



The

TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

Special Conference info inside!

Replacing yourself...

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The Hardest Things...

One of the hardest things we do is find people to take community workshops. The second hardest thing is to find people who want to take on doing just a little bit more than facilitating a workshop (such as being part of a committee), with the hope they will be willing to take on a somewhat greater responsibility, such as chairing a committee.

The third hardest thing is coming together as a group to work with someone who does not quite get how AVP functions and needs to change behavior or approach.

The fourth hardest thing is keeping a group as excited about the work as you are, whether council or AVP committee.

The fifth hardest thing is letting go and knowing when to let go once any of one of the above four tasks is accomplished.

And maybe the hardest thing is to remember to tell people how much we appreciate their work as often and as specifically as possible.

I wonder if it is hard, too, for people to step up and volunteer...



"Finding and keeping the next generation of AVP" describes this series of the Transformer. This is crucial for all of us to understand if we wish to grow AVP into the movement it deserves to be. In the Fall 2011 issue, the second "hardest thing" on this list was explored: "How do you get out of or into a volunteer position?" on page 8. In the AVP-USA Organizing Kit, you can find a chapter on "Finding People to Take Basic Workshops."

Cultivating the next generation

By Pat Hardy

(See Fall 2011 Transformer for the first article in this series, "Finding Your Replacement.")

I may have found my perfect successors, but I am learning that moving from finding my replacement to actually passing the baton can be a long, sensitive path, often calling on my best AVP skills.

Listening

My first step is serious listening to "my" potential volunteer's needs, interests, limitations and hopes for the position. It helps to have shared the job description prior to this listening time. Maybe this "answer to my prayers" needs to settle some things

in her personal life, such as getting their last child off to college or getting off parole. This conversation helps us come to an understanding, which runs the gamut from "being ready" to take on the job now to "agreeing to start in a year" while being assistant clerk or apprenticing coordinator or maybe it's "not the right position" after all and we need to revise the position tasks. Listening deeply begins the conversation and starts our relationship, but I still cannot jump to conclusions. The listening is ongoing.

Continued on page 2

The TRANSFORMER

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1050 Selby Avenue

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Phone: (888) 278-7820

E-mail: avp@avpusa.org

Website: www.avpusa.org

Please make checks payable to AVP/USA.

Editorial Coordinator: Pat Hardy

Copy Editor: Joan Cowan

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Questions and address changes:

Contact: Toby Laverty

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transformer@avpusa.org

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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

Cultivating...

I find in today's economy and with more formerly incarcerated facilitators participating that I need to listen for and ask about financial needs for doing any position. Please, new volunteers, educate us about your needs--from affording a conference call, to having the right equipment to be on the call, to getting to a workshop and just affording meals... We don't know if we don't talk about these things.

I have to remember to validate a volunteer's thoughts, hopes and situation.

Deciding: Being ready to revise the aspects of the position

Sometimes this perfect successor is very clear about what she is ready and able to do. I need to remind myself I have some deciding to do, too, so I ask about experience, strengths and areas needing more experience. Encouraging

The obligation of anyone with responsibility is to begin cultivating a successor the first day of the task. This is best done by validation, celebration, affirmation, appreciation...

him to take time to discern what is right and agreeing to a follow-up conversation around the next steps or decision gives us both time to look toward a workable solution. Once we have decided together what the job entails and where this new volunteer wants to begin it's time to begin sharing the tasks. I have enjoyed co-chairing or having an assistant chair, which also serves as an announcement to others that this is the direction in which we are heading. Sometimes there is just not a fit and I need to start over.

I have to remember to say: "I appreciate your process and honesty."

Being patient and persistent

For me, this is when empathy is present. Let's say we have talked, and there is real interest in handling the computer skills part of the "job," but I have not been able to reach her by phone or email for weeks. I can choose to assume the interest is gone and move on, I can get creative or I can figure I

am stuck in the job until I die. I have one friend with a very ill and failing husband who said in the past she wanted to be a facilitator but could not as her parents and her husband have needed her attention. People know there are times in their lives that need their focus. Sometimes this occurs *after* the person has taken on the role. I have been known to help out for six months until things settle down and the person is ready to come back... or not.

I need to remember to verbalize, "The time will come when it is right, and you will know"... "May I keep you on our email list?"

