

*Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter*

# **the Transformer**

*for AVP Workshop Leaders*  
*Spring 1994*

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## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

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### **AVP International Conference**

August 11-14 in Philadelphia

AVPers from all over the world will be coming to Philadelphia in August.

The Third AVP International Conference is scheduled for LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on August 11-14, 1994. We expect that up to 150 AVPers from around the world will attend.

This is your opportunity to meet trainers from all over the world and find out what's happening in AVP in Canada, England, Germany, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand.

The program will include one day with a multitude of mini-workshops with new exercises, new program ideas, youth work and sharing of tips and ideas.

One day will be an in depth focus on the forces of violence in our society from the public health and sociological point of view. There will be new insights about violence prevention from sociologists, psychologists, criminologists and other professionals. We expect to have a noted outside speaker for this program who will provide us with a better understanding of the emotional and cultural forces that lead to violent behavior.

The third day will provide an opportunity for everyone to get involved regionally, nationally and internationally. There will be an AVP-USA Board meeting, regional groups, education and other committees.

The tree lined campus of LaSalle University which is a few miles north of the center of Philadelphia. Side trips can be taken to Independence Hall and many historic sites. LaSalle is near the Germantown section with its many handsome pre-revolutionary homes. We will be housed in dormitory facilities with a choice of single or double rooms. Comfortable classroom and auditorium facilities will be available for meetings. The conference will run from Thursday evening to Sunday afternoon, August 11 to 14. The cost will be about the same as the last conference, ranging from \$170-210 depending on the accommodations selected.

A registration form is included with this issue. There is a special discount for early registration. Please reserve the date on your calendar and mail your registration today.

If you would like to lead a mini-workshop, please list it on your registration form and include an outline.

## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

# Alternatives to Violence... Is There Another Way?

by Michael Cremer, an inmate at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Faribault

Alternatives to violence. What? I didn't know there were any. After all, this is a prison and violence is the only way to survive. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. Do unto others before they do unto you! We carry with us the philosophy of the streets; that it is a dog eat dog world here. We have learned that only the strong shall be in control, and only those who take their world by force are considered to be strong.

Could there be another way? Have we experienced enough pain, agony, defeat and time locked up, to be willing to try another way? I have discovered my violent, irrational ways to be fruitless and futile. Doing time has been the continual consequence of my not having an alternative to violence, anger, and the pressures of life. I'm tired and I'm finally willing to discover a new to live and cope with reality.

Recently, I experienced a life changing weekend at the Faribault Correctional Facility! No, it was not a party weekend, or a trip to the hold, or even a new woman. It was a group of five volunteers and sixteen inmates. The volunteers donated the entire weekend to these men; including over 22 hours in the workshops alone. This group is not a division of the Department of Corrections, and as a matter of fact they refuse to do a seminar with D.O.C. staff present. The seminar is called "Alternatives to Violence Project," (AVP).

At first I thought, "22 hours, man am I going

to be bored!" This seminar was incredible. I have done eight years in an institutional environment and attended many meetings and seminars. I had previously never seen the active participation by 100% of those who started the meetings.

Everyone who attended the first three hour session went the other 19 hours. At the first session, some had that "convict" image painted on thick. We "appeared" to be tough, smile-free, fearless, emotionless men. But something changed. What in the world would motivate 16 prisoners to want to come back hour after hour?

The volunteers taught us about what they called "a sense of community." An environment of trust, honor and respect. Within a few hours the facilitators had us playing games and doing things I thought impossible in prison. The ice began to break, the false images began to fall down. Each inmate seemed to give permission to others to get real and be real. A sense of community developed over a short period of time because mutual respect and trust came into effect. It was unlike anything I have ever seen before. The "tough guy" look turned into smiles and laughter. Depression turned from defeat to hope.

Although I was an eye-witness; I still find what I saw and what I experienced almost unbelievable. I discovered that there is an alternative to violence. I discovered that that even in prison there is a better way than my way. *continued next page*

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## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

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One might think: "Yeah, that's an attitude for those that are weak, child molesters, rapists and the like. I'm too tough for that." The amazing thing is many of the men in this group were what I would call the "Gangster Type." Some of them are definite hard-core "Convict Material!"

