. It's within walking distance of coffee houses and ethnic restaurants. NDNU's modern facilities give us a chance to look ahead while being rooted in AVP's incredible past. We are glad to be supporting a university committed to community engagement and the values of social justice and global peace.



**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Laura Magnani**  
Interim Regional  
Director for the  
American Friends  
Service Committee  
(AFSC), Pacific  
Mountain Region

Most of Laura's work, going back to the 70s, has been in the area of criminal justice. From 1971-1979 she was the lobbyist for the Friends Committee on Legislation in Sacramento, California, working on a broad range of issues including equal rights, housing, criminal justice, and militarism. She is author of *America's First Penitentiary: A Two Hundred Year Old Failure* (2000) and *Beyond Prisons: A New Interfaith Paradigm for Our Failed Prison System* (2006, Augsburg/Fortress Press), that analyzes the racial, social and economic underpinnings of the criminal justice system and explores new models of justice. In addition to her work at AFSC she is adjunct faculty at Starr King School of the Ministry, teaching classes on prisons and prison ministry.

**Register by March 26th and save \$55!**

Pull out this centerfold for future reference

## **WORKSHOP STRANDS**

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### ***Building Our Communities***

Community is front and center with AVP. Explore training and support of your local facilitators; organizing yourselves as a group; empowering and preparing your replacements; and energizing and expanding community outreach.

### ***Welcoming Diversity***

Diversity is the lifeblood of any AVP community. Learn more about tapping into the youth community; keeping the formerly-incarcerated fully involved; assuring the broadest racial and cultural bases; welcoming those with hearing, sight or physical challenges; and empowering volunteers with literacy or limited English-speaking issues.

### ***Exploring New Tools for the Future***

Moving forward is a key to AVP vitality. Take the plunge into fully using new media; finding volunteers on VolunteerMatch.com; making Facebook work for AVP; making Wiki a tool for organizing and writing; Skype for conference calls; and sharpening your database skills.

*Bring your laptop to explore NEW MEDIA. Set up your Facebook account and learn how to use it to reach out beyond your circle of friends to introduce AVP.*

*Wifi service is available throughout the campus.*

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING**

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### ***Friday evening dinner, May 27, through Monday lunch, May 30***

**Start off Friday night with an evening of laughter**, sharing our successes, renewing friendships and making new facilitator-friends. Don't miss this gathering of all gatherings.

**Saturday, the sharing deepens as we explore** more methods of implementing AVP exercises and workshops, ways to promote community workshops, as well as working with prison and department-level staff. Discover what AVP/USA committees do and how you can participate.

**Sunday features more workshops and the AVP/USA Annual Meeting.** Find out how AVP/USA is moving forward and how you can be a part of the next steps.

**Monday, stay until lunch for a morning** of catching up on what you missed either with repeat workshops or small Dialog sessions—to ask questions and get answers on your specific issues.

#### **Guest Speakers:**

**George Giurbino, Director of Adult Institutions, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)** George has served in many positions within CDCR, including warden. His early support of AVP has been strong and steady.

**Kenya Williams, Principal of Vaca Valley Adult School, California State Prison, Solano** Kenya has helped to launch five AVP programs in two prisons, was on the AVP/CA Steering Committee and is currently working with the AVP/USA Research Committee and is completing a dissertation on AVP's effectiveness on reducing violence in prison.

*A newly energized AVP/CA has been fortunate to have doors opened to 18 CDCR prisons. Staff from the prisons, as well as the volunteer facilitators, bring insights and ideas to this conference on moving forward by working together effectively.*

## ***Come early for Friday's In-Depth Workshops 9 a.m.- 4 pm***

### **Gender Awareness....Char Carroll and Team**

Gender wars and gender discrimination are two-edged swords that harm women and men in our society. In this workshop we will work to transcend polarized gender beliefs and expectations; understand and appreciate gender and sexual differences; and recognize and validate various forms of sexual expression in order to reduce discrimination, social dysfunctions and resultant unhappiness.

### **Sociodrama: An Alternative to Conducting and Debriefing Role Plays ...Susan Hefte and Team**

Conducting and debriefing role plays in AVP give participants direct experience with using the AVP tools that have been taught throughout the Basic and Advanced workshops. In Sociodrama, a scene and its characters are created by the group and acted out as a way of experimenting with how things work – or don't work – in life.