Mentoring: Reaching for that good in others

This part seems so obvious that I almost hesitate to bring it up. But in most volunteer opportunities with AVP, there is more actual orientation, training or apprenticing than we acknowledge *or do*. I am all too guilty of skipping this step.

On a committee, just learning people's names, what they do and a little history takes time—not to mention the actual work of the committee.

We are *mentoring* people, not training them. If "training" is necessary, it is likely to involve how to use the computer program to enter data. However—in most cases, it is being available to talk before and after meetings or workshops, to debrief. Gradually transferring pieces of my responsibilities is often most comfortable for both of us.

I need to remember to celebrate each step: "Great facilitation of that meeting" or, "You handled that situation with grace."

The pending committee chair's confidence is fostered by her creating agendas, taking minutes, running meetings, arranging meetings, getting to know the committee, working together on challenges and challenging people. One of the things I wish I had done was ask the apprenticing clerk to spend time with each committee member to find out what they do and what they want to do. All these begin to shift the relationships.

Functioning as a mentor after the person is in place is a touchy role. I

find the relationship works best when I ask questions (without instructive overtones), rather than giving advice. I need to remember this person knows what to do if I ask the right question and then appreciate their process.

I am most successful in passing on my responsibilities if I honestly and repeatedly affirm others more than I believe is necessary.

Margaret Lechner:
How to develop your replacement? Invite the facilitators in your program to your meetings with prison officials, state board meetings, national gatherings, etc. I have made the mistake of not inviting a developing leader to a meeting, with negative consequences for program and leadership development.

Re-entry

by Gori Urling

• Unsung heroes—no one sees their achievements.
 • But it doesn't matter because
 • if incarcerated people run the course they are extremely gifted.
 • One of the hardest fights because
 • you are looking at a mountain... same as doing your time in prison.
 • You are fighting more... can't take it personally...
 • media and society have built a wall so high we have difficulty going over it.
 • Do I take this medicine—no!
 • You knew what worked in prison ...doesn't work.
 • All you know to do is stand and move forward.

“With Public Sentiment, Nothing Can Fail”

A coalition of prisoners and the community against violence

By Larry Bratt (“Bodacious Bratt”)

The Extra Legalese Group (ELG), the first-ever incorporated prisoner think-tank in Maryland, based at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI), has a history of serving the prison community. They created a newsletter that provided legal tips and information on rulings. This led to conducting legal awareness seminars and anti-violence symposia throughout Maryland prisons. Various luminaries from the professions of law, politics, and social activism were speakers and participants in these programs. Later, some of these individuals met privately to discuss what they could do to aid ELG. These citizens formed the Community Support Coalition (CSC).

This wave of activity to embrace ELG's philosophy, “To prevent victims and victimization,” began the grassroots campaign that echoes Abraham Lincoln's words: “With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decision.” Thus, the seeds of CSC were sown.

The men of ELG: Rashid Salih, Vincent Greco, Dwight Davis-Bey, Ronald Ellis, Robert Morgan and Larry Bratt (all AVP graduates; Ellis, Davis-Bey, and Bratt currently facilitate) shared their vision and belief that all people, regardless of life's choices and circumstances, possess the ability to transform themselves, once they have chosen to change their lives. Thus, ELG and CSC formed a relationship with Jennifer Adkins, (a victim rights activist whose 14-year-old son, Christopher Jones, was murdered by gang members) in order to promote ELG's Peace Initiative. The Peace Initiative is focused on preventing victims and

victimization not only in prison, but also throughout Maryland communities.

In December 2010, the two-day Peace Initiative Symposium was held, and AVP was well represented -- all inside facilitators, several community facilitators and many inside participants were among the several hundred attendees. After Jennifer shared her story, a dozen gang leaders, representing the Bloods, Crips, Dead Man Inc., Black Guerrilla Family and the Aryans, rose and stated in totem, “We pledge our efforts to do what no police officer can do...to stop the initiation rites of random violence,” saying they were touched by the senseless killing of Christopher.

Through Jennifer's stewardship, the tapestry of CSC supporters propelled ELG's template for the Peace Initiative to be recognized as an Innovator of the Year, by Maryland's leading legal newspaper, *The Daily Record*, along with 23 other honorees.