The volunteers taught us about transforming power. Which is a method (really an attitude) of changing a potential violent confrontation into a problem that can, and does get resolved. We learned by role playing and actually going through various confrontational situations, that all of us could relate to. It wasn't just a bunch of information thrown at us. We had hands on experience in learning how to transform a situation. We were given a six point problem solving method to apply in confrontational encounters. It worked in our workshops and I am going to try it in the world in which I live.

Is there a better way? Are there are alternatives to violence? Yes, Yes and Yes! For

those who are willing to take the risk and trust. For those "real men" who are willing to admit their need for help. Hope is a life giving, life changing force.

I would not be the same as the result of attending this Alternatives to Violence seminar, and I believe I represent the 15 other men as well, in this regard. Do yourself a favor and check it out. After all, if you do the same old thing you get the same old results. Take a risk and discover alternatives and all the choices within your grasp.

Hopefully the seminar will become a monthly or bi-monthly activity at MCF-Faribault. the sponsors of the Alternatives to Violence Project will continue to present it as long as sufficient interest is shown. Ideally they want to train inmate volunteers to help facilitate the seminars. This was the first seminar in a Minnesota prison.

*Reprinted from "The Voice" of MFC-Faribault by permission of the author.*

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## Personal Notes

We wish the best to Marge Zybas, who has been a cornerstone of AVP-New York, AVP-Maryland and AVP-Pennsylvania. In many years, Marge led more than 20 workshops a year. Marge had surgery for cancer in February and is now undergoing radiation treatment. Nevertheless, she still found the energy to help to lead a community workshop in March.

We are sad to announce that Carmel Kussman died of cancer on March 29, 1994. Carmel was a foundation of the AVP pro-

gram in New York City. She coordinated workshops at Arthurkill Correctional Facility for more than eight years and led nearly 100 workshops. She will be greatly missed.

We wish the best to Gloria Messemer who has been an important leader of Spanish workshops in New York. Gloria has also been suffering from cancer and survived both a high-risk liver operation and peritonitis. She is now recuperating and would appreciate cards and letters.

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## AROUND AVP

# AVP-USA Board Meets & Adopts Policy Statement

by Debby Wood, Recording Secretary, AVP-USA

In January, appropriately over Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday weekend, the AVP-USA Board met in Purchase, New York hosted by the Westchester-Fairfield Area Council.

Representatives came from New Hampshire, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Wyoming, California, Colorado and New York. Susanna Eveson from Canada joined us and told about her AVP work in Hungary. All arrived without incident, but getting home was a different story. On Monday, New York served one up one of this winter's worst snow and ice storms - great for picture taking, but not so good for planes.

The major accomplishment of the meeting was adopting the Policy Statement. Changes were made to the draft distributed in December, some of them editorial and some of them substantive. Many thanks to all those that sent revisions. Most of them were included in the final document. Changes that were not adopted were considered thoughtfully before making a final decision.

The substantive changes involved: the number of program hours necessary to receive a certificate, definition of a lead facilitator, reporting to AVP-USA, clarification of DOC employees' participation in workshops, and accepting funding from DOC.

The wording about workshop hours (III.A.4) now reads as follows: "A workshop leading to a certificate is a minimum of 22 program hours. In unusual circumstances and after serious consideration, a local group may

reduce the time to no fewer than 18 program hours."

New wording about lead facilitators (III.C.5): "A workshop team leader may be designated to lead the pre-workshop team building session, write the workshop report, and may have other responsibilities assigned by the local group. This workshop team leader empowers all team members, encouraging them to take responsibility for team functioning and the quality of the workshop."

Annual reports to AVP-USA will come from regional organizations rather than directly from local groups. The regions will summarize reports from local groups, including program and financial statements, and forward them to AVP-USA.

DOC employees' participation in AVP workshops is now specified as follows (IV.C): "Employees of DOC are encouraged to participate in and facilitate community workshops, but may not do so in prison workshops."

The Board was not in favor of allowing the possibility of receiving funds from Departments of Corrections, and therefore eliminated the last sentence in section VI.E, which allowed AVP groups to bring requests to the AVP-USA Board to ask for an exemption from that policy.

Other changes were more editorial than substantive. Anyone who wishes a copy of the new policy statement should write to Debby Wood.

