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Dear Colleague,

Alternatives to Violence Programme

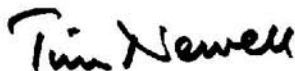
As a governor of prisons I was always concerned with the possibility of violence within the population of prisoners. I looked for ways in which the potential for violence in individuals and in groups could be minimised in creative ways as well as by traditional methods of good supervision and monitoring of prisoner interactions using appropriate interventions to deter violence and sanctions when it had occurred. The most creative way of meeting this need I came across in my years as a governor was the Alternatives to Violence Programme (AVP) which was transforming for many difficult and dangerous men who went on the workshops. It also had an impact on their peers as on their return to the landings their behaviour and attitudes were different. Thus gradually the culture of the wing began to change to become more problem solving rather than confrontational.

The management of our violent possibilities has been achieved for most of us through learning strategies and interpersonal skills. AVP helps prisoners develop skills that may well have been latent so that they can manage conflict in problem-solving ways ensuring that respect for the needs of all concerned can be sustained.

It is one of the few culture changing programmes that works through imaginative intervention. The workshops are hard work but immensely enjoyable. They could be provided for staff to develop their problem-solving skills as their support for the work increases its value.

There is a community of AVP people that will support the work and give opportunities for prisoners to take responsibility for themselves as well as for becoming facilitators and delivering the workshop.

I commend AVP to you.



Tim Newell
Former prison governor