

To: Giri Sequoya

From: AVP California Steering Committee

Attending: Pat Hardy, Stephen Matchett, George Ramos, Vicki Rumbaugh, Alice Waco, Katherine Youngmeister, Bob Barns.

Attending as consultants: Joyce Banzhaf, Ann Boone, John Shuford, Kenya Williams

RE: Sierra Conservation Center Incident

Date: October 11, 2006

During a thoughtful and very difficult meeting the above group of AVP facilitators weighed heavily some situations that have developed during workshops you have led under the aegis of AVP/CA. The purpose of this letter is to share those concerns and our recommendations. We know this will be difficult for you as well, so in advance we wish to let you know of our great appreciation of the tremendous commitment of time, your indefatigable energy and precious resources you have given to our efforts here.

On September 7, during the CCPOA conference Pat Hardy and George Ramos were informed by a Sierra Conservation Center correctional officer that at a recent workshop you co-facilitated an incident occurred in which you were seated facing an inmate with your hands on his legs above his knees. Later, George was advised by Reggie that there is a video recording of this incident. Additionally, it was reported that you had told the inmates to pay attention to you on the rules and not to the prison staff. There were people present at the Steering Committee meeting who had had similar experiences with you regarding rules. These actions on your part were serious violations of CDCR policy and could place your continued access to CDCR prisons and all of the AVP program in the CDCR prisons in serious jeopardy.

At our meeting we discussed the seriousness of the touching incident and the question of whether you knew that you were violating CDCR rules. However, previously, in the presence of Vicki Rumbaugh and Bob Barns, George Ramos told you emphatically that CDCR's rules state "no touching" and that as an AVP facilitator you were to abide by the no touch rule, as are the rest of us. (Shaking hands is permitted touch.)

Several other incidents involving your failure to adhere to the CDCR rules under which we all operate were discussed at this meeting, as well as your strengths and deficits as a facilitator.

We recognized that you have a vast amount of experience facilitating AVP workshops, know the exercises well, and are able to adapt an agenda to fit the circumstances of a workshop. However, there was a strong feeling on the part of those who have facilitated with you, present and absent, that you do not support the participation of all members of the team and this has been both distressing and dis-empowering to team members.

This lack of support of team members was discussed on a conference call upon your return to California last June. We discussed AVP/CA's need to develop new facilitators and to train using the manual and to incorporate apprentices in your workshops. You indicated you understood this.

After serious consideration the Steering Committee decided on two actions –

1. You are suspended from participating with AVP/California in a CDCR prison for one year. We will notify both Sierra Conservation Center and CDCR in Sacramento of this action on our part. At the end of one year we or our designees will meet with you to discuss the possibility of your returning to participation with AVP/California in CDCR prisons.
2. You may participate in AVP/California community workshops as a facilitator but not as a lead facilitator at this time. We will work with you on the specific behaviors of a lead facilitator that you need to incorporate to return to lead facilitator status.

Giri, these are strong actions, which we take seriously. It is our understanding that you jeopardized the entire AVP program in CDCR prisons when you touched an inmate, other than to shake hands. If the Steering Committee does not address this problem we will further jeopardize the program and our credibility.

This letter is written with love and the belief that you are able to change in preparation for returning to California.

If you would like to discuss these matters, please contact Pat Hardy or Vicki Rumbaugh in order to schedule a phone call with you and some members of the Steering Committee.