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## AROUND AVP

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The next AVP-USA Board meeting will be Thursday afternoon, August 11, just prior to the international conference in Philadelphia. If you are interested in attending, let Candace Powlick, Chair know closer to the date so that details of time and location can be sent to you. Of course, there will be a

formal Annual Meeting during the International Gathering.

A piece of good news is that Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has made a grant of \$17,000 available to AVP-USA, enabling us to look for a part-time office administrator and fundraiser. Any interest in the job? See article below for details.

## AVP-USA Seeks Executive Director

AVP-USA is accepting inquiries and applications for the position of Executive Director. Funding has been obtained for one year with a salary of approximately \$1,000 per month. The primary responsibilities of this position will be to set up the national office. This will include developing adequate and ongoing funding for the national organization in cooperation with the fundraising committee of the board of directors.

The location of the office will depend on the candidate selected for the position.

Candidates should be well versed in the AVP program, its philosophy and standards of practice. The Executive Director will need a proven ability to raise funds and work effectively with an active volunteer Board of Directors. Resumes may be sent to:

John Shuford  
103 Dalwin Drive  
Dover, DE 19901.

## Education Committee Seeks New Members

Are you interested in developing new exercises and programs? Would you like to help to develop new manuals and materials? The AVP-USA Education committee has a number of projects underway such as publishing new exercises and editing the Spanish Basic Manual.

The Education Committee will be building the AVP program of the future and it is important to have representation from AVP groups around the country. If you would like to get involved in this effort, please contact Donn Williams, 103 Evergreen Road, New Cumberland, PA 17070



*My dialogue with Killer Kowalski has finally convinced me that it is time to take the Alternatives to Violence Workshop!*

AROUND AVP

## AVP Trainers Work with Youth In Croatia

by Markham Breen, AVP-New York

Last November two AVP trainers, Robert Taylor and myself, left for Croatia to work with Bosnian refugees. When we arrived in Zagreb, we found a beautiful, serene city seemingly untouched by the nearby war. However, when we visited the Bosnian refugee camp outside the city, the ravages of war were all too present. Mothers, grandmothers, children and teenagers living in hopelessness. All the adult males were absent, they were either fighting or dead. Atrocities and death had touched every family. The staff and volunteer leaders didn't know how to help people.

The camp was staffed by Suncokret, an international volunteers organization. The youth agency where I work, Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry, NY was asked to provide program and staff training for the camp. Robert and I were there to work with the teens in the camp. The program was funded by the U.N. and the International Rescue Committee.

The staff training program was conducted in two camps, one near Zagreb and the other near Split. This consisted of organizational development skills and group skills. Robert and I led a series of AVP style mini-workshops and ended with one two day, 15 hour workshop. Although there was ethnic rivalry



in the camp, I was amazed that everyone looked the same. There were no visible distinctions between Serbs, Croats or Muslims.

The AVP exercises provided an important tool for building community in the divided camp. Light and livelies were most powerful. The refugees came from a powerless world where they had been dominated by rigid parental authority and ignored by an autocratic government bureaucracy. Participants found it amazing that facilitators (who they initially saw as authority figures) would actually participate in exercises and light and livelies with them rather than just tell them what to do. AVP provided a way of opening up and expressing feelings in a caring but controlled atmosphere. Serbs, Croats and Muslims could discover that they didn't hate each other, only their leaders who had created the war.

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## AROUND AVP

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The youth program led by myself and Robert, focused on working with the more than 130 young people in the camp. Before we arrived a youth center had been built entirely by adult volunteers "for" the teenagers who had no part in the planning or construction. The teenagers went on to trash the youth center. There was a lot of anger and the youth and adults were hardly speaking to each other. The teenagers had little constructive to do with their time and were frequently in conflict with the staff. Some of the older adult refugees lived in fear of the young people.

This was certainly a situation that called for conflict resolution. We put our AVP skills to work. We were able to reach out to the

young people, listen to their needs and build a sense of community using AVP exercises.

The adults were finally convinced to listen to the youth group. In a meeting, the fears of the adults were resolved and space for the youth center was approved. We were able to obtain building materials from a sawmill and the young people enthusiastically began the construction of a youth center. Some of the most negative role models were chosen as leaders. Croats and Muslim teenagers worked together. The project transformed the youth group and the atmosphere in the camp became much more positive.

Before we left, we were able to establish a support group for the teenagers to help them begin to deal with life outside the camp and starting a new life in another country.

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## AVP in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia?