Even Governor Martin O'Malley joined the growing public sentiment for ELG and Ms. Adkins, after she was invited to the White House, as a guest of Congressman Sarabanes, when Edward Parker, Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention wrote to CSD on the governor's behalf “...ELG members are working seriously to try to bring safety to our communities and neighborhoods of Maryland. Taking a leadership position with gang members to convince them that violence is never justified is a great step towards public safety.”

In fact, State Senators, Attorney General and Delegates of both parties all sent citations recognizing the invaluable work of ELG. Truly with this public sentiment the Peace Initiative and Jennifer Adkins quest to save Maryland's children cannot fail.



A Man Named Bill *by Bill Denham*

His words slammed into me
like hot lead,
ripping through my flesh,
right through my heart,
nearly knocking me backwards into my chair.
“I shot and killed a man,” he said.

This was Bill,
this gentle, white-haired soul
with whom I was spending the weekend
in an alternatives to violence workshop.

“But, wait a minute,” you say. “You are Bill.”

You’re right; and his name
was not the same as mine.

But in that moment
when his words
shot through me
like a bullet,
I knew him
as I know myself.
I knew
we were
the same.

No, I have not shot
and killed a person—
not directly.

But, let me tell you this...

Matt is dead.

And if I had done my job—

I was the adult and he was the child—

if I had not had my head

so far up my ass,

for whatever reason--

it makes no matter--

Matt most likely would be alive today.

I know that

just as well as my new companion,

this gentle man with whom I spent the weekend,

knows what he did

and what he did not do.

And if you think for one millisecond

that I am not speaking truth,

that I am speaking in hyperbole,

then I respectfully suggest

that you had better start...

right now...

figuring out

how you and I

are just alike.

And if you do that,

you will never look at me the same.

You will know my burden

as you know your own

and that of each person

you encounter on your journey.

You will be free—

to breathe, to weep, to dance, to sing,

to work, to play and to weep some more.

You will be free to live.

Letter from Champion Charles Craven

I’m an inmate at The Lincoln Correctional Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. I’ve attended numerous AVP classes and have become a team facilitator. I feel AVP has helped me maintain a level of confidence and courage to continue a new life as a better person. I continue to grow each and every day, becoming a more active and outgoing man, regardless of my circumstances.

Every day I serve of my sentence does NOT have to be served pointlessly. I was lost until I found AVP, which saved me from the life I was living. I will always thank AVP for helping me see that I could change my life to something worthwhile. It’s important to see the future for what it can be other than what my life has been.

But a Baby’s Breath of Time *by Larry Bratt*

You came into my life like a whirlwind,
That showered me with unconditional love.
We danced. We laughed. We sang. We loved.
You became the center of my universe.
Like a shot in the dark--you were gone.
You gave me love for an Eternity,
But it was only a Baby’s Breath of Time.

Silent White *by Larry Bratt*

From a narrow perch,
Yellow lights spy ghost shadows etched across
Bleak brick walls.
White cold streams from a leaden sky.
Periscope rattles.
Winds reveal skeletons at the feast.
Gulags. The Camps. Calcutta’s Black Hole.
Countless, nameless, gnawing grief.
Inmate’s destiny unfolds.

AVP WORKS!

Deepening the Practice

Extending the Principles



Join us for

The 2012 AVP/USA National Gathering,

Save the Date!

May 25 - 28, 2012

New Windsor, Maryland

www.avpusaconference.org

Our Annual Gathering is the place to deepen your understanding of AVP, become acquainted with new ideas and new people, meet up with old friends and put some faces to names. You will come away inspired and, just like our AVP workshops, you will have fun while accomplishing all of this.

New Windsor is about an hour's drive from Baltimore and an hour and a half from Washington, DC.

Pull this out to share or for future reference



Featured Speakers*from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, (SAMHSA) - CDC on the importance of

Trauma-Informed Practices

and

John Shuford, AVP, DE

On Trauma Healing AVP Workshops and Delaware as a Trauma-Informed Care state

*Look for updates on the Conference@www.avpusa.org

New Windsor Conference Center

Located outside of Baltimore in a pastoral setting, New Windsor Conference Center provides full support for our gathering, including wireless connectivity, A/V equipment, lounges, handicapped accessibility and outdoor walking paths. You can choose between dormitory or hotel-style accommodations, with all linens provided.

