



The

# TRANSFORMER

Supporting and Celebrating the Facilitators of AVP Workshops

**Introducing the newly-revised  
Facilitators Training Manual**

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## A huge debt is owed...

**T**his issue of *The Transformer* is about a miracle we as facilitators receive every couple of years—a newly revised manual. Many of us didn’t realize these reference tools we use all the time are compiled by a dedicated committee of volunteers with years of experience “doing the work” of AVP. In the case of the newest, *The Facilitators Training Manual (FTM)*, the combined experience of the core team is well over 100 years of facilitating, organizing and writing about the work we love, AVP workshops. (See page 2 for who they are)

This level of experience is not so surprising to many of us who also are enjoying the workshops of AVP; however, the amazing gift is the time working on the committee. For anyone who has worked on a committee or who has made a joke about some really absurd thing “being the result of a committee,” the gigantic gift to us is the model of this group of women working through the decisions upon which they did not agree while using electronic tools most of us didn’t even hear of two years ago.

From three countries themselves, but having spent time in a dozen other countries, this small collective brought to this latest manual a broader perspective and deeper understanding of how we train people to fill their AVP pack with skills, concepts and specific tools. Then after over 150 hours, we send them off to represent AVP.

Though sometimes it seems

laborious, this process works. All too often community people are appalled at the time it takes just to participate in a workshop: “a whole weekend?!” “two long days?!” We are giving them not only a mountain-top-like experience but also a way to live differently with others and to facilitate others doing this as well.

Committee work is the ultimate practice of AVP concepts. All too often we say, “This committee drives me crazy; I don’t need this...,” and we leave or never even join up. “I am doing enough; I facilitate workshops,” we think.

But these women have not done that; they have stayed through five years of incredible detail and decisions. And then they sent their baby (which they labored over), chapter by chapter, to additional readers to look more closely at what they might have become too close to to see.

Now, they are expanding this even more, asking everyone to share her/his ideas for the next manuals. Just send your contributions to: [avpmanuals@gmail.com](mailto:avpmanuals@gmail.com). Also indicate if you are interested in being a part of the rarefied air of this miracle-producing AVP-USA Education Committee.

You might express your debt of gratitude (at the above email) even if you are not going to contribute. This is the least we can do.

*Present Pat, part of the Editorial Team for The Transformer.*

## The TRANSFORMER

The Transformer is a quarterly publication of the Alternatives to Violence Project of the United States of America.

Headquarters and Distribution Service, Subscription:

1050 Selby Avenue

St. Paul, MN 55104

Phone: (888) 278-7820

E-mail: [info@avpusa.org](mailto:info@avpusa.org)

Website: [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)

Please make checks payable to AVP/USA.

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Editorial copy for the newsletter and requests for "Guidelines for Submission" should be e-mailed to [editor@avpusa.org](mailto:editor@avpusa.org). If no

Internet capability, mail to

The Transformer

P.O. Box 3294

Santa Barbara, CA 93105

Phone: (805) 886-9773

Graphic Design: *Four Winds Graphics*

Questions and address changes:

Contact: [transformer@avpusa.org](mailto:transformer@avpusa.org)

Or go to: [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)

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## Becoming A Facilitator Is An Ongoing Journey

*Facilitators Training Manual with Continuing Learning Material*

On May 25, 2013 at the beginning of the AVP-USA Conference, the new *Facilitators Training Manual* (FTM)—aka the Training for Facilitators Manual (T4F)—was launched at the Homestead Women's Prison in Florida with the presentation of the first copy of the manual to the inside AVP facilitators. They put it into the prison library and are taking turns reading it. Three hundred copies of the manual were sold in the first two months.

The previous manual was very out-of-date, even called the *Training for Trainers Manual*, and did not include any continuing learning for experienced facilitators and very little discussion beyond just what should be in a Training for Facilitators workshop. Taking into account that this manual is a starting point for workshops offered worldwide was a refreshing step. This new revision was a needed improvement.

The FTM was discussed first by the Education Committee at the AVP-USA National Conference in Bellingham, Washington (USA) in 2008. In April 2009 the Manual Editors Team started to work on it. It went to Alan Taplow for final editing and layout in January of 2013 and was published in April.