*by Hal Brody, AVP-San Deigo*

I have a friend who has been writing me from the former Yugoslavia for about a year. She's doing personal relief work in the refugee camps and conducting English language seminars and tours. Her accounts of the physical and emotional state of the citizens of the former Yugoslavia are riveting.

I sent her an AVP brochure and old Transformer articles of AVP conducting workshops in Russia, Israel, Hungary, etc. I told her that I felt there was a need for nonviolent conflict resolution trainings in that area, and if she agreed and could set them up on that end, I was sure we could staff them from this end. She called me recently during a brief return to the U.S. and she said that she

thought that there would be great interest in AVP in that region and enthusiastically agreed to try and make it happen. She returns to Slovenia in early April.

So, I'm constructing a pool of experienced trainers who would like to take AVP to that region. Fluency in the languages of the area would be wonderful, but not required. If interested, please contact me with your name, address and phone, and I'll get details to you as I receive them.

Hal Brody  
6369 Malcolm Drive  
San Diego, CA 92115  
Phone and Fax: 619 583-7572  
E-Mail: halbrody@cts.com

AROUND AVP

# Russia Interested in AVP

by John Shuford, AVP Delaware

Interest in AVP is moving forward at many levels in Russia. There is interest from the Department of the Interior, there is a request for workshops to train staff in a large hospital outside Moscow and there is a group that may be willing to provide funding and set up an ongoing program.

I have been invited to Russia for a month and will conduct workshops in Elektrostal, a city of 120,000 about 50 miles from Moscow. The workshops will be conducted for the staff of a 600 bed hospital and physicians will be taking the AVP training.

Recently, In Washington DC, I met with key Russian government officials including Orlov Valeri Ivanovich, the First Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of Russia who is responsible for corrections and Alexander S. Michelin, director of the research which does research and writes the laws for corrections. I told them about the AVP program and the

work we have started in Russia. They were so interested that they asked me to write a seven page article on AVP which will appear in the Russian correctional journal. This is the first time a foreigner has been asked to write for the journal.

The international peace organization, Search for Common Ground, seeks to build coalitions for peace in South Africa, the Middle East and other parts of the world. They are interested in the AVP program and may be able to provide funding and organizational support to set up AVP in Russia. A meeting with the Minister of the Interior has been scheduled while I am in Russia and a representative from Search for Common Ground will accompany me.

We are being presented with remarkable opportunities in Russia. In the next issue, I will have a report of my visit.

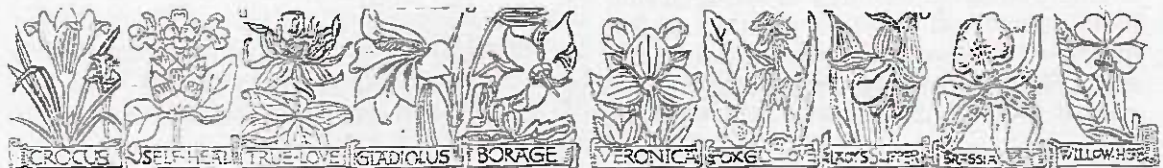
# AVP in Northern Ireland

by John Shuford, AVP Delaware

There will be an international conference on "Religion and Conflict" in Armagh, Northern Ireland on May 20 to 22. The conference which is jointly sponsored by the United Nations University and the University of Ulster, will include representatives from most of the major trouble spots in the world.

I have been invited to give a paper on the AVP program and I plan to focus on the unique way in which AVP is deeply spiritual, and at the same time non-sectarian and is not identified with specific beliefs or doctrines.

This is an unusual opportunity to increase the awareness of the AVP program internationally.





## AROUND AVP

### AVP in Hungary and Romania

AVP is growing in Eastern Europe through the efforts of Suzanna Eveson.

Suzanna has already taken three trips to her native Hungary to lead AVP workshops. Workshops have been held in both medium security and maximum security prisons. A dozen AVP facilitators have been trained and an Hungarian AVP organization has been established. Work has even started on translating the Basic Manual into Hungarian.

Now there are requests for two AVP workshops in Romania. There is a sizable

Hungarian population in Romania, so one workshop will be conducted in the Hungarian language and the other will be conducted in Romanian.