Dorm rooms accommodate two to four people. Indicate roommate preferences. Hotel-style rooms with private bath are available as double room or single (number of singles is limited).

The kitchen is equipped to meet special dietary needs; please indicate dietary needs when registering.

Register by March 26 and Save  \$25

www.newwindsorconferencecenter.org

WORKSHOP STRANDS:

AVP Works

Explore how and why AVP works. Deepen your understanding of the information offered by featured speakers with more information on trauma, shame, forgiveness and the importance of trauma informed care.

Deepening the Practice

Grow your AVP skills. The Annual Gathering offers opportunities for cross fertilization, learning new ways to do things, getting practical ideas for our local groups. Get inspired and energized by opening to a new possibility.

Extending the Principles

Beyond our work in the prisons, how are we extending AVP principles into the world? Workshops or panels may include sessions on conflict resolution, supporting re-entry and the AVP-related HROC program (Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities). There will be opportunities to hear about AVP international work.

What workshop could you help facilitate?

Have something to share on any of the strands above? What works well for you and your group? We ask you to share your experience with others. Create a 75- to 120-minute experiential workshop to be offered by your team of facilitators. Submit to: Phyllis Lawrence: phyllislaw@comcast.net, phone: 703-868-9320 (East Coast time zone!)

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE—WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT...

- **FRIDAY EVENING.** Meet some new friends in our AVP-style mixer. Light and lively is the tone.
- **ENLIGHTENING ENTERTAINMENT.** Enjoy TP stories told by Bobby Avstreich –all with musical accompaniment. AVP musicians, bring your instruments. Jammin' may be happenin'!
- **BREAKOUT SESSIONS AND PANELS.** Four sets of breakout sessions for us to learn from and share with each other. (See request for your help above.)
- **AVP ANNUAL MEETING.** Remember, we are all volunteers; that includes our national officers and committees. Come offer your support and guidance at our annual business meeting.
- **COMMITTEE MEETINGS.** The important work of AVP is done by us, usually in conference calls. This is a chance to meet in person. If you're not on a committee, choose one to sit in on. All welcome.
- **TRADITIONAL TALENT SHOW.** We like entertaining ourselves. The Talent Show got high marks in the evaluation for the 2011 Conference. Come surprise us!

CONFERENCE PLANS, DETAILS OF SPEAKERS AND OTHER PROGRAMMING WILL BE UPDATED on the WEBSITE.

Check out the conference pages at: www.avpusa.org

Questions? Offers of assistance? Contact Nancy : nhutchins471@comcast.net

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Facility Cost Per Day for Pre- or Post-* Conference Events. Your per-day cost is based on your room selection for the 3-day Annual Gathering.

Multi. occ/dorm: \$85 Dbl/priv. bath: \$95 Sgl/priv. bath: \$105 Commuter: \$45

*Post-Conference Committee of Committees Retreat: register for one extra day: 5/28

BUILDING DIVERSE AVP COMMUNITIES, May 24 & 25.

One-day, in-depth workshop. Workshop Fee \$45

Check in after 1 pm Thursday, May 24. Register for one extra day (5/24) plus the workshop fee. Workshop takes place Friday, morning and afternoon. Min/Max participants: 10/30

Want to find kindred, yet diverse spirits in your town to take and ultimately foster powerful AVP community workshops? **Secret:** It involves more than an email, a flyer or announcing workshops at a Quaker meeting. Building an AVP community takes planning and sustained commitment. **But what does that mean?** *The AVP-USA Organizing Kit* is a springboard; now discover what's been tried and found to work...or not. Come, explore fresh ways to attract participants with AVP tools. Tap into how to cultivate these diverse spirits—both before and after workshops.

You don't have to do it all! Bring a friend or even a team.

Find out how to start/re-start an AVP community that feeds **you**—that is committed to shared leadership and shared responsibility, so you have fun being with others in your AVP-based community.

Work with four marketing-minded facilitators: Cheryl Sutton, AVP/USA PR Committee Chair, Iowa; Pat Hardy, California. See previous edition for Carroll Boone, San Diego, CA and Kit Hanley, Maryland

Guarantee: Take away a basket of do-able ideas, a rich network of AVP-community leaders and at least one new approach to recruitment or your money back.

A BASIC HROC (Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities) WORKSHOP, May 23 - 25.

