

# AVP

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

## BEST PRACTICE



AVPBESTPRACTICE@2025



***Best Practices are those practices that generally produce the best results at minimum risk*** -Chad White



# AVP BEST PRACTICE



<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1ok4DrWz2N93cww61tNs3-04PDPUfQanu> photos

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## About Best Practices

AVP Best Practices are trusted methods that follow AVP values to ensure high-quality workshops. This handbook helps all facilitators reflect and improve by encouraging them to share their experiences and feedback about what works best and why. Best practices have been developed alongside AVP manuals to support effective workshops. AVP facilitators can access the manuals online at [www.avp.international](http://www.avp.international)

This handbook aims to:

- Highlight the essential values, principles and practices that define all AVP workshops.
- Inspire conversations about best practices within AVP.
- Clarify what qualifies as an AVP workshop.
- Guide facilitators and our organizations in our continued AVP practice.

This is a “living document” that is meant for continuous reflection and update to meet the shared needs of our learning community.



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# 1. Core Values of Our AVP Organisation and Workshops

AVP's Core Values represent our fundamental beliefs. The following core values, appearing in no particular order, are present throughout AVP, from our workshops to our organisations, to our daily lives. They influence our behaviour and our way of thinking. They set AVP apart.

## **AVP-Trained Teams**

*A community of AVP-trained facilitators working in teams. We practise and model the attitudes, skills, processes and knowledge of AVP. This is present in workshops and throughout the organisation.*

## **Shared Power and Leadership**

*Enabling everyone to participate in leadership roles. Acknowledging that none of us has all of the answers, we share responsibility and draw on the strengths and wisdom of everyone in the group.*

## **Alternatives**

*The belief that we always have options and choices in any given situation. We choose how we respond.*

## **Inclusiveness**

*The conscious effort to acknowledge and consider, without prejudice, all natural and social differences, perceived or otherwise, in the AVP Community. We seek common ground by identifying and embracing differences.*

## **Good Within Everyone**

*The belief that there is something of value in all of us. We seek to affirm and connect with that capacity for good. We accept each person on their life journey.*

## **Journey of Personal Exploration**

*The understanding that each person's path is different. We each empower our own path, and begin by being open to change.*

## **Experiential Learning**

*Doing, listening, interacting with others, and reflecting on present and past experiences leading to reframing perspectives. Re-experiencing the self with peers.*

## **Community**

*Building, rebuilding and maintaining a sense of belonging, connectedness and safety with others. Respecting and caring for oneself while respecting and being present for others.*

## **Personal Nonviolence**

*Taking personal responsibility for not harming oneself or others. When we recognise there are alternatives, violence is no longer an answer to conflict.*

## **Consensus**

*We are all part of this decision-making process seeking to reach an agreement that everyone can accept, work with, and apply.*

## **Safety**

*Creating an environment that is conducive to collaboration, personal growth and taking risks to change ourselves and our relationships.*

## **Accessibility and Consistency**

*Staying true to AVP best practices and ensuring our processes, learnings and organisational operations are open, clear and easily understood. This is how we can recognise AVP anywhere in the world.*

## **Mutual Respect**

*Building strength and confidence in oneself while honouring and connecting with others. Taking personal responsibility and accountability.*

## **Transforming Power**

*We are guided by our optimism that when we are open to Transforming Power, every situation has the potential to have a hopeful, positive outcome.*

**2. Guiding Principles** People often have differing ethical standards, but some principles can be universal. The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is guided by principles that foster trust, growth, and connection. Rooted in respect and nonviolence, these principles create supportive spaces where individuals can explore, learn, and transform challenges into opportunities for positive change.

**1. Facilitator Excellence**

Skilled AVP facilitators model core values, ensuring workshops remain authentic, ethical, and impactful.

**2. Experiential Learning**

Engaging hands-on activities, role-plays, and reflective practices foster self-awareness, teach practical skills, and inspire growth.

**3. Adaptability and Inclusivity**

Workshops are tailored to participants' unique cultural, linguistic, and contextual needs, while staying true to AVP principles

**4. Flexibility Within Structure**

A clear and progressive workshop structure—Basic, Advanced, and T4F—is balanced with flexibility to suit diverse formats and needs.

**5. Collaboration and Consensus**

Inclusive decision-making processes encourage cooperation, shared leadership, and agreements that reflect collective wisdom.

**6. Real-Life Relevance**

Grounded in practical application, workshops teach essential conflict resolution tools like active listening and assertive communication.

**7. Safety and Trust**

Emotional and physical safety are prioritized through group agreements, fostering an atmosphere of respect and support.

**8. Community and Connection**

Workshops build trust, empathy, and a sense of belonging, creating spaces where meaningful relationships can flourish.

### 9. Transforming Conflict

Conflict is embraced as an opportunity for growth, using the power of positive alternatives to create constructive outcomes. Consider the complexity of conflictual situations. Consider different levels of emotional maturity.

### 10. Continuous Growth and Feedback

Regular feedback and reflection ensure workshops evolve and stay impactful, promoting personal and collective development for participants as well as facilitators.

### 11. Ethical Engagement

Facilitators approach communities with sensitivity, respect, and a commitment to meeting participants' needs with care.



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### 3. AVP Approach and Methodology: Is What You Are Doing a Core AVP Workshop?

(From Is What You Are Doing an AVP Workshop? AVPI and AVP-USA websites and Red Library)

AVP workshops are founded on principles of nonviolence, personal growth, and community connection. The guidelines in “Is What You Are Doing an AVP Workshop?” capture the key elements that make these workshops meaningful and effective. By following these principles, facilitators and participants can create safe and transformative spaces for learning, self-reflection, and resolving conflicts. Facilitators do not have all the answers in an AVP workshop, but their facilitation serves to deepen understanding for all.