Suzanna would like to go back to Hungary. So far, she has been financing her efforts out of her own pocket but she has run out of travel funds. Perhaps local AVP groups or individuals can aid in the international work of AVP by contributing travel funds. See the article below.

### AVP Ambassador Fund

Would you like to be part of the effort to spread AVP around the world? Perhaps you can't speak Spanish, German, Hungarian or Croatian. Perhaps you don't have weeks or months of spare time to travel to other countries.

Nevertheless, you can make it possible to bring the AVP experience to Hungary, Germany, Romania, Croatia, Russia and Colombia and other countries.

AVP-USA is establishing an "Ambassador Fund" to assist with travel expenses for trainers starting up AVP programs around the world. AVP groups and individuals are invited to contribute to this fund. You may earmark your contribution to a specific project such as Hungary, Russia, Romania or

Croatia, or you can just make an undesignated contribution.

Perhaps your group would like to contribute \$100 or \$200 to help get AVP started in Romania and other countries. One AVP group has already contributed \$250.00 to the Romania project. Please put this topic on the agenda for the next meeting of your local AVP group.

The fund will be administered by Hal Brody, the AVP-USA Treasurer. Make your check out to AVP and send it to:

Hal Brody  
6369 Malcolm Drive  
San Diego, CA 92115.





## AROUND AVP

### AVP in Mexico and Nicaragua

by Mary Gray Legg, AVP-New England

After completing a workshop in Nashville, Tennessee and Houston Texas with Steve Angell, we traveled to Mexico City to do the first AVP workshop in Mexico. In Mexico, we were joined by Val Liveoak of AVP-Texas. The workshop was held at Casa de los Amigos. Although there were some organizational difficulties in workshop planning, the workshop was well received and will provide a starting point for AVP in Mexico. AVP-Texas will follow up with workshop support in the future.

In Nicaragua, crime and delinquency are creating a national crisis. In Managua alone, there are more than 17,000 children living on the streets. The prison system is harsh in many ways and at the same time enlightened in others. The standard sentence is 30 years and the housing in the prisons is primitive, crowded and cruel. At the same time, there is a counselor assigned to each 15 inmates and there seems to be a concern about individuals. There is an urgent need for programs like AVP.

The reception for AVP in Nicaragua was truly remarkable. Hank Elkins of AVP-New York was able to set up high level government contacts through his friend, George Campos. George is an official in the Ministry of the Interior which includes supervision of prisons. George arranged for Steve and myself to meet with Franco Montealegre who is the Deputy Commissioner for the

National Police and the former Director of the National Penitentiary System. Both George and Franco are forces for change and are leaders in the non-profit Nicaraguan Association for the Prevention of Delinquency and for Criminal Justice.

Through their efforts we were able to conduct two prison workshops in Titipapa. These workshops were extraordinary in many ways. In both workshops inmates from the men's and women's prisons were mixed. This was certainly a first for AVP and we found that having the men and women in the same workshop resulted in some distractions but was generally very positive. Both workshops were extremely successful.

We also conducted one community workshop with 25 participants and included a wide variety of professional people; a nun, a priest, police officers, military personnel, university students, social workers, counselors and a psychiatrist. This workshop was very exciting and powerful. We believe it will provide the basis for future program. We were assisted by Donald and "Gitano" Rendell who work for the Prison Fellowship Program and organized the AVP efforts in Colombia. The Rendells will assist in organizing an ongoing program in Nicaragua also.

We believe this trip was the first step to a positive AVP program in Mexico and Nicaragua.

Georgia

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## WHAT'S NEW IN AVP

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### The Miracle of Transforming Power

by Randy Kezar, AVP-New England

For me, the recent Alternatives to Violence Workshop at the New Hampshire State prison was more than a powerful personal experience, it is an example of the success of AVP in New England. After a year of preparations and hard work, this was the first workshop in a proposed year-long program at the prison.

In November, Bob Hillegas, Dick Cornelius, Debbie McIlwaine and I led our first Advanced Level AVP workshop in the State Prison in Concord. None of us had facilitated an Advanced workshop before and we did not know exactly what to expect. A new emphasis in the Advanced is to empower the inmates to decide and act as a group. We led discussions and exercises on working toward consensus, and asked the group to choose topics and themes they would like to work on. The clearest interest was to work on anger issues, and several as well had asked to work on forgiveness. We scheduled the morning of the third day for a session on forgiveness.