Two and one-half-day Workshop. Workshop Fee \$125

Check-in after 1 pm Wed. May 23. Register for two extra days (5/23, 5/24) plus the workshop fee. Workshop takes place Wed. evening through Friday afternoon. Min/Max participants: 8/16

Facilitators: Adrien Niangabo, (co-founder of HROC) Dr. Bill Jacobsen, Dr. Amy Cox, Anne Swoyer

Description: "Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities" brings together people in conflict to work towards healing and reconciliation. Originally developed by Africans to rebuild ravaged communities in Rwanda and Burundi, using AVP as a template, HROC focuses on transforming the traumatic effects of violence and war into an opportunity for peace and trust building, ending the cycle of hatred and revenge. HROC facilitators have worked with rape survivors, ethnic and immigrant communities, at-risk youth and those with HIV+/AIDs. They create safe and supportive groups, which sustain peace-building efforts.

NOTE: This Basic Training meets the pre-requirement for those people interested in taking the 2nd International HROC training for trainers in New York this spring, June 17 - 30, Stony Point Conference Center, Stony Point, New York. For more information see <http://aglifpt.org/>. Play the Icyzera Hope video and then go to the HROC page.

Reserve your 2012 Annual Gathering T-Shirt when you register.

Short-sleeve, sand color, with Maryland black-eyed Susan flower.

Back says: "Alternatives to Violence Project" and "Making a difference—one person at a time." Sizes S – XL \$15 or 2X- 3X \$18



TRANSPORTATION: Flying? Plan to use BWI Airport.

Contact AVPDavid471@gmail.com when you have your reservations.

Committee can provide airport shuttle service for \$10 in most cases.



AVP/USA 2012 Gathering Registration

New Windsor Conference Center, May 25- 28, 2012

Name (for your name tag, please print)

Adjective name (for your name tag, please print) Male Female

Address Apt. _____

City State Zip Code

Phone: home Phone: work cell

Email

Emergency Contact (name) Phone #

I would like to share room with: (if double or multiple)

Names(s). Please Print

SPECIAL NEEDS: New Windsor is ADA equipped.
 Accessible Needs Special Needs

Register online: www.avpusaconference.org
OR
Mail to: AVP/USA 2012 Gathering
PO Box 41, Fort Howard, Md 21052

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

Please note: All people enrolling for this conference must be age 18 by May 15, 2012.

CANCELLATION: For full refund, written requests must be received by April 22. Requests after this date will be reviewed by AVP/MD and AVP/USA.

No refunds after May 8, 2012.

Registering for the Three-Day Conference
All rates are per person **3-DAY CHOICE** \$ _____

Three-Day Conference	Early Bird (by 3/26)	Regular (by 4/23)	Late (by 5/7)
Multi/dorm (limited availability)	\$310	\$335	\$365
Dbl/priv. bath	\$350	\$375	\$405
Sgl/priv. Bath (limited availability)	\$380	\$405	\$435

Registering for Pre- or Post- Conference Events

Workshop fee \$ _____

Bulding AVP Communities (5/24) **\$45**

HROC (5/23,5/24) **\$125**

C o C (5/28) - no charge

Facility Cost Per Day
(Use same room selection as Three-Day Conference)

Multi/Dorm: \$85 Dbl/priv.bath: \$95 Sgl: \$105 Commuter: \$45
days _____ X per Day Cost of _____ = _____

PRE- OR POST-CONFERENCE TOTAL (Fee + Facility cost) = \$ _____

Registering as a Day Commuter

Days @ fee: \$85 per day

I will attend: Saturday Sunday Monday \$ _____

T-shirt order: S-XL @ \$15, 2X-3X @ \$18
 S M L XL 2X 3X

T-shirt total \$ _____

My donation to the Scholarshsip fund \$ _____
Thankyou

Pay this TOTAL \$ _____

Check IF YOU ARE APPLYING FOR A PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIP

- Contact with your Local Group to find out how much they can assist you.
- Apply online for a partial scholarship from AVPUSA at www.avpusaconference.org.

OR request a hard-copy scholarship application in the mail from Beth 914/419-9874. You may also contact scholarships@avpusa.org for assistance at any point in the scholarship application process.

Is the AVP-USA conference too expensive for you?