*\$100 additional fee (for early birds) includes Thursday night lodging and breakfast and lunch on Friday  
Advanced Registration required.*

### ***Facilitate a Workshop, Facilitate a Dialog***

***What can you contribute to others in AVP?*** Your insights and experiences are the heart of an AVP National Gathering! Please consider sharing your ideas with others. Create a 75-120 minute experiential workshop to be offered by your team of facilitators.

***Deadline for Ideas:*** February 14, 2011. Submit to Blissful Barbara (avp\_barb@yahoo.com)



### ***Getting to the Bay Area & Ground Transportation***

***Which airport is best?*** Airline prices and convenience vary depending on your home airport and the day of the week. San Francisco Intl. (SFO) is closest to the gathering site in Belmont, at 11 miles; San Jose Intl. (SJC) (AKA Mineta) and Oakland Intl. (OAK) are both about 25 miles away. All three feature shuttle van services, and there are also various (less expensive) public transportation options available. More details on ground transportation upon registration. Compare flights and book early for the best deal and consider travel insurance for cancellations. And do note that the San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose area is also served by Amtrak.

### ***Accommodation Options***

#### **On-Campus Accommodations are convenient and relaxing:**

**Single Rooms** in the beautiful, New Hall dorm—each with one single bed arranged in quads, so you can be near friends but still enjoy the privacy of your own room (4 single rooms share one adjoining bathroom).

**Double Rooms** in the older dorm—2 single beds with a bathroom down the hall.

**Local motel/hotel in the area,** go online and search "hotels near Notre Dame de Namur University" where lots of options are available.

**Food Service will be provided by Bon Appétit** which will accommodate special requests (Vegan, Diabetic etc) and has a reputation for fresh, local, organic foods.

### ***Things to Do in San Francisco***

Don't miss out on all the attractions of this great city. Go to [www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com](http://www.onlyinsanfrancisco.com) and plan to spend some extra days exploring all its mysteries and wonders.

***Register by March 26th and save \$55! >>>***

# AVP/USA 2011 Gathering Registration

## Notre Dame de Namur University, May 27-30, 2011

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Adjective Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name and phone of emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL NEEDS: Be aware that NDNU is fully ADA equipped.

Accessible Room  Sensory Needs  Other

Please note: All people enrolling for this conference must be aged 18 by May 20, 2011.

CANCELLATION: For a full refund, written requests must be received by April 24, 2011. Requests after this date will be reviewed by AVP/CA and AVP/USA. **No refunds after May 17, 2011.**

To register online: [www.avpusaconference.org](http://www.avpusaconference.org)  
To register by fax: 1-805-823-4618

### Registrar Use Only

Date registration received \_\_\_\_\_

Date confirmation sent \_\_\_\_\_

### Registrar Use Only

Date council contribution received \_\_\_\_\_

Date amount approved \_\_\_\_\_

Amount approved \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to attend the Three-Day Conference

|  |                   |                 |               |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Three-Day Conference</b>              | <b>Early Bird</b> | <b>Regular</b>  | <b>Late</b>   |
|  | Before March 26   | Before April 25 | Before May 12 |
| (rates are per person, double occupancy) |                   |                 |               |

Older Dorm \$295 \$320 \$350 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New Dorm \$295 \$320 \$350 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to register as a day commuter.

I will attend  Friday  Saturday  Sunday  Monday

Day Fee \$65 \$75 \$85 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per day, three meals, no lodging

I would like to attend the **Friday In-Depth Workshops**

Includes Thursday lodging, Friday breakfast and lunch

Gender Awareness  Sociodrama  
\$100 \$120 \$135 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AVP/USA 2011 National Gathering T-Shirt \_\_ @ \$18 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Long-sleeved organic cotton \_\_S\_\_M\_\_L\_\_XL\_\_XXL  
Pre-order required

Commemorative Mugs \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donated by [www.deneenpottery.com](http://www.deneenpottery.com)—all proceeds go to scholarships

My donation to the Scholarship Fund (*Thank You!*) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Payment by Check or Money Order payable to AVP/USA

Payment by Credit Card  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Cardholder's Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Send registration and payment to:**

**AVP/USA 2011 Gathering, PO Box 3294, Santa Barbara, CA 93130**

## Partial-Scholarship Request Form

*This is a very limited pool of funds. It is helpful for you to get your local council's assistance and paying what you are able.*

Steps to obtain a scholarship:

1. Get local council's commitment and their contribution amount.
2. Mail the entire registration form in ASAP
3. Don't send money until your scholarship is approved.
4. Contact Alice Waco for assistance: [awaco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:awaco@sbcglobal.net)

Please attach the following information on a separate sheet:

1. Reason for requesting scholarship
2. Current AVP involvement
3. How your attendance will benefit your local council
4. Letter of recommendation from your local council
5. Are you \_\_\_\_\_ previously incarcerated  
\_\_\_\_\_ first-time attendee

Total Cost: Registration \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Travel \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I can pay \$ \_\_\_\_\_ My council can pay \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Remainder: Amount of scholarship request \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline March 26th**



# Why AVP workshops are valuable tools for parole...

In February 6, 2007, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections completed a Parole Outcomes Study, which offers very practical rationales for AVP workshops.