This is the first AVP manual to have been written by the AVP-USA Education Committee in partnership with the AVP International Education Committee. The task for AVP International is now to distribute the manual to every AVP group in the world, using both electronic and print copies. Those who purchase the print copy from the US Distribution Center also have access to an electronic copy. Translators have started to translate it into different languages.

This Facilitators Training Manual (2013) is preceded by three other reference manuals: the Basic (2002), Youth (2000) and Second Level (2005). The Manual Editors Team consisted of Grace McGrath (New York, USA), Cynthia MacBain (New York), Elaine Dyer (Aotearoa, New Zealand) and

Katherine Smith (Sydney, Australia). Grace and Cynthia were the writers for all four of the previous AVP reference manuals. Elaine had been a writer for the Second Level manual and Katherine was the apprentice writer.

### MANUAL GOALS

The Manual Writers decided their goals in writing this manual were:

- To update and include material from AVP programs worldwide
- To make the manual useful for both new and experienced facilitators
- To focus on experiential learning only, with minimum talks
- To use non-academic language whenever possible
- To make it easily translatable to other languages
- To make all material applicable to prison work
- To emphasize that developing skills as a facilitator is an on-going process, not just a workshop

# Layout Of The Manual

The *Facilitators Training Manual* is divided into five chapters:

## Chapter 1—Introduction to the AVP Facilitation Process

One of the first issues that we discussed was what impact, if any, there would be on an AVP manual that would be used not only in US prisons but also in communities—including traumatized communities—and schools around the world. Part of the success of AVP is that it can be adapted to suit local cultures, languages, faiths and learning styles.

We started with an examination of what is essential to every AVP workshop: what is the mission, vision, model and philosophy of AVP? Then we discussed how to adapt workshops to different settings and take workshops to different cultures. We also asked at what point a workshop ceases to be an AVP workshop and becomes a “spin-off.”  
(See “*Essence of AVP*,” p. xx.)

## Chapter 2—Introduction to the Training for Facilitators (T4F) Workshop: Empowering Ourselves

This chapter covers how to craft an agenda and how to prepare and run a workshop.

## Chapter 3—T4F Learning Activities/Exercises for Each Element

The T4F workshop is divided into 10 elements. A variety of exercises (or learning activities) is provided for each element so that the facilitation team can select which exercises are most appropriate for its environment. (See List of 10 Elements of a T4F workshop, p. xxx.)

## Chapter 4—Continuing Learning

This is the first time that materials for ongoing facilitator training following the T4F workshop have been included in an AVP manual. The six units of learning in the AVP Learning Guide provide the framework for the Continuing Learning exercises, learning activities and agendas. This collection is a sample of the range of exercises and agendas used by AVP groups around the world to provide further training for their facilitators. (See the List of Learning Units, p. xx.)

## Chapter 5—Meeting Special Needs

Adapting our workshops for participants with special needs is considered important enough to have a chapter devoted to it. There are notes on diversity of learning styles, special physical needs and responding to trauma in AVP workshops.

## Appendices

These include a glossary, bibliography and index.

## Online Supplement

In the manual there is a link to an online supplement to the FTM on the AVP-USA website. We faced the issues of how much material to put in the manual without making it too large and how to add new materials as they are developed between manual editions.

This FTM online supplement is an attempt to include new materials on the website as they are contributed between now and the publication of the next manual.

At present, the online supplement includes T4F workshop agendas from around the world, details about how to obtain the materials listed in the bibliography and a range of templates for materials needed for exercises found in the manual. Contributions of further exercises and agendas are welcome. Send your contributions to [avpmanuals@gmail.com](mailto:avpmanuals@gmail.com) or mail them to AVPUSA, 1050 Selby Ave., St Paul, MN 55104.



## The Essence Of AVP

As AVP has expanded into most states in the USA and about 55 countries worldwide, it is important we maintain the essence of AVP while being sensitive to how the program can be adapted for cultural differences.

### What makes a workshop AVP? Transforming Power

Every workshop will include the concept of Transforming Power presented directly through learning activities, talks and discussions as well as indirectly through the facilitators' personal acknowledgment of it as their underlying philosophy. Any workshop that does not specifically include Transforming Power is not an AVP workshop. The workshop also presents the concepts of affirmation, trust and community building, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution through a series of learning activities which build on one another.