The essence of AVP includes: 1) living our core values; 2) understanding what violence is, how it manifests and applying alternatives to violence; 3) caring for others with honesty and commitment to bringing about peaceful solutions to conflict, while supporting personal growth. AVP workshops are **hands-on experiences** that help people respond creatively to potentially violent situations. These workshops nurture personal growth and self-discovery.

All AVP workshops have common building blocks. These are the basis for the effectiveness and consistency that have enabled AVP to remain relevant over its more than 50-year history and into the future.

#### Section 1. Using the AVP Building Blocks to guide workshop content:





AVP Building Blocks are the essential framework for workshops, providing the foundation for transformative learning. Without them, workshops become meaningless activity sequences, hindering participants' ability to apply content to real life and change habits. These Building Blocks deliver practical tools and techniques for conflict management, fostering self and other awareness.

**AFFIRMATION & SELF-ESTEEM:** **Affirmation** is a crucial component of AVP workshops because it builds self-esteem and trust, which are essential for creating a safe and supportive learning environment. It's incorporated through various activities like positive name exercises, affirmation pairs, and group posters. Without affirmation, participants may experience self-doubt, mistrust, negative sharing, difficulty connecting with others, and projected anger, hindering the workshop's ability to facilitate positive change.

**Reflection:** Reflection is included in AVP workshops to encourage self-awareness and broader perspective, fostering the "Think Before Reacting" practice. It's facilitated through journaling, personal reflection exercises, and debriefing. Without it, participants are less likely to change habits, remain reactive, and fail to apply workshop learnings to their lives.

**Empathy:** Empathy is crucial in AVP workshops as it fosters compassion and understanding, essential for healthy relationships. It's incorporated through affirmations, listening activities, and self-disclosure. Without it, communication and problem-solving can become manipulative, and trust and willingness to share decrease significantly.

**COMMUNICATION:** Communication is essential in AVP workshops because it fosters focused listening and clear speaking, enabling participants to understand each other's needs and concerns. This prevents misunderstandings, a common cause of conflict. It's integrated through various activities like non-verbal exercises, small group sharing, and "I" messages. Without it, participants may disengage, conversations could be dominated, and manipulation may occur.

**Assertive Speaking** is included in AVP workshops to promote clear and open communication about feelings and needs, preventing misunderstandings and potential conflicts. It's facilitated through exercises like "I" statements and assertiveness activities. Without it, participants may feel disempowered, leading to misunderstandings and unresolved needs, which can escalate conflicts.

**Listening:** Listening is a vital part of AVP workshops because it prevents misunderstandings and validates participants by showing respect. It's practiced through gatherings, group agreements, and exercises like concentric circles. Without it, misunderstandings arise, participants feel unheard, and there's an increased urge to dominate conversations.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING & COOPERATION:** Community and community building are vital in AVP workshops to foster a sense of belonging, care, and respect, creating a safe and trusting environment for personal growth. This is achieved through circle seating, group activities, and agreements. Without it, the workshop space becomes unsafe, fostering mistrust and defensiveness, hindering personal and community interaction, and potentially leading to participant withdrawal.

**Cooperation:** Cooperation is a key component of AVP workshops because it teaches participants how to work effectively with others, fostering community and mutual respect. Recognizing the value of each person's contribution helps everyone meet their needs. This is practiced through gatherings, non-verbal exercises, role-playing, and cooperative activities. Without it, participants may feel disempowered, competition may arise, individuals could be marginalized, and overall engagement will likely decrease.

**Consensus:** Consensus is included in AVP workshops to empower participants by valuing their contributions and fostering "power with" rather than "power over". This is demonstrated through group agreements and specific consensus exercises. Without it, power imbalances arise, relationships feel unequal, dominant opinions prevail, and participants feel unheard and disengaged.

**Trust:** Trust is essential in AVP workshops to create a safe community where participants feel comfortable sharing and opening up. Facilitators model trust, and it's built gradually through group agreements and trust exercises. Without it, participants become defensive, lose faith in the workshop, and are less open to change.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION & CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION: Conflict Resolution:**

Conflict resolution is a core component of AVP workshops, enabling participants to view conflict as an opportunity for growth rather than a problem. It's implemented through communication, consensus, role-play exercises, and problem-solving tools. Without it, participants struggle to recognize alternatives to violence, experience helplessness, and remain stuck in avoidance patterns.

