

# HANDLING CONFLICT AND BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## Who we are and what we do

### Who we are

The **Alternatives to Violence Project** is a network of skilled volunteers who run workshops for anyone who wants to find ways of resolving conflict without resorting to violence. We work in the community and in prisons.

### The thinking behind AVP

We understand that conflict is a natural and normal part of life, and that it is possible to learn new ways of handling it. By holding workshops in which the participants consider the underlying causes of friction and violence, practical ways of dealing with situations of conflict are worked out.

Our workshops build on everyday experiences and try to help us move away from violent or abusive behaviour by developing other ways of dealing with conflicts. They help us to increase the respect we have for ourselves and others.

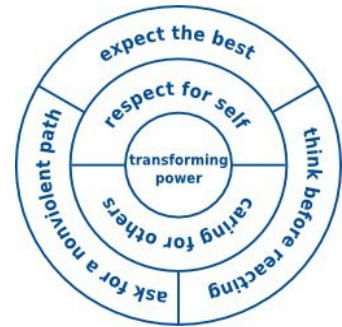
### History

AVP began in 1975 in a New York prison when the inmates asked local Quakers to help them to devise a programme to support young prisoners to resolve conflict non-violently. The programme spread quickly to other prisons and to the wider community. Workshops are now offered in a variety of community and residential settings in over 50 countries. They run in a range of settings including in refugee camps in Kenya, prisons in the United States and in schools in Australia. In 1989 the programme came to Britain. It began as a Quaker-led group but gained independence as AVP Britain in 1997. The low-cost workshops are run in prisons and in the community and there is a six-week distance learning course called 'Facing up to Conflict' for use in prisons.

### Our Vision and Mission

AVP Britain's vision is a non-violent society.

**Our mission is to support people, particularly those in hardship, to learn how to handle conflict, resist violence and build stronger relationships.**



**For more information contact us at**  
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[www.facebook.com/avp.southwales](https://www.facebook.com/avp.southwales)

@AVPSouthWales

## Our approach

We believe that change is always possible. Those who attend AVP workshops usually do so because they have reached a point where they want to make changes in their lives.

During the workshop/course everyone is valued equally. The exercises are designed to reinforce feelings of self-worth and to encourage working together to solve problems. This is done in small and large groups. The activities are varied so that the participants can learn in different ways and from each other. We believe that the best way of learning is by experience; some of the tasks provide the opportunity to practise different ways of understanding and dealing with anger and violence.



**“AVP was to be my turning point. There was no right answer – nor wrong ones. What pleased me more was that other people could see the changes I was making.”**

Prison workshop participant

## Who is it for?

Participants are drawn from all walks of life. What links them is the desire to make changes in the way they handle conflict. They attend for different reasons:

- They may be experiencing difficulties in their relationships
- They may be referred by a social worker or probation officer
- They may have heard about AVP from their GP
- They may wish to make changes in their lives, for example, after the breakdown in a relationship or following release from prison.
- They may wish to understand more about how they respond to conflict and to explore ways of changing old habits

**“I usually walk away from workshops - here I have stayed”**

## Our workshops

AVP workshops are not lectures. Participants learn from one another through group activities, discussion and role-play, drawing on real-life situations where conflict might happen, and exploring different ways to handle them. Light refreshments are provided and participants sometimes bring food to share.

We run two types of workshops: **Level One** and **Level Two**.

**Level One** helps with skills and attitudes for handling conflict, such as: understanding and believing in yourself, respecting others, communicating, and managing strong feelings like anger.

**Level Two** explores conflict, nonviolence and relationships in more depth while building on the skills developed in a Level One workshop. Usually the participants cooperate to choose the focus of the work in a Level Two workshop.

There is also an online course for people in prison called [Facing Up to Conflict](#).

### Workshop Fees

Workshop fees are charged on a sliding scale between £10 and £95 according to income. However, no one will be turned away due to inability to pay.

## How can our workshops help your service users?

**“All parts were helpful. I've learnt new techniques and strategies to help with anger, aggression and violence etc.”**

In AVP workshops, people draw on their own experiences to explore the conflicts in their lives, and find ways of dealing with anger, fear and violence or potential violence.

**“Especially helpful: understanding anger and body language because I can start to understand where my anger comes from and deal with it rather than for it to just happen again.”**

Participants learn new skills, which can help to:

- Understand why conflict happens
- Manage strong feelings such as anger
- Build or rebuild good relationships with other people
- Communicate well in difficult situations.
- Be true to oneself while respecting other people

## Common objectives for working together

### Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

We can help you to meet your obligations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act by working together to achieve common goals.

Under the Act, 'Wellbeing' includes:

- Being physically, mentally and emotionally happy
- Protection from abuse, harm and neglect
- Positive relationships with family and friends
- Being part of the community

**“I genuinely found all areas of the workshop facilitating growth, and development of empathy and compassion.”**

### Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It is designed to ensure that the public bodies listed in the Act think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.



Common goals for AVP and public services:

#### A healthier Wales:

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

#### A more equal Wales:

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).

#### A Wales of cohesive communities:

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.

## Building better relationships

### AVP Wales contacts:

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### FAQs

#### What is the structure of community workshop?

They are non-residential. They start either on a Friday evening (around 6.30pm) or on Saturday morning (around 9.30 am) and finish on Sunday (around 5pm).

#### Is this an Anger Management Course?

Participants in AVP workshops who have previously attended anger management courses told us that AVP's approach to anger is very different to anger management courses. They said that AVP offers a gentler and less intrusive approach to assisting people to recognise and understand their anger. AVP does not ask participants to share their individual experiences of anger. Instead, we assist participants to understand that anger is a natural response to difficult situations which may need to be changed. During workshops, we discuss the differences between anger, conflict and violence.

#### Is this a Perpetrator Course?

No, whilst AVP workshops do attract people who have in the past used violence to solve problems and wish to change their lives, AVP is open to all people who wish to learn creative and nonviolent ways to resolve conflict. In a typical workshop, there are usually people from a variety of backgrounds. This diversity usually adds richness to the workshop where skills and experiences are shared.



## Next steps..

If you would like to work with us please contact us on the details above. We will be very happy meet with you to:

- discuss your service users needs
- offer a taster session for your staff or clients
- provide an in-house workshop
- take referrals to our programme of community (public) workshops
- provide more information on our distance learning course 'Facing Up To Conflict'.

[Thank you for taking the time to find out more about our work.](#)