## Summary:

Simply finding a job and a place to live are not the major reentry concerns that they are sometimes considered to be. There is a clear link between anti-social peer groups and recidivism. Parole violators had more difficulty with basic life skills, e.g., financial management.

Substance abuse relapse is correlated with parole violation.

Parolees who succeeded had more positive relationships with partner/spouse, had a mentor and had a good experience with community corrections.

The overarching theme is there are **three primary factors differentiating successes from failures:**

- Parole violators maintain more unrealistic post-release life expectations.
- Parole violators demonstrate more anti-social attitudes, values and beliefs.
- Parole violators have poor coping or problem-solving skills.

**Parolees who succeeded** clearly went through the same rough times

and faced the same types of problems and emotional difficulties that violators experienced.

**A general anti-social disposition occurred among violators.**

They were more likely to view violating parole as an acceptable option of behavior,



to maintain a general **lack of empathy** for others, to shift blame or **deny responsibility** for negative behavior.

Many violators could identify their problems but could not come up with a strategy for addressing them. They were not shy about providing long explanations for why they had previously violated parole, but they were unable to provide a cogent response to how they would handle the future.

Some sort of dysphoric emotion (e.g., stress, depression, frustration, worry, anger, etc.) was the strongest emotion experienced during the 48 hours preceding parole violation. Dysphoric emotions also tend to be cumulative, with a majority of violators experiencing

multiple types of dysphoric emotions preceding violation characterized by a variety of confusing and unpleasant emotions. Clearly, a correlation was present between being in a dysphoric, or hard to bear, emotional state and violating parole.

## Recommendations:

1. Focus offender programming on cognitive-behavioral types of treatment.
2. Teach financial responsibility and money management skills.
3. Move beyond employment and housing and teach employability skills and instill a positive attitude towards employment.
4. Instill overall pro-social attitudes, including interpersonal relationships and community supervision.
5. Maintain positive pro-social relationships (mentor, spouse, counselor, etc).
6. Offer intensive types of substance abuse treatment programs, such as TCs.
7. Offer in-prison programs that encourage offenders to maintain realistic post-release expectations.

Thank you to John Shuford for finding this research.

## Reentry relationships are all different

Over my time with AVP, I have had the good, though sometimes heart-wrenching, fortune to experience vicariously the return to society by a number of facilitators. Each person dealt with reentry with different support systems and different lenses—all as different as their personalities—often affected by a parole officer's approach.

One man was trapped in the restrictive net of his parole labeled as a "sex offender" with changing parole officers' methods. Another was given great latitude to live with his female partner for a couple months at a time in another part of the state. Then he was released early from parole.

One man's commitment to giving back to the community eased his ability to move quickly back into that community, starting up a school for at-

risk kids, while another found his ticket to comfort in the outside by studying and earning a master's degree.

Each one had different relationships in the community. One walked into a ready and welcoming family with a job and home. One who was returned to a former community that soundly rejected him felt isolated until he was off parole and able to move away.

Each of these men has contributed to, or tapped into, AVP after his release. Some waited a year or so; some called

AVP immediately. Some now only speak about or represent their AVP experience in other settings, such as

---

*"When I came out of prison, I was fortunate to be enveloped by the local council, which provided me with a place to feel welcomed and a sense of belonging as well as useful opportunities to give back to the community in a powerful way." Take-a-breath Toby*

---

acting in a play about prison, working with AA... doing the work of living life. A few have been no-shows in planned AVP co-presentations, without a call or a follow-up.

Several AVP facilitators whom I met inside were fortunate to discover an active local AVP group. Now they facilitate on workshop teams and are actively

involved, powerful assets to the health and growth of that local group.



Continued on page 6

## Empathy: a core value in getting along

by *Delightful Derrick*

I've been involved with AVP since 2005. Until I experienced my first encounter with empathy, I did not realize this prison system had changed me.