Last year it was too costly for over half the people who attended, but they raised the money somehow. And YOU CAN, TOO. Here are some ideas for you:

1. **Be intentional.** Decide today what you want to raise. *You need to have a dream to create a reality...*
2. **Start now by developing your own personal scholarship fund.** Ask your friends to help you go to the conference. If you get \$5 from 5 friends every month until the conference, you will have saved almost half of the registration, including lodging and food. Keep out a jar in your living room where you and others can put spare change, or ask on Facebook and see what happens. Maybe someone has extra miles they can give you toward a flight. *Your friends want a chance to help you in the work you love.*
3. **Hold AVP-USA conference potlucks,** a carwash, bake sale. Do some L&Ls and ask for donations. *People like to know what is needed, so tell them the amount you need specifically and what it is for.*
4. **Collect names** and emails of all your local group's friends, including people who have taken a Basic Workshop or have ever indicated an interest in AVP. *Names and contact info are the gold in raising money.*
5. **Send an email to the list with your story** and others' who need scholarships in your group. Be specific about what you do now and why you need the help. AVP-USA raised over \$1,500 last year in an email scholarship request. *People give to people, not to causes.*
6. **Ask someone you know who has money to sponsor you.** Invite them to coffee, dinner or dessert, show some photos of a workshop and what happens, share about AVP. Then JUST ASK outright for exactly how much you need to go, or ask for someone else and tell their story. What seems like a lot of money to you may seem like dinner out to someone you know. *People need to be asked and like to give to something they know about and can trust.*
7. **Speak now to your local group about raising money to support you** so that facilitators from your group can attend. You will need local group support to apply to AVP-USA. *Cooperative efforts are a lot more fun.*

Remember, if you are able to contribute something toward your attendance, more people will be able to come.

Donors appreciate your helping yourself. Then it isn't charity; it's empowerment.

Start now.

↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔ ↔

↑ *When you start with nothing...* ↓

↑ Last year during Talent Night at the national conference, people were raising money for scholarships to the International Conference. They were intentional and shared stories about people coming from Africa who needed the money. Then, Lucky Lindsay strode to the stage with a big vase and shared she was going to drive back home to Canada after being incarcerated in California. Someone had asked her to come to dinner at their home on her way through the Northwest. She was so moved by that gift that she put in the \$20 she saved by not having to buy dinner that one night and asked people to match it. Her infectious openness and ebullient appreciation when someone donated and her steady invitation and willingness to wait until people gave was exciting to be a part of. She raised \$500!

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Start NOW... to receive an AVP/USA PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIP

If you cannot afford to pay the full cost of the national conference in May, you are encouraged to apply for a partial scholarship from AVPUSA. At www.AVPUSAConference.org click the "Register and Apply for Scholarship" button and fill in the form. Contact scholarship@avpusa.org or Beth at 914/419-9874 if you have questions regarding the scholarship process or need a printed (hard copy) scholarship application. In order for the people who need them to receive scholarships, AVP/USA gives *partial* scholarships on the hope that others in your life or AVP world will help you raise the rest.

Your second step is a recommendation by your local group or if there is no active group, an AVP facilitator with

whom you work. This increases transparency and assures your local group is aware of your interest in attending and can support you in your eagerness to go. The committee bases its decisions on your involvement with AVP including:

- Formerly incarcerated facilitator
- Current facilitator
- AVP/USA officer
- AVP/USA committee clerk
- AVP/USA committee member
- Conference presenter
- Conference worker
- First-time attendee

More details can be found at www.avpusaconference.org or email scholarships@avpusa.org

What you missed on the AVP-L: Evaluating Readiness

Many topics have been pondered in AVP-USA's active facilitator discussion group in recent months. To give you a taste of one such discussion, we reproduce it here.

From: affirm@friendshouse.org

Date: November 23, 2011 3:12:44 PM PST

The problem is that the ability to facilitate well involves more than skill and experience. It requires something less definable: a mix of inquisitiveness, compassion and toughness. Facilitators must have a sense of timing and balance as an event evolves. They must know when to lead and when to follow, when to guide and when to let go.

And they must be able to leave their ego at the door while keeping a sense of humor. It's a tall order for any group to judge these characteristics fairly and consistently.

Best, Steve B.