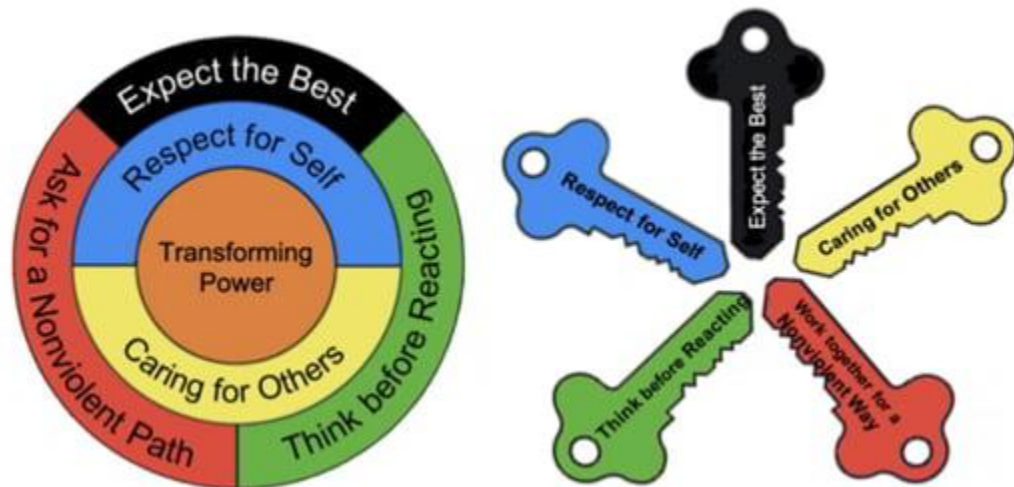
**Conflict transformation** is included in AVP workshops to show that conflict can be an opportunity for positive change, even if immediate resolution isn't possible. It fosters creativity in de-escalating conflict and strengthening relationships. This is taught through activities like role-playing and "Hassle Lines". Without it, conflicts escalate, participants feel disempowered, struggle to apply transformative strategies, and lack the motivation to try.

**TRANSFORMING POWER:** Transforming Power is the core, the heart, of AVP workshops, emphasizing that choices and alternatives always exist, often seen as a spiritual realization. It's

integrated into all exercises and activities, connecting AVP tools to daily life. Without it, the workshop fundamentally ceases to be AVP.

## Section 2. Workshop Fundamentals

AVP Workshop Fundamentals are globally consistent, providing a framework that allows for flexibility while maintaining the core identity of AVP. Respecting these fundamentals ensures workshops are recognizable as AVP, supports apprentice facilitators, and enables effective adaptation to participant needs. Without them, workshops lose their AVP identity, hinder facilitator development, and become difficult to tailor to specific groups.



**Experiential with a Progressive Focus:** AVP workshops use an experiential, progressive approach to build confidence and trust by starting with simple activities and gradually increasing complexity. This allows participants to learn through shared experiences and reflection. Without this structure, participants become overwhelmed, the workshop loses its coherence, and it becomes indistinguishable from other training programs.

**Facilitation Teams:** Facilitation teams are essential in AVP workshops to model cooperative interaction and shared leadership, demonstrating trust and the strength of collective effort. This is achieved through shared responsibilities and team support. Without them, a single facilitator holds undue power, hierarchical structures emerge, individual vulnerability increases, and the workshop resembles a traditional classroom setting, undermining AVP's collaborative approach.

**Length and Size of an AVP Workshop:** Considering the length and size of AVP workshops is crucial because the program is designed for a specific duration (18-22 hours) and group size (12-20 participants) to ensure effectiveness. Adhering to these guidelines allows for complete coverage of core elements, adequate time for building trust, and full participant engagement. Ignoring these factors can lead to an incomplete experience, inadequate preparation for advanced workshops, limited community building, potential for the workshop to become therapy, and reduced participation in large groups.

**Participation:** Participation is fundamental to AVP workshops because it fosters community and a safe space for open sharing. Everyone present, facilitators included, is a participant, and observers are excluded. This ensures that the workshop serves the participants' needs, not external agendas. Without full participation, the space becomes unsafe, participants feel judged, facilitators become authority figures, vulnerability increases, confidentiality is compromised, and community building is hindered.

**Purposeful Flexibility:** Purposeful flexibility is vital in AVP workshops to ensure the experience is responsive to participants' needs and growth. By adapting to feedback and observations, facilitators create an inclusive environment that respects individual journeys. Without this flexibility, the workshop becomes rigid, unsafe, and disconnected from participants' needs, hindering shared power dynamics.

**Real Life Experience:** AVP workshops are grounded in real-life experience to ensure practical application of skills in everyday situations. By sharing personal stories and practicing through role-plays, participants uncover and build confidence in their conflict management abilities. This approach fosters community and helps participants find personalized alternatives. Without it, participants struggle to connect with the workshop, learning retention decreases, and the application of AVP tools in daily life is discouraged.

**Safety:** Safety is paramount in AVP workshops, fostering a secure and supportive environment where participants can explore vulnerabilities and take risks. Facilitators maintain awareness of the group's mood, establish group agreements, and model safety. Without it, participants are less likely to engage, physical and emotional harm is possible, and the integrity of the AVP program is jeopardized.

**Structured Sessions:** Structured sessions are essential in AVP workshops to provide a carefully crafted learning experience. Sharing agendas, following consistent patterns, and ensuring each activity has a purpose builds trust and facilitates reflection. Without structure, participants feel disconnected, anxious, and distrustful. The workshop appears disorganized, the progressive learning approach is lost, and participants may leave with unmet needs.





### Section 3. Workshop Processes

AVP Workshop Processes are the tools and resources that underpin the workshops, fostering clarity, safety, and community. They maintain the experiential nature of the training and encourage personal exploration. Without them, participants struggle to connect, the workshop feels disjointed, and the crucial experiential learning is lost.

**Agendas:** Agendas are essential in AVP workshops to provide structure and direction, giving participants and facilitators a clear roadmap. They build confidence by showing purpose and continuity, and ensure activities are well-organized. Without them, the workshop feels disorganized, participants disengage, scheduled breaks are unclear, and exercises lack context.

**Brainstorms:** Brainstorms are used in AVP workshops to explore topics, encourage diverse ideas without judgment, and validate participant contributions. They help avoid repetition and promote participation. Without them, idea sharing is limited, conversations can be dominated, participants feel unheard, they don't recognize their own knowledge, and facilitators end up lecturing.