### Learning by doing

AVP is an experiential program: participants learn through their experience of doing things, rather than by the facilitators lecturing to them. Participants learn the power of **affirmation** through learning activities like *Affirmation in Twos*, build **community** through *Light and Livelies* and learning activities like *Concentric Circles*, experience **cooperation** through learning activities like *Cooperative Construction*, gain **communication skills** through experiences like *"I" Messages* and develop **conflict resolution skills** through Role Plays. The learning activities build on one another and are processed by both facilitators and participants throughout the workshop.

### The workshop is facilitated in teams

This ensures that the program does not develop around one charismatic person and gives the teams the opportunity to model and demonstrate cooperation, affirmation and positive conflict resolution. Also, when the team is seen by the participants to be comfortable and inclusive of the diversity of its

various members (apprentices, inside and outside facilitators, different genders, ages, racial and cultural backgrounds, experiences and possibly languages), then we model AVP inclusiveness, thereby enabling all present to be more likely to fully participate in the experience ahead. There may be unusual circumstances where this is not possible, or reasonable, such as in a mini (2-3 hours) workshop. In general, however, team facilitation is an essential element of an AVP workshop.

### Circles

When at all possible, AVP workshops are held in a circle, with facilitators spread around the circle. This makes it less likely that facilitators will be seen as the ones with all the answers and encourages participants to recognize the value of their own contributions to the workshop.

### The workshop community agrees to a set of guidelines

Ground Rules/Community Agreements include at a minimum: affirm ourselves and one another, avoid putdowns, respect confidentiality, respectfully listen to one another, volunteer ourselves only and give one another the right to pass if an activity is uncomfortable for a person. These guidelines begin to create a safe space to build community and develop trust.

### Workshops that lead to a certificate are ideally 18-22 hours long

People need a significant number of hours together for the ideas in AVP to deepen, ripen and find expression. Workshops can have fewer hours, but 18 is considered the minimum.

### Facilitators and participants are volunteers

When an AVP workshop gathers, all people are there by choice. People cannot be mandated to attend an AVP program, and everyone (especially youth) should always feel they have chosen to be in the circle. We also strive to make the circle accessible to

everyone. To this end, when it is not financially possible for a facilitator to be on a workshop team without any compensation, he or she may be paid a stipend. Facilitators may be paid for their expenses if the local group can afford it.

### Evaluation

Participants are asked to evaluate the workshop continually as it progresses, and facilitating teams make adjustments to meet the needs of the current group.

### Fun

So much of what touches our hearts in AVP comes from the profound sense of community that develops when people have fun together, even in--or especially in--workshops where people express deep feelings and, perhaps, shared pain. *Light and Livelies* do not just provide a break from sitting for periods of time; they also provide a rich opportunity for building community. In the same way, having each participant choose an *Affirmative (Descriptive, Adjective, Positive) Name* provides many functions. It allows participants to affirm themselves every time they say their names and to receive affirmation from others. It is also fun and a way to acknowledge we are doing something different and special in an AVP workshop.

### Cultural sensitivity and program drift

The original AVP manuals were written by committees in the United States and were based in US culture. As AVP has expanded into new cultures and countries, many creative and dedicated people have developed new exercises and provided ways for AVP workshops to acknowledge and affirm their particular cultures. For example, some cultures have prohibitions against touching between genders. The *Light and Livelies* which require touching must be adapted to respect this cultural more. The concept of taking personal responsibility for communicating our feelings ("*I*" Messages) has taken various forms in AVP workshops in

*Continued from page 4*

different cultures. Music and song are very important in some parts of the world and become an integral part of AVP workshops. Other communities have developed sophisticated inclusions of cultural references in their workshops. Some of these adaptations are included elsewhere in this manual, particularly in the section on agendas.

**Caution:**

New programs must take care, in making adaptations, that AVP workshops include all the elements essential to AVP listed above. It is our hope this manual offers a baseline—a common reference point from which to make adaptations, rather than letting the cultural model move the adapted AVP workshop too far from what experience tells us is an effective core. The original values of the project as it started in New York in the mid-seventies and its link to the Quaker founders and their traditions of nonviolence are the fertile root from which all these worldwide branches have grown. If a new country or community adapts the program to its culture, it is important the essentials of AVP are not lost. Otherwise, what we call “program drift” will occur: one place adapts the program, brings it to a new place that continues to adapt the program, then brings it to a new place, etc. If this happens, we will end up with a program that may have a lot of conflict resolution activities but will have lost the core values that inspire and energize an AVP workshop. One way to avoid this is to have worldwide communication among facilitators through AVP websites and email discussion groups as well as to encourage exchange of facilitators among programs.