From: sirago5@gmail.com

Date: November 23, 2011 3:48:22 PM PST

I spent a career in the military, and I was involved in the evaluation of many, many people regarding their skills and attitude in leadership roles. I have also had my leadership and attitude/behavioral skills evaluated countless times. Judgment was always at the center of this task. It was something that always irritated me--evaluating someone, using a list of characteristics and written measurements.

When I read the simple comment in one of the AVP publications in response to the question, "How do we make leaders?"

"Let them lead."

Pure gold.

Peace, Gentle George

On Nov 23, 2011 7:34 PM, avppat@gmail.com

Conceptually, being a facilitator is different from being part of a team.

I don't see us as LEADERS but rather as a TEAM of facilitators (usually of differing experience and always with different sensitivities to a given situation), working together toward a common goal. That is why, in California, we use the term Team Coordinators, which others call "Leads" and why (I will bet) there has been a gradual transition from the term "Training for Trainers" to "Training for Facilitators" across the United States.

As soon as I begin to think of myself as leader on a team, things don't work as well, which I know I do all too often.

Playful Pat

From: Stephen Birdlebough [mailto:affirm@friendshouse.org]

Sent: Thursday, November 24, 2011 12:12 AM

My own experience is that we often learn the most by doing the facilitating. After a while, we find ourselves surprised that we have been able to navigate a difficult situation. Then we discover ways of helping a less experienced facilitator succeed, and soon we realize that we are playing a more leading role on the team. The lines between being an apprentice, being a facilitator and being a reliable lead facilitator or team coordinator are fuzzy, and there are always areas where one person is more adept than others.

In the end, I think it is the teamwork that counts, along with mutual commitments to making the process work. Your idea of identifying skill sets and deliberately developing them is worthwhile. On the other hand, don't be surprised or disappointed if you keep adding to the list. There probably is no end to the learning process where AVP is concerned.

Best, Steve B.

From: journeyingjames@yahoo.com

Date: November 25, 2011 9:32:39 AM PST

I have had the good fortune to help with workshops in many areas of the country. I have also had the privilege of working with both new and experienced facilitators, both adult and youth. Each area has a slightly different twist on the same old exercises, and the facilitators in those areas likewise do things just a bit differently. I have also served as coordinator. I have seen newly minted facilitators notice and respond skillfully to things in workshops that more experienced facilitators missed. I have seen young people develop facilitation skills very rapidly and adults flounder through several workshop or never quite advance to a skilled level.

One of the things I like best about AVP is that it is non-hierarchical—a lesson that, as a recovering lawyer and trained parliamentarian, I am constantly learning. One fundamental concept of AVP is that it is team-taught. It is the team as a whole, which must have the skill set among them to lead a workshop. I like reminding participants, especially those in a school setting, that we are not teachers; we are facilitators. The base word is facile, easily accomplished.

I see value in certificates for completion of each of the three levels of workshops. And there is probably value in agreeing nationally on a uniform color system for those three certificates. I think I borrowed and adapted language for the certificates I've produced from somewhere else on this list. When I've worked with facilitators from other areas, I've talked with them to determine their skill level and scheduled them in workshops according to our mutual understanding of their skill level. I have never been asked to produce a certificate, nor have I ever asked to see one.

I think apprentice facilitators should be encouraged to facilitate and to take more and more responsibility in workshops under more experienced facilitators. I see three basic skill levels. Apprentice, intermediate and skilled. A skilled facilitator should be able to conduct a workshop with one or more apprentices. An intermediate facilitator should be able to conduct a workshop with one or two other intermediate facilitators. An apprentice feels the need for guidance from more experienced facilitators. Skilled facilitators should have conducted workshops at all three levels. These skill levels are obtained by experience and also reflect the individual's talents and skills obtained outside of AVP. Counselors, teachers, coaches, etc., may have skills that help them advance more rapidly. These skill levels should be discussed with workshop teams both before and after workshops, and facilitators ought to be encouraged to develop their skills and given the opportunity to do so in actual workshops.

I see "lead facilitator" as more of a role in a workshop than a title, much as AVP- California uses the term Team Coordinator, i.e., the person responsible for convening the team planning session and doing the paperwork.

Peace, Journeying Jim



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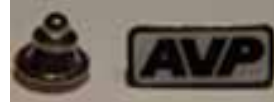
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