**Circles:** The circle is fundamental in AVP workshops to create equality and inclusion, ensuring everyone is visible and engaged. It eliminates hierarchy and fosters a sense of shared space. Without it, power differentials arise, the space feels exclusive, and participants are more likely to disengage.

**Clinics:** Clinics are used in AVP workshops to empower facilitators to address issues in real-time, ensuring participant safety and responsiveness. They model respectful team communication and consensus-based decisions, making participants feel heard. Without clinics, an "us vs. them" dynamic emerges, decisions become unilateral, problems remain unresolved, and participants may misinterpret facilitator discussions.

**Feedback and Evaluations:** Feedback and evaluations are crucial in AVP workshops to give participants a voice in shaping their experience and to help facilitators improve. They identify effective activities and areas for development. Without them, participants feel unheard, decisions are made without their input, concerns remain unaddressed, and unmet needs persist.

**Gatherings + Openings and Closings:** Gatherings, Openings, and Closings are essential in AVP workshops for creating a sense of community, equality, and transition. Gatherings allow everyone to share without judgment, while Openings and Closings provide structure and closure, connecting participants to the workshop space and each other. Without these processes, participants feel disconnected, quieter voices are silenced, engagement decreases, focus is lost, and a sense of incompleteness prevails.

**Group Agreements:** Group agreements are vital in AVP workshops as they establish safety and behavioral expectations, creating a shared understanding of respectful conduct. They foster consensus, empower participants, and honor their collaborative effort to create a safe space. Without them, there's no behavioral framework, participants lack recourse for disrespect, old habits persist, behavioral uncertainty arises, and unintentional harm is more likely.

**Groups:** Groups are essential in AVP workshops to build awareness of interpersonal relationships and provide varied opportunities for sharing. Smaller groups often create a safer environment, fostering peer learning and community. Without them, participants and facilitators struggle to connect, individuals feel isolated, peer learning is limited, and engagement decreases.

**Light and Livelies:** Light & Livelies are included in AVP workshops to build community, improve communication, and create a safe, energetic environment. Humor and play help discharge emotions, reduce tension, and facilitate transitions between activities. They also provide opportunities for equal interaction between facilitators and participants. Without them, transitions are difficult, the workshop becomes emotionally draining and stagnant, and participants lose interest and feel overwhelmed.

**Processing and Debriefing Exercises:** Processing and debriefing exercises in AVP workshops are crucial for deepening understanding and connecting experiences to real-life situations. They facilitate reflection, encourage shared insights, and promote thoughtful responses. Without them, participants fail to see relevance, behavior change is unlikely, negative feelings persist, and the connection between exercises and real-world application is lost.



**Role Play:** Role-playing is essential in AVP workshops to provide practical experience in conflict exploration and application of AVP principles to daily life. It fosters empathy and allows

participants to practice Transforming Power in realistic scenarios. Without it, learning remains theoretical, conflict transformation is less visible, and Transforming Power stays abstract rather than becoming a tangible skill.

**Self-Disclosure:** Self-disclosure is vital in AVP workshops to build trust, community, and empathy. Facilitators model sharing, encouraging participants to do the same. Without it, facilitators seem distant, participants feel disconnected and isolated, trust is difficult to establish, sharing is impersonal, and opportunities for shared experiences are lost.

**Unanswered Questions:** Unanswered questions are included in AVP workshops to show respect for participants' concerns and to maintain the workshop's flow. By documenting these questions and addressing them later, facilitators create a space for open inquiry without disrupting the learning process. Without this practice, the group can get sidetracked, participants may feel disrespected, and unresolved questions can repeatedly disrupt the workshop.



## 4. Guidelines for AVP Workshops

This guide provides a clear framework for AVP workshops, highlighting the core values and practices that make them meaningful and impactful. It focuses on maintaining consistency, training facilitators, and ensuring safety in both in-person and online formats, helping to preserve the integrity of the AVP program. The core workshops (Basic, Advanced and Training for Facilitators) begin the journey of personal transformation.

### What Defines a Core Workshop?

AVP core workshops are essential to becoming a facilitator and uphold the following key principles:

- **Format:** Core workshops are based on AVP manuals and span 18–22 hours.

- **Sequence:** Workshops follow a specific progression—Basic, Advanced, and then Training for Facilitators.
  - Participants complete Basic and Advanced workshops before attending Training for Facilitators..
- **Structure:**
  - The Basic workshop follows the Basic Manual’s agenda.
  - The Advanced workshop incorporates a consensus process to select topics.
- **Flexibility:** Extended formats that involve significant time or days between workshop sessions may require additional efforts to rebuild trust and community once the workshop is reconvened.
- **Facilitator Coaching/Mentoring:** Apprentice facilitators need guidance from the experienced facilitators. They must demonstrate a commitment to AVP’s values and principles.

## Core Workshops

1. **In-Person Core Workshops (Basic, Advanced, Training for Facilitators):**
  - Adhere to AVP core values.
  - Follow the structured 18–22 hour format.
  - Progress through the sequence: Basic → Advanced → Training for Facilitators.
  - Use consensus for Advanced workshop topic selection.
  - Learning the consensus process is essential for training facilitators so they have a personal understanding of group decision-making.
2. **Topic Workshops** (similar to core Advanced but without the consensus process)
  - These are Advanced workshops with pre-selected topics.
  - They maintain the 18–22 hour format but are only considered "Core" workshops if they contain a decision-making process. Effective decision-making is key to successful collaboration in an Advanced workshop. Since Advanced workshops focus on the relationships of individuals to others and society, effective decision making is key to successful collaboration with others.
3. **Online AVP Core Workshops:**
  - Online Workshops are core if they:
    - Uphold AVP values.
    - Follow the 18–22 hour timeframe, adjusted for shorter session durations.
    - Use safety and community guidelines for online settings.
  - **Benefits:**
    - Improve accessibility for those with mobility challenges, geographic barriers, or language differences.