By that time the group had developed an unusual level of mutual trust and openness where inmates were sharing feelings and taking risks. The first exercise was a sharing by each participant around the circle on the statement of "Something in my life for which I have (or am working on) forgiving myself." When the last person had finished, it was clear that we were all overwhelmed by what

we had said. It was my turn as facilitator to lead another similar exercise; I could only sit in silence- until it became clear that we should move directly to the main part of the session, an exercise called "Steps to Forgiveness." After a short message about each of us having the spark of goodness within us, we divided into groups of four. Each group member was to contribute a personal experience of unresolved and unforgiven conflict. Others were to respond, helping the contributor focus on a set of guidelines of specific questions and issues.

I still have difficulty believing what then happened. The changes and healing which took place in the next two hours I call miraculous. There were such dramatic changes in desperate commitments of anger and rage, in attitudes toward individuals in these personal situations, in conversational tones and points of view. One desperate man with whom I had talked at length seemed to become a different person. It was at this time that I felt what AVP veterans call "Transforming Power," a flow of spiritual energy which works with and through that which is good in us. The friends who have made AVP happen knew what they were doing!

Each AVP workshop with a graduation where each participant receives a certificate and lots of hugs and handshakes. The facilitators don't receive certificates, but I certainly feel that I have graduated also.

## AVP FORUM

# Sequence for De-Roling Role Players

by Steve Angell, AVP New York

The de-roling phase of the role play is possibly the most important from the standpoint of not leaving participants feeling discomfort or even psychic pain. The following is a format which, if followed exactly, can help to eliminate such problems.

Bear in mind, however, that each situation is unique and that in some instances even these steps may not be sufficient and that other caring actions may be needed to release someone from their role. To minimize these situations always emphasize when setting up role plays that individuals should avoid playing stressful roles that they have experienced before in real life.

This should be conducted with some sense of intimacy. The facilitator should get out of his or her seat, go up and stand beside the role player and ask questions in the following order:

"Are you ready to come out of your role?" If the answer is "No" tell the person you will get back to them and leave them seated. If the answer is "Yes" proceed as follows:

"Please stand. Before I take you out of your role, is there anything you would like to say to the other players?" Then let him or her speak directly to the other players or the empty chairs with name tags. Then have them take off their name tape and place it on the back of the chair where they have been sitting. Then say "Your name is no longer (fictitious role play name), you are now (give them back their adjective name)." As you do so, put your hand on their shoulder to anchor their name. Do not touch them until

you give them back their name.

Now have them move away from their chair and ask "Is there anything that you as (give adjective name) would like to say to the character (give fictitious name they used in the role play)?" Have them speak to the empty chair as if it were that person.

When they have done the latter, have them face the audience and ask "Is there anything that you as (give adjective name) you would like to say to the group about how you felt playing the role of (give fictitious name)." It is exceedingly important to use the word "felt" because this gives them the opportunity to deny aspects of the role which they did not like. It further helps to release them from the role.

It is in this phase of the de-roling that you will find out if the person has really let go of the role. If they use the first person in referring to the character, it is a sign that they are still feeling tied to the role. You need to catch them on this and say "You are no longer (fictitious name)." and then ask them to use the third person.

If you sense the person is really stuck in their role, you will need to work with them further to release them. Some further questions you might ask are: "Was there something of (give their adjective name) in the character of (give role play name)?" "How are you different from the character (give role play name)?" "Did playing this role bring up things from the past that were difficult for you?"

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## AVP FORUM

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If the reply is in the affirmative, help them to talk about it and let it out. You may encounter tears at this point and may need to offer consolation. Do whatever you have to do to ease them out of this difficulty.

Sometimes it is helpful enlist their aid by asking "What would help you to get out of the role of (give role play name)?" Useful suggestions often result. Of course, keep before them that they are no longer the person in the role play but have come back to who they really are. Checking back periodically with such participants is a good thing to do to be certain that they have really

let go.

Occasionally you will encounter an individual who feels that he or she has failed because they "did not play their role right." They need to be reassured that they did well and that "you can't play a role wrong." The role play is a learning experience for the group whether a successful solutions was reached or not. We are looking for examples of Transforming Power and we can learn as much and perhaps more from a situation where Transforming Power did not come through because we can see what could have been done differently to result in a win/win solution.