Source: page 6 of the new *Facilitators Training Manual* (p.6-7 FTM)

## What we hold dear in AVP...

The five-year process of writing this manual has been for me an enlightening and rewarding experience. I felt blessed to work with the other editors; I calculated that among us we had almost 100 years of facilitation experience. Through our use of Wiki pages, Google docs and Skype, I expanded my technological skills. Our love of AVP pulled us through what was sometimes a slow and frustrating process, but we were all pleased with the final product. Katherine as team leader brought her wealth of ideas and technological knowledge, Cynthia brought her almost thirty years’ experience in prison facilitation and Elaine offered her deep understanding of role plays. All of us bounced ideas around and reflected on and incorporated the suggestions of our 70-member review team of facilitators. It was truly a team effort.

We were determined to write a manual that would reflect the concept that learning to facilitate well is an ongoing journey, not something that can be acquired in one workshop. We aimed to write a manual that would benefit relatively new facilitators as well as deepen the knowledge and skills of expert facilitators. In addition, we wanted to include some of the exciting materials sent to us about many programs. This was a challenging process. Furthermore, we didn’t want to end up with a manual that would need to be carried around in a wheelbarrow!

As I wrote the piece “The Essence of AVP” (included in this *Transformer*), I consulted with facilitators from around the world. I wanted to ensure that we fully presented what we hold dear in AVP and what has made it endure as a vital program for so many years. A youth workshop in Jordan might, on the surface, look different from a prison workshop in Miami, which might look different from a community workshop in Rwanda; but all are AVP if they incorporate our essentials, especially a focus on Transforming Power.

*Amazing Grace McGrath has facilitated and organized workshops in many New York prisons for over 20 years. As chair the AVP-USA Education Committee for many years, she was involved in writing all the manual revisions.*

## Ten Elements Of A T4F Workshop

1. Building Community and Understanding about T4F Facilitation
2. Facilitating Rather Than Teaching or Leading: What This Means
3. Facilitating by Teams
4. Preparing the Practice Teams
5. Planning by Practice Teams: Facilitation Skills
6. Practice Team Presentations with Coaching by Facilitating Team
7. Transforming Power
8. Role Plays: Setting up and Debriefing
9. Responsible Messages (“I” Messages)
10. Responsibilities of Facilitators and *Where To Go From Here*

## CLOSING: YURT CIRCLE

**Purpose:** A closing or trust activity to explore, see and feel how much trust there is in our group (how well we can depend on each other)

**Time:** 10 minutes How it's done:

1. Participants hold hands in a circle and move outward until everyone feels some pull on their arms from the people to their left and right. Let go of hands.
2. Count off by "one/two" (if the count is not even, have a facilitator step out of the circle so there will be an equal number of "ones" and "twos").
3. Ask all the "ones" to turn around and face outward; "twos" remain facing inward.
4. Ask participants to connect with their neighbors by holding the wrists of those to the left and right (holding wrists is stronger and more comfortable than holding hands). Place feet about shoulder width apart.
5. At the facilitator's signal, everyone is going to lean backward, keeping body straight (don't arch back or bend at the waist—facilitator demonstrates). The "ones" who face outward will [spacing is off for "will," but I can't seem to fix it] be leaning inward, and the "twos" who face inward will lean outward.
6. It may take more than one try to get the whole group balanced. Once they are successful, don't leave them hanging too long. Bring everyone back up straight.
7. Ask everyone to reverse the direction in which they are facing: those facing out will now face in toward the center of the circle; those who were facing inward will now face out.
8. Repeat the leaning backward action. This way everyone has an opportunity to SEE the trust in the circle. Each person also experiences a sense of being held up by the whole group, no matter which direction they face.

(Without implying anyone is backwards, we still can be a strength and support for each other even when we aren't on the same path).

**NOTE:** A YURT is a Mongolian nomad tent which stands because the roof pushes against the walls in equilibrium .





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## A gift to the world

Being invited to be a writer/Editor for the new Training for Facilitators Manual was easy to accept. While working pretty much full time with AVP internationally for 10 years as a trainer and mentor, I accumulated a wide basket of tools, knowledge and experience and a deep affection for this transformative work. I saw great facilitators and not so great ones. I realized a key part of the work of AVP is to train our facilitators in the skills that empower them to use their talents and passion to nurture the AVP program.