- Offer a cost-effective option, though they may pose technological challenges for low-income participants.
- **Considerations:**
  - Reliable devices, internet access, and audio/visual equipment are essential.
  - Extended formats may require more effort to rebuild community.

## **Adapting AVP Workshops for Changing Formats, Settings and Diverse Groups of Participants**

As workshops evolve to include online delivery, it's crucial to:

- Stay true to AVP's core values.
- Follow established best practices for both in-person and online settings.

Ensure facilitators are trained specifically for the format or context in which they will be interacting.

## **Guidelines for Online Workshops**

To ensure a safe and connected environment, online workshops should include:

- **Camera and Audio:** Participants and facilitators should keep cameras and audio on to foster connection and safety.
- **Confidentiality:** Observers and recordings are strictly prohibited to protect trust.
- **Breakout Rooms:** Use groups of three for pair exercises to prevent power imbalances.
- **Movement Breaks:** Include regular breaks with short activities to refresh participants.
- **Clinics:** Facilitators can use messaging platforms to address issues privately.
- **Community Agreements:**
  - Use individual devices to enable random breakout assignments.
  - Ensure participants stay visible to monitor body language.
  - Create a quiet, distraction-free environment with consistent audio.

## **Online vs. In-Person Workshops**

- **Key Differences:**
  - Online workshops may risk disengagement but enhance accessibility for some participants.
  - Online workshops provide the opportunity for participants to reflect on learning between sessions and discuss learning with family and friends.
  - Rebuilding community is essential in shorter online sessions. This is enhanced in breakout rooms where there are fewer interruptions and distractions (noise from other groups and facilitators when activities are in-person).

- Online workshops can benefit from participants creating and connecting using a WhatsApp group amongst themselves during the workshop period and afterwards. In-person workshop participants can also create a WhatsApp group for post workshop connection.
  - **Facilitator Training:**
    - Training for Facilitators workshops should align with participants' previous modality (online or in-person).
    - New facilitators should apprentice in their chosen format for 2–3 workshops.
    - Facilitators trained in one format should undergo additional training for the other.
- 

### Additional AVP Programs

These programs help promote AVP to communities.

#### 1. **AVP Taster Sessions:**

- Introductory, shorter sessions lasting 2–8 hours.
- Should align with AVP's core values.

#### 2. **AVP Short Sessions:**

- Shorter, topic-focused sessions influenced by AVP principles.
- Not replacements for Online Core Workshops.



## 5. Complexity levels

It is important for facilitators to consider the safety and emotional impact of the exercises on the participants. As facilitation teams craft their agendas they need to assess the difficulty of each exercise for facilitators to present. By understanding these levels, facilitators can design workshops that balance emotional depth with safety, ensuring participants feel supported while exploring meaningful growth.

### **Facilitators consider how difficult it is to facilitate:**

How many steps are in the instructions?

Do you need to experience the exercise before facilitating it?

### **Facilitators consider the safety and emotional impact on participants:**

Is the exercise uplifting, exploring or going deep?

Is the level of sharing - low, medium, high?

May the result be negative thinking, strong emotions or feelings?

(Be prepared at any level for possible triggering of negative feelings.)

## COMPLEXITY LEVELS

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5  
 low high



### Level 1: Simple & Low Risk

- **Setup:** Involves 1–3 straightforward steps.
- **Intent:** Positive, uplifting exercises that encourage light sharing.
- **Sharing:** Low level of personal disclosure.
- **Vulnerability:** Minimal, with emotions managed independently.
- **Preparation:** Facilitators simply need to review the exercise.

### Level 2: Moderate & Guided Interaction

- **Setup:** Requires 3–6 steps, possibly involving movement or materials.
- **Intent:** Focuses on pair or group activities with mild vulnerability.
- **Sharing:** Ranges from low to moderate.
- **Vulnerability:** Participants control their emotional engagement.
- **Preparation:** Practice the exercise with another facilitator.

### Level 3: Medium & Deeper Exploration

- **Setup:** Involves 5+ steps for facilitation.
- **Intent:** Encourages meaningful self-disclosure in a supportive community.
- **Sharing:** Moderate level of personal sharing.
- **Vulnerability:** May surface strong emotions; thorough debriefing is essential.
- **Preparation:** Facilitators should experience the exercise as participants, observe its implementation, and practice with a team.

### Level 4: Complex & Enhanced Awareness

- **Setup:** Includes 5+ steps with deeper vulnerability and potential for personal growth.
- **Intent:** Aims to increase cooperation and self-awareness.
- **Sharing:** Medium to high levels of disclosure.
- **Vulnerability:** Emotions may be more challenging to manage; debriefing and support are necessary.
- **Preparation:** Facilitators should observe, experience, and practice alongside a partner or team.

### Level 5: Difficult & High Risk

- **Setup:** Involves 5+ steps with staged instructions and active facilitator involvement.
- **Intent:** Encourages deep vulnerability and transformation through personal and group change.



- **Sharing:** High level of personal disclosure.
  - **Vulnerability:** People sometimes experience these exercises as emotionally challenging. Requires intensive debriefing and often community healing.
  - **Preparation:** Facilitators need to experience the exercise, observe its delivery, and team up with an experienced facilitator for practice.
- 



Workshop evaluation and feedback forms offer an effective way to understand participants' experiences and the impact of AVP workshops. These forms focus on key areas like improving communication, managing conflict, and fostering personal growth. They also encourage participants to share suggestions for enhancing future workshops.