### Redoing Role Plays

## Transforming Power Act II

*by Ed Sweeney, AVP Ohio*

I was disappointed after the role plays in my Basic and Advanced workshops. One of the characters was designated to express Transforming Power, but it didn't work. The characters were caught up in the conflict and the anger and the resolution was a long way off. The facilitators and the participants discussed afterward what could have happened differently. but the fact remained that Transforming Power was not demonstrated. The participants do not experience it for themselves.

At my Training for Trainers workshop, I was able to see that it could be done. I was one of the characters and we went through the scenario with all the conflict and stubbornness. We appeared to be getting nowhere. Lee String, the Lead facilitator called cut and went through the discussion of how everybody felt, etc. I felt we were near a resolution and if we were allowed to play

the scene again something different might happen.

We went through it again and, sure enough, the main character let go of the outcome she had in mind. Transforming Power appeared with an unexpected solution that amazed everyone.

At the prison and community workshops that I have facilitated since then, I have always done the role plays twice. The first time through the participants act out the conflict in the way it was described with all the anger and frustration. We then call for a break and ask the characters to do it again with one "minor" difference. We ask them to be willing to do it differently. Without exception, this "Act II" has demonstrated Transforming Power with a solution nobody anticipated.

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## AROUND AVP

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The most dramatic example of this occurred for me when I was playing the character Reggie Denny at a Lebanon Correctional Institution Training for Trainers workshop. The first time through, the inmates playing the Los Angeles street characters pulled me from my truck (chair) and were very zealous in their assault on Reggie. We had our one minute break and proceed to do it again, willing to do it differently. As I wheeled

across the room in my "truck" one of the characters stopped me and asked me where I was going. After I told him, he suggested that I take a different route because there could be trouble ahead so I turned around. Needless to say, I was deeply moved by this experience and the belief that Transforming Power can work in real life as well as role plays if we are only willing to do things differently.

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### AVP-United Kingdom

AVP groups have been springing up all around England with community workshops in Derby in the Northwest, Bristol in the Southwest, as well as London and Oxford. A regular program has been established in Grendon Prison and Tim Newell, the governor of the prison is strongly supportive of AVP.

Mark Bitel, who became an AVP leader at Sing Sing prison is now active in AVP in London and has been appointed treasurer of the London group. The London group is seeking a part time development person to help support their prison program.

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News from Queensland

### AVP-Australia

Queensland has planned an ambitious program for 1994 with 30 prison and community workshops scheduled. They are working in half a dozen men's prisons and one women's prison. They have even succeeded in training their first inmate facilitators.

Before one of these facilitators, Michael Pattinson, came into AVP he was depressed

and not wishing to live. A year later he is an AVP trainer confidently facilitating exercises, writing agendas and debriefing role plays. He has discovered that he can establish new boundaries and move mountains. He has been an inspiration to both the inside and outside facilitators in Queensland.

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### AVP-New York Needs New Statistical Clerk

Rere Hassett has decided to resign as statistical clerk for New York and is seeking a replacement. This important task involves reviewing workshop reports and entering

lists of workshop participants in our computer records. Please call Rere if you would like to volunteer for this job.

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 AROUND AVP
 

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## Boxing Ring Highlights Workshop

by Arline Williams, AVP-Derby UK

As I was attending my first AVP workshop, the facilitators explained the ground rules, everything was to be positive, no put downs. This was a difficult task for me as I find it hard to think positively about myself for five minutes, let alone two days. Then I chose the name Assertive Arlene, and I was already beginning to feel better.

As the facilitators took us through the exercises, there was one that was really a great help to me: My real life conflict with a work colleague was chosen for the Boxing Ring role play exercise. I sat and observed

two other members of the group trying to resolve the conflict. It was wonderful. I actually saw how I'd been behaving towards this colleague. I realized that I had been giving out mixed messages about my feelings. It was fascinating to be on the outside looking in. I gained a totally different outlook on the problem. The Boxing Ring was a really worthwhile exercise and a very enlightening experience.

No words can really express what this Basic Workshop did for me. I went to the workshop five feet, two inches tall and came away feeling six feet tall!

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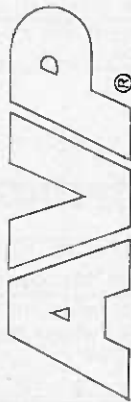
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