I didn't know it would take nearly five years of Skype meetings and much writing, reading and thinking. We were a great team. We were both stretched and inspired to present the material in the most accessible way and adapt it to fit the worldwide expansion of AVP.

Particularly rewarding to me was focusing my thinking around role plays and action methods to support

their safe and effective use. Those five writing years brought back memories of the places I had run workshops, the people I had met from the Pacific, Africa and Hong Kong and the privilege of learning



with the AVP founders and other experienced facilitators around the AVP world.

When we ultimately sent the final draft of our work to proofreaders, I experienced a feeling of immense love. And now, the manual goes

out as a gift to the world of AVP to support all the awesome people inside and outside prisons who are committed to a world where violence no longer defines our relationships. May you frolic even more joyously in the peace-filled meadows of workshops cultivated by well-trained facilitators sharing our collective wisdom as we create pathways of peace to our future.

Blessings,

*Enthusiastic Elaine Dyer has been an organizer and facilitator with AVP-New Zealand for over 20 years. In the 1990s, she travelled with Stephen Angell, seeding new AVP groups in Australia, South Africa, Kenya and Uganda and later helping to introduce AVP to Hong Kong and Tonga. She has organized many specialized role-play and advanced facilitator-training workshops.*



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## Six Units Of Continuing Learning

**Unit 1** — AVP Values and Skills

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**Unit 4** — Group Dynamics

**Unit 5** — Facilitation Skills

Part 1: Advanced Facilitation Skills

Part 2: Coaching Workshops

Part 3: Processing Questions

Part 4: Role Plays

Part 5: Dealing with Participant Challenges in a Workshop

**Unit 6** — Leadership in AVP



## Understanding People with Special Needs

I had three goals when I began working on the new Training for Facilitators Manual: to create more flexible agendas, to add experiential learning techniques to build understanding and skills and to improve aids for people with special needs or difficulties with language.

Early AVP workshops were held over one weekend. This is no longer true, even within prisons. Therefore, we need to think of training elements that work whether the workshop is done during one weekend, over two weekends or in daily or evening sessions. These elements of a training then became the outline for the first section of the manual.

Developing experiential learning activities for each element of the training was fun. We asked experienced AVP facilitators to send us examples of experiential exercises they were using in their Training for Facilitator workshops and added these to the new manual.

The third goal was closest to my heart. I believe AVP should welcome ALL people who believe in its mission to become facilitators, no matter what their education or language skill level. It is our responsibility to make that goal a reality. As a retired English teacher, I learned about learning disabilities and the strategies people use to overcome them (and to hide

them from others). Each time I showed incarcerated facilitators Rick LaVoie's simulation of the experience of being learning disabled in "F.A.T. City," men shared they had been diagnosed with a learning disability or ADHD. Each time it stimulated discussion among those who have a learning disability and those who do not. You can see segments of Rick's simulation on YouTube; it is also available for purchase. ([www.ricklavoie.com/videos](http://www.ricklavoie.com/videos))

I hope you will take the time to read in the new manual the section on AVP and Special Needs. Consider using the worksheets and suggestions for posters in this section. When I facilitate a Training for Facilitators workshop now, I ask ALL trainees to make posters showing directions for their exercises. Then I ask the trainees to stand across the circle from their posters. This keeps their noses out of the manual and helps participants who may forget the directions when they move into small groups.

*"Caring" Cynthia MacBain is in her 30th year as an AVP volunteer. Starting in Taconic, she went with Fred Feucht into Sing Sing for 17 years and then coordinated Elmira Correctional Facility, now facilitating AVP at Auburn. She has been involved with the Education Committee and AVP-New York for over 20 years.*

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## Being Part Of The Manual Writing Team

For me, it has been a wonderful privilege and learning opportunity to work with skilled and experienced AVP manual writers. This was my first opportunity to help write an AVP-USA manual. Previously, my AVP writing and editing experience had been with Sydney, Australia AVP manuals. I am grateful for the coaching of my three mentors who helped with my steep learning curve.