Copies of the form in several languages are available at:

This online form link can be shared with workshop graduates online or in print format.

Facilitators can type in the contents of printed evaluation forms from in-person AVP workshops to the online forms so that they can also be included in the evaluation database. Please send the completed forms to [research@avp.international](mailto:research@avp.international) .



## Alternatives to Violence Project Workshop feedback

**Workshop level:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Workshop location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions with what you really think. Like everything in this workshop, you can choose not to do it. Your answers will help us improve AVP and discover what difference, if any, the workshops make. Your answers may be shared with the AVP International research team so that we can learn more about the impact of the workshops. We will not know who answered the questions so they will be private. (Use the back of the sheet if you want to write more!)

**Please show how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements**

<b>Because of this workshop I am more likely to:</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. Express my thoughts and feelings while being sensitive to others					
2. Find the positive in myself and others					
3. Listen without judgement					
4. Work in cooperation with others					
5. Respond to conflict in a caring and constructive way					
6. Think before reacting					

7. **Something I learned about myself from the workshop is ....**
8. **Something I learned about dealing with conflict from the workshop is ....**
9. **Something I might do differently because of this workshop is ....**
10. **The best part of the workshop was ....**
11. **The workshop could be improved by ....**
12. **One thing I would tell somebody else about this workshop is ....**
13. **Is there anything else you would like to say?**

**Thank you**

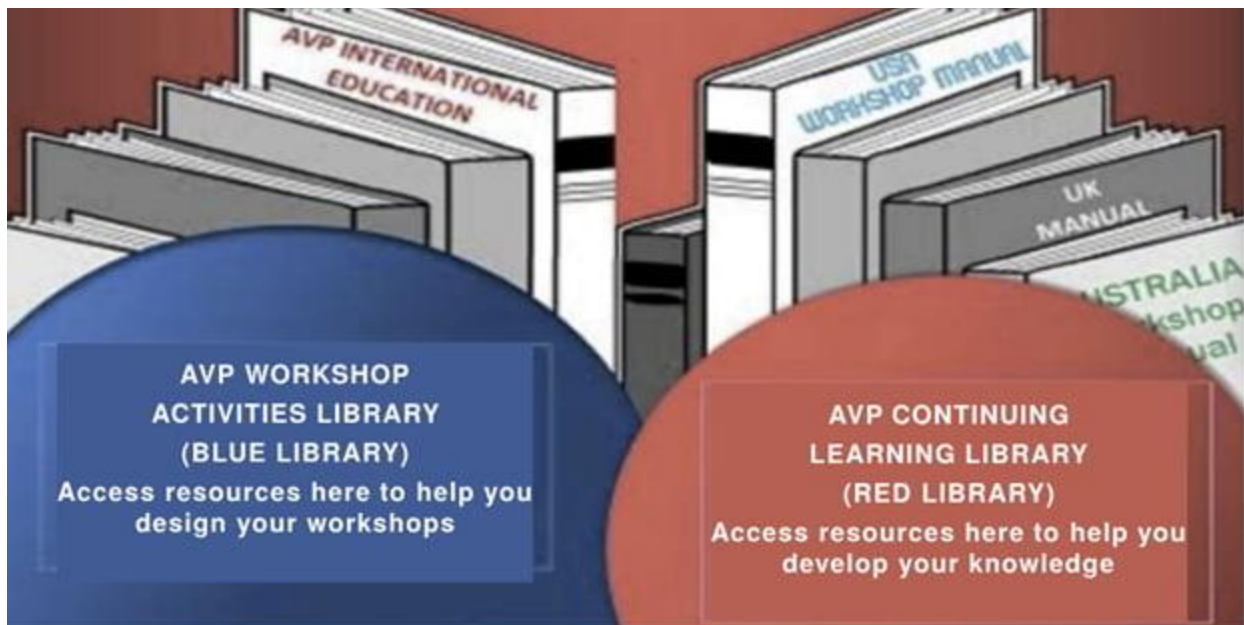
## 7 AVP Online Libraries

AVP provides two versatile online libraries designed to support facilitators and learners worldwide. Accessible from any device, the BLUE Workshop Activities Library and the RED Continuing Learning Library are rich with exercises, workshop agendas, and special resources. These libraries empower facilitators and participants to explore new ideas, deepen their skills, and foster meaningful growth in their communities.

### ON-LINE LIBRARIES

Available on any device: laptop, phone, tablet

You will need to register with the AVP International website at <https://avp.international> contact education at: [education@avp.international](mailto:education@avp.international)



**The BLUE Workshop Activities Library** - All exercises and agendas from a range of manuals.

**The RED Continuing Learning Library** - Other materials for continuing learning and workshops for specialized: topics, target populations, and settings.