That was an experience I did not know how to deal with. I actually was mad at Anchor Alice (outside facilitator) because she had made us aware of our feelings but didn't tell us how to protect ourselves. For all these years in prison, I had numbed myself. Now, all of a sudden, I could not only feel but also actually feel for someone else outside of my race.

What I always believed was that "A man is not supposed to cry or feel hurt and pain." This empathy thing was contrary to what I lived by most of my life, and I didn't know how to deal with it.

Thankfully, we had a workshop the next day. Although Anchor Alice would not tell me how to deal with my situation, she said to listen and trust the process. By the end of the workshop, I understood and knew it was all right to feel empathy for others. It's all right to feel pain. It's all right to get upset. It's even all right to get angry as long as we remember to use transforming power to deal with our emotions and feelings, which will result in a positive outcome.

In my case I didn't like who I had become, so I had to stop dissecting the next man and instead analyze my own thoughts. Through AVP I have been able to do just that.

I am still involved as an inmate facilitator at California Substance Abuse and Treatment Facility as AVP is a part of my life. Thank you for bringing us AVP.

## Restorative Justice and Reentry

No question arises when looking at the benefits of the restorative justice process; it assists in the returning of individuals to society. These benefits also accrue for all people involved in the process.

For nine years, AVP/USA had a Restorative Justice (RJ) Committee with the charge to clarify AVP's role in the movement toward Restorative Justice and disseminate information about Restorative Justice to AVP facilitators. Resource materials are now available on the AVPUSA.org products list. This committee was laid down in 2009.

The RJ Committee developed the framework agenda for a three-day Advanced Workshop focused on restorative justice. Facilitators inside and outside at Jessup Correctional Center, MD did a trial run of the agenda and commented on it; however, the RJ committee offered this guideline for using the agenda in a workshop: "We think it is essential that the facilitators have a good understanding of the concept of restorative justice before offering a workshop on this topic. In this respect, this topic differs from other topics for advanced workshops. The average person has a grasp of the meaning of anger, fear, power, etc., and can lead productive discussions on these topics. That is not the case for restorative justice. Someone who hasn't spent some time considering this topic might do more harm than good by presenting

about it." An agenda with comments can be found at <http://www.avpusa.org/rj.html>

The following working definition for Restorative Justice was developed: *Restorative Justice focuses upon the hurts and needs of victims, and the hurts and needs of offenders, in such a way as to move them and their community toward healing. This approach by society to the issues of criminal justice strives for a balance between accountability for the offender, on the one hand, and repair of the harm done to the victim and to the community, on the other.*

### Publications

A small selection of materials on RJ are available at [www.AVPUSA.org](http://www.AVPUSA.org) Distribution Center:

#### How Restorative is AVP?

By Michael Bischoff  
Evaluating the Alternatives to Violence Project according to a Restorative Justice yardstick. Free pdf available at <http://www.avpusa.org/ftp/rjbish.pdf>

**AVP Restorative Justice, Healing in the Community**, \$1 includes shipping  
**Little Book of Restorative Justice for People in Prison**,

by Barb Toews,  
Rebuilding the Web of Relationships, \$4.95

**Little Book of Restorative Justice**,  
by Howard Zehr.  
Concise Introduction to Restorative Justice, \$4.95



*Continued from page 5*

### Reentry relationships are all different

The lessons I learned in these relationships:

AVP's impact and ability to assist newly released facilitators is limited since reentry is not the direct focus of AVP work. We need to admit this to ourselves.

The involvement between formerly inside and outside facilitators is

natural when it does take place in the community. How do we "help" one another? Neither of us is likely to step into the other's life in an uncomfortable way, but what we might ask one another is, "How can I support you in your life?"

A call once in a while to talk about how someone is doing is often enough encouragement for coping with the next hurdle. Don't expect regular calls from the freshly paroled.

Assuring formerly incarcerated people are on community AVP workshop teams

has a profound effect on the participants' workshop experience and on the re-entering facilitator.

The beauty of a friendship with a formerly incarcerated AVP facilitator is that we start with a similar value system and are familiar with communication skills. The circle is completed and real when we both remove the term "formerly incarcerated" when thinking of our "friend."

*Playful Pat*



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### Information to facilitate a positive prisoner re-entry

Available from [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org) or use the order form in this *Transformer*.

*Doing Good After Prison* by M.B. Jackson

Guide for re-entry into society. An excellent hands-on guide for inmates approaching release including relating to employers. Written by a man who has been there. \$8.50

Several exhaustive reports on how to operate reentry programs are available at [www.avpusa.org/reentry.html](http://www.avpusa.org/reentry.html)

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