I was amazed at the complexity of writing an AVP-USA manual. This included planning, sharing ideas, and listening to and understanding concerns. We dealt with writing pieces, collecting and evaluating contributions, arriving at consensus, editing, sending material out for review, responding to feedback, rewriting and re-sending material for review. Finally, there was putting material together in sections, proof-reading, editing and final layout and publishing. After that there was our presentation about the new manual at the Miami AVP National Conference and ongoing promotion of it, including these articles in *The Transformer*.

The process is not over. Ahead is a check for errors and responding to feedback received before the next print run. Grace McGrath is coordinating this. There is also the task of getting the new manual to AVP groups around the world as well as promoting translation of the manual into different languages. Also ahead is gathering new contributions for an online supplement. When are we going to be ready to revise the next set of AVP manuals? In about five years!!

Each of the writers/editors brought different skills, experiences and passion to the team. My focus was to: have a sufficient range of experiential material from which facilitators in different countries could select for each training workshop to involve as many facilitators as possible in the review process. In the end, there were 70 reviewers from a number of different countries using modern communication technology. We met electronically using Skype, used a Google email group for emails and used a Wikispace to collect and revise material. We used GoogleDocs to

write meeting minutes jointly.

Coming from an AVP group on the other side of the world, I am very conscious of the importance of AVP-USA manuals to local groups wherever they are. The manuals have been a major source of information for us about the implementation of AVP.

*Calm Katherine Smith has facilitated and organized with AVP Sydney for 20 years, mainly AVP workshops in the community with specialized Advanced Facilitators Training Workshops. She has been involved with AVP manual writing in Australia for 15 years and the United States for 6 years, as well as writing an AVP spin-off workshop for the national Australian college system. Currently Clerk of the AVPUSA Education Committee, Katherine is also Co-Clerk of the AVP International Education Committee.*



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# Testing The New *Facilitators Training Manual*

I began using parts of the draft *Facilitators Training Manual* (FTM) two years ago when I helped with continuing education for facilitators in Colombia. *Peace-building en las Américas* sponsors programs there and in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. I translated and used the following sections: Themes of the Basic Workshop, Developing Agendas, the Open/Closed Questions Exercise, Praise vs. Acknowledgment and Team Debrief in a Fishbowl.

I used four topics for team debriefing: how do we/I feel right now, what we did well, what we can improve and acknowledging one another. The teams I work with use Red Light-Green Light to introduce “I” Messages, which we call “Responsible Messages.” We use: *the what, so what and now what* framework for exercise debriefing. Last year I translated the Individual Practice Team Member Planning worksheet, which I thought would be useful in facilitator training workshops in Latin America.

I was excited to read the printed copy of the FTM when it came out for review. I hoped to put it into

practice in a facilitator training workshop in El Salvador this past summer. I was thwarted because of logistical difficulties copying the 15 or so pages I had translated as well as limited time to prepare the facilitator team for the new activities. In the end, we used only the section on how to give an effective Transforming Power (TP) talk from the new manual. However, the trainees did give good TP talks, so it must have helped.

What I most appreciate about the new manual is the use of the 10 elements as a basis for designing agendas for AVP workshops (see Ten Elements on page xx). I understand that future manuals for the various levels of AVP workshops will be based on some or all of these elements. The second thing I appreciate about the new manual is the variety of experiential activities highlighted. In the previous Training for Trainers Manual, there were several talks, such as “What it is to be a Facilitator” and “What it is to be a Team Member,” that I found to be difficult to present experientially. As the new manual suggests, brainstorming is the best

way to avoid talks or lectures, but even they should be used infrequently. The new manual gives other options to get a point across via experiential activities.

My greatest doubt regarding the manual is the question of time. I’d like to be a part of a training team that actually succeeds in facilitating a workshop within the time limitations suggested in the manual. Until then, I have to leave out sections such as Crafting an Agenda of a Basic Workshop and other sections. I give out few handouts as many people that we work with are slow or inadequate readers. Overall, I see the new manual as a treasure trove of ideas and techniques for improving facilitator training and AVP as a whole. I look forward to putting more of the manual into practice. We need a Spanish translation..

*Vibrant Val/Valeria Viva Liveoak was one of many AVP facilitators who reviewed the Facilitators Training Manual. They were able to critique the content of the manual before it was published based on actual use in the field. Val is now a Co-Clerk for the AVPI Education Committee*





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