#### 7 ways to search

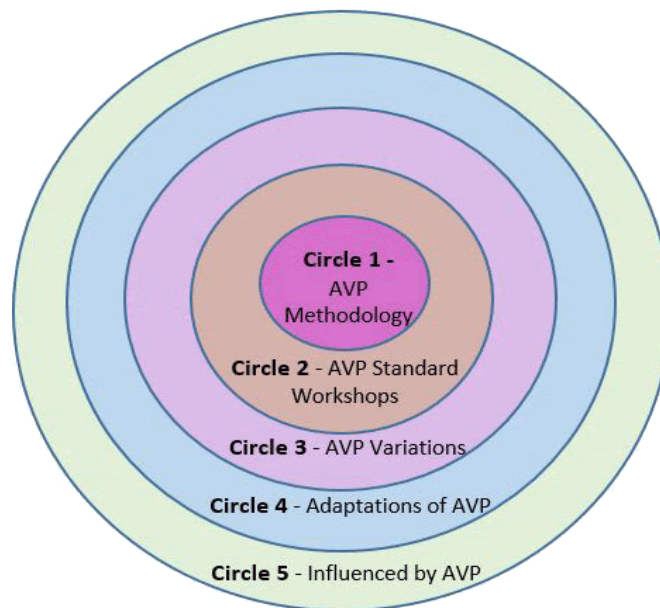
1. Activity/Exercise Title
2. Basic Workshops
3. Advanced Workshops
4. Training for Facilitators
5. Youth Workshops
6. Light and Livelies
7. Types of Exercises

#### 7 ways to search

1. Facilitation skills
2. Settings/Target populations
3. On-line AVP
4. Specialised Topic Workshops
5. AVP Values and Processes
6. Types of material

## 8. AVP Community Circles Model

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is all about promoting nonviolence and personal growth through hands-on, experiential learning and life-changing experiences. The **AVP Community Circles Model** shows how AVP's principles and practices start at its transformative core and grow outward, creating space for inclusivity, collaboration, and adaptability across many different contexts. This model includes the many ways AVP methods are being used in our communities. It is an effort to embrace all of our AVP communities.



### Understanding the AVP Community Circles

In AVP we use concentric circles in many ways. We sit in circles. “Concentric Circles” are circles inside each other with a common center point, such as a rock thrown into a pond. When we are introducing the topic of Transforming Power, we point out that the mandala is an example of concentric circles. Our community model is represented by concentric circles.

Imagine AVP as a series of expanding circles, each one representing a unique way that AVP's values and methods are used. Together, these circles show how AVP's work grows from its heart—the foundational workshops—into even broader applications.

#### Circle One: AVP Methodology

- This is the foundation of AVP, grounded in shared learning, group connection, and non-hierarchical participation.
- It includes AVP's principles, philosophy, and documented methods, all designed to create trust, personal growth, and supportive connections.
- At its heart is the power of transformation—helping individuals and groups discover their inner strength for peace.

### **Circle Two: AVP Core Workshops**

- These are the backbone of AVP’s training: Basic, Advanced, and Training for Facilitators (T4F) workshops.
- Each workshop lasts 18–22 hours and is led by trained AVP facilitators.
- They focus on essential skills like communication, conflict resolution, and building supportive communities in a way that’s consistent and reliable.

### **Circle Three: AVP Variations**

- Workshops that adapt AVP principles while meeting specific needs or interests.
- Two main types:
  1. **Support Workshops:** These include introductory “tasters” or follow-up sessions for continued learning.
  2. **Stand-Alone Workshops:** Focused on topics like empathy or dealing with trauma.
- These variations are flexible while staying true to AVP’s values.

### **Circle Four: AVP-Informed Adaptations**

- Tailored workshops created by experienced facilitators for external organizations.
- Address particular groups like veterans, youth at risk, or trauma survivors.
- Although based on AVP, these aren’t official AVP workshops—they’re adaptations.
- They provide opportunities for growth and collaboration, giving facilitators ways to expand their work.

### **Circle Five: AVP-Inspired Activities**

- Exercises and activities influenced by AVP but used independently of its structure.
- Examples:
  - Schools integrating AVP-inspired techniques like circle learning.
  - Shelters applying AVP exercises without conducting full workshops.
- These activities acknowledge AVP’s influence but do not claim to be official AVP sessions.

## **Why This Model Matters**

The AVP Community Circles Model helps AVP:

- Stay true to its transformative learning core while avoiding dilution of its mission.
- Expand its reach, welcoming a diverse range of people and organizations.
- Foster creativity and innovation while recognizing contributions from other groups.
- Support both volunteers and professional facilitators by providing opportunities for growth and inclusivity.

This thoughtful structure allows AVP to spread the message of nonviolence and personal growth to more communities while staying connected to the values that make it so impactful.



## 9. AVP Learning Objectives

The AVP workshops equip participants with tools to resolve conflict, build self-awareness, and foster peaceful communities.

- The Basic Workshop introduces foundational skills like communication and cooperation.
- The Advanced Workshop deepens these skills, exploring more complex conflict dynamics and fostering consensus-building

### AVP Basic Workshop Learning Objectives

The AVP Basic Workshop is a three-day intensive experience that is designed to develop interpersonal conflict resolution skills. It provides tools to empower individuals to transform violence into peace and build resilient communities.

#### Core Objectives:

- **Self-Awareness:** Reflect on personal responses to conflict and explore new, constructive ways to engage with others.
- **Awareness of Others:** Cultivate sensitivity to other's needs and learn to see situations from their perspective.
- **Attitudes:** Develop a cooperative mindset that moves beyond competitive approaches to conflict.
- **Skills:** Gain practical, hands-on experience in conflict transformation techniques.

#### Key Components & Learning Outcomes:

- **Affirmation:** Boost self-esteem and trust, both in oneself and in others while celebrating the inherent worth of every individual.
- **Communication:** Strengthen listening skills and practice assertive, empathetic communication for better understanding and connection..
- **Cooperation:** Foster teamwork and collaborative problem-solving by developing cooperative attitudes.
- **Creative Conflict Transformation:** Harness the inner Transforming Power to resolve conflicts, channeling energy toward positive change on both individual and group levels.

### AVP Advanced Workshops Learning Objectives

The AVP Advanced Workshops take participants further, deepening their understanding of AVP principles and practices.



#### Key Objectives:

- **Enhanced Conflict Transformation Skills:** Transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and stronger relationships.
- **Deeper Understanding of Transforming Power:** Enhance and apply this foundational AVP concept in challenging situations.
- **Consensus Building and Group Facilitation:** Learn and practice consensus-based decision-making and effective group facilitation skills.
- **Exploration of Complex Conflict Dynamics:** Address power imbalances, systemic conflicts, and other intricate dynamics with confidence.
- **Personal Growth and Self-Awareness:** Deepen self-awareness and examine personal patterns related to conflict to achieve meaningful growth.
- **Application of AVP Principles:** Strengthen the ability to apply AVP values and techniques in real-world scenarios.
- **Building Community and Support:** Contribute to a supportive learning community while benefiting from shared wisdom and encouragement.

## 10. Guides for Visiting Other AVP Programs

Visiting AVP programs offers a chance to connect deeply with diverse communities, share wisdom, and grow together. This set of questions helps ensure that your engagement reflects AVP principles, fostering meaningful workshops and mutual understanding.

### Questions Before Visiting

- How can I respectfully learn about the culture and history of the group I'm visiting?
- Who should I reach out to for insights about this group before I arrive?
- What biases or assumptions might I have, and how can I address them?
- How do I acknowledge and navigate my own privilege in this context?
- What is my intention for this visit, and how can I focus on the group's needs over my own?
- Am I prepared to let participants shape the workshop based on their needs?
- Can I embrace others as they are, celebrating our shared humanity?
- Is there a local AVP program in the area that I could contact and possibly partner with?

### During Facilitation

- How can I contribute without judgment of people, making specific, positive comments on activities, as a facilitator, avoiding both criticism and praise of people?
- When unsure, am I asking advice and guidance from the lead facilitator and the others in the facilitation team?
- Am I treating every participant with dignity and respect?
- Can I listen deeply, accepting that I don't have all the answers?
- How do I let participants lead the workshop while remaining flexible?
- What steps can I take to encourage group ownership and release control?
- How can I approach non-verbal cues, trauma, and shame with empathy?

### Addressing Concerns

- How do I maintain safety and integrity in the workshop?
- What methods for feedback and debriefing promote emotional safety?
- How can I nurture community-building and trauma processing within the group?
- What clear communication strategies can keep participants informed?
- How do I set boundaries with defined roles and guidelines?
- How can I address concerns and lingering emotions respectfully?
- What is the best way to navigate special issues and exit interviews?
- How can I integrate AVP principles into both facilitation and my daily life?

## 50 Years of AVP Best Practices

Since 1975, the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) has grown through collaboration and shared learning. Early facilitators like Ellen Flanders, Janet Lugo, and Lee Stern laid the foundation, shaping workshops and exercises that continue to evolve today.

By 1980, AVP New York (later AVP USA) Education Committee published its first training manuals, ensuring consistency across programs. Best practices spread through intervisitation and facilitator gatherings, strengthening AVP's impact.

### A Global Commitment to Best Practices

At the 2011 AVP International Gathering in Guatemala, facilitators from 20 countries explored key questions: **What is AVP? What is not AVP? What are its essential elements?** This inspired the AVP International Education Committee to create the AVP Best Practice Team in 2012. Facilitators found remarkable consistency in AVP's core principles across regions, reinforcing the importance of high-quality reference manuals used worldwide.

By 2014, the Best Practice Team became a joint effort between the AVP International and AVP USA Education Committees, continuing to refine and document AVP's approach.

### Key Documents

- **2015** – AVP Community Circles (AVP USA)
- **2017** – Guidelines for Visiting AVP Programs (AVP International)
- **2017** – AVP Approach & Methodology
- **2017** – Core Values of AVP (Nepal World Gathering)
- **2020** – AVP Online Activities (Blue Library) & Continuing Learning (Red Library)
- **2020** – Complexity Levels
- **2021** – AVP Evaluation Form (AVPI Research Team)
- **2023** – Guidelines for AVP Workshops

As AVP moves forward, its commitment to best practices remains at the heart of its mission — ensuring safe, impactful workshops for communities worldwide.

*Team members have included: Anna Alderson, Betty McEady, Dawn Addy, Don McPhee, Esther Cowley-Malcolm, Jordan Hoffman, Judy Litke, Katherine Smith, Lucy Lopez, Maji Peterx, Malcolm Smith, Martin Ford, Mary Walton, Nancy Vimla, Bronwen Hillman, Peter Onyango Olwal, Peter Preiss, Sally Herzfeld, Saskia Schuitemaker, Val Liveoak.*







*No matter how good you get you can always get better, and that's the exciting part.*

-Tiger Woods

*Excellence is not a destination; it is a continuous journey that never ends.*

-Brian Tracy





**I have  
the Power  
to Change  
My Story.**



**AVP Best Practice @ 2025**

**I CAN BE**

*Imagine yourself as the most wonderful and fulfilled person you can be.*

**I CAN SAY**

*Recognize the power of your speech for negativity, such as put-downs, lying and abusive words; but also recognize the power of your speech for good.*

**I CAN ACT**

*How can we act toward others to comfort them in distress or calm them down when they are angry?*

**I CAN USE MY TIME TO**

*Use your time and energy in activities that build you up rather than destroy.*

**I CAN ACHIEVE**

*There is energy inside you that can be used, with will power, in a steady pull, to achieve a better direction.*

**I CAN BE PEACEFUL**

*Keep your mind calm and free from frantic desires. Tap into your inner strength.*