

# SRV in action



## PROPAGANDA

THE  
**VISUAL**  
 LANGUAGE OF  
 PERSUASION  
 IN THE TWENTIETH  
 CENTURY

LACMA

SPECIAL MEMBER PRICED  
 BETWEEN TWENTY-FIFTY

OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC  
 OCTOBER TWELVE FIRST  
 FORTY-THOUSAND  
 AND TEN

THE IMPACT OF  
 ROLES

THEORY TO  
 ACTION:  
 BRIDGING THE GAP

IN USING SRV,  
 DO I NEED  
 A PRACTICE  
 FRAMEWORK?

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### IMAGERY IS NOT AN IMAGINARY MATTER

by Rhiannon Brodie

*Values in Action has invited Rhiannon Brodie to the role of Guest Editor for this edition. Rhiannon is Chair of Foundations Forum, the SRV group in Sydney, and is a sister, daughter, advocate, student, worker and avid traveller. Welcome Rhiannon.*

Of the many concepts in Social Role Valorisation (SRV), imagery is one that I'm highly conscious of; it sits at the forefront of my mind. From my experience of interacting with others who are learning about SRV for the first time, some common misconceptions arise about imagery and image enhancement for people who are devalued. Mostly that we, or perhaps SRV, is trying to 'fix' people.

*cont. on page 3*

And also our regular features:

- Resource Review
- From the Inbox
- What might SRV say about ...

# SRV in action

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## SRV in action

An initiative of **Values in Action Association Inc.** to assist people make the links between the theory of Social Role Valorisation and how it can be used in our work and our lives. We are assisted by our colleagues in other local groups as well as the Australian and New Zealand SRV Group.

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Values in Action is a small unfunded incorporated association in Australia (Brisbane, Queensland). It hosts SRV and SRV-related events as well as working to develop SRV application and the emergence of next generation leaders.

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Throughout this periodical the following style formats are used:  
*Italics* are used for both emphasis and for SRV concepts.

Direct speech is italicised and in single inverted commas.

Quotes and unusual expressions are in 'single, inverted commas'.

Chicago 15B referencing is used.

References available upon request.

VALUES IN ACTION ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND AND OUR GRATITUDE THAT WE SHARE THIS LAND TODAY, OUR SORROW FOR THE COSTS OF THAT SHARING, AND OUR HOPE THAT WE CAN MOVE TO A PLACE OF JUSTICE AND PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER.

**viaa**  
values in action association

# GUEST EDITORIAL

## IMAGERY IS NOT AN IMAGINARY MATTER

by Rhiannon Brodie

Cont. from cover

Statements from participants include 'well my friends don't think like that', 'I don't care what I look like', 'it's what's inside that counts'. These statements indicate that the potential impact of the person's vulnerability or impairment is not appreciated.

If we explore a little further and if we are truly honest with ourselves, it must become very clear that our society values self-image and positive imaging of our surroundings. The global beauty market alone is worth around \$265 billion annually; the Australian home improvement market last year reached a value of just over \$45 billion! Even in non-western cultures one's image is highly important; it tells people what class they belong to or the status they have in their culture, tribe, or social group.

Yes, I wish we lived in a world where others do not judge others or make assumptions based on how we look or where we live. However, we need to be conscious that a positive image is a value widely held in our society and that is deeply ingrained.

**For people who care about a loved one, a person they support or work alongside, they must be vigilant and highly conscious about a persons' image and how that can be enhanced, in order for the person to most likely get the good things in life.**

For example, my sister, who happens to have an intellectual disability, works in the city in a fun but corporate environment. It's highly important for her to be seen in the role of employee and co-worker. For this to happen, we helped her make decisions that would enhance her image and therefore acceptance. For example, she wears clothes that suit the environment, similar to her co-workers. She is a young looking, 20-something woman, so we are highly conscious about helping her to dress like other young women of similar age. We are intentional in our actions as we know that by her having the positive image of a young woman in her 20s, she is far more likely to be able to

connect with others. Others can see similarities and look beyond her disability and get to know her.

What we see shapes what we believe about people.

Media outlets determine many of our assumptions and stereotypes. Just think of how refugees and asylum seekers are commonly portrayed as dangerous; people who are homeless as dirty; people with disability as child-like; old people as frail, grumpy and senile. It is unfortunate and extremely concerning that we continue to see imagery of devalued people reinforcing such negative roles. How deliberate might this be? Who does it serve? Not the person.

**SRV and its frameworks have a lot to offer us in helping us to think about imagery and how we can enhance imagery for people who are devalued.**

A support worker told me the story of four men in their late 20s who live in a group home. They explained to me that the house had pictures of children's movies and childlike colours throughout, lots of signs everywhere, clipboards and other office materials. After learning about SRV she became conscious of the fact that the young men were being portrayed as child-like and as a result they were also behaving as children. She thought carefully about what would strengthen the image of a home environment. She, support staff, and the young men brainstormed ideas about what sorts of things might be happening at home for other young men in their 20s. Changes were made and expectations of the men were raised. It was reassuring to hear they had bought a BBQ and now they regularly hosted neighbourhood parties and football nights.

We know that efforts like I've mentioned will not guarantee the good things of life such as reciprocal relationships, respect, love, belonging, participation and contribution. However, we DO know from the unique combination of knowledge in Social Role Valorisation theory, that imagery efforts are highly LIKELY to make very real, positive differences.

# THE IMPACT OF ROLES

by Kim Roots and Shu-Hua Chan

Kim Roots has worked with people with disability, their families and supporters at Family Advocacy, Resourcing Families and as a consultant in NSW, Australia. She is committed to improving opportunities for people with disability to lead full and active lives as valued members of their community. Kim is a partner at Rogan Consulting in NSW.

As a person who speaks out about issues that impact on her life, Shu-Hua has worked in the advocacy sector for more than 14 years and is an active volunteer who contributes her knowledge to support the advocacy efforts of others. One of her many roles is that of Vice President of the Management Committee of the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability.

*I met Shu-Hua about two years ago when we worked on a project together.*

*I was aware of Shu-Hua's valued roles and respected status. Among other things, Shu-Hua is a much loved daughter, the Vice President of the management committee of a respected advocacy organisation, an employee at another peak advocacy organisation in NSW, a home-maker, a church-goer, a painter, a traveller, and a friend.*

*What I gradually found out was that roles have played a very positive part in Shu-Hua's life. But at some times expectations around those roles have been less positive, resulting in anxiety and lost opportunity for Shu-Hua.*

*We met on a Friday afternoon to discuss Shu-Hua's thoughts about her roles and what they have brought her.*

*Shu-Hua came from Hong Kong to Australia with her family in 1987.*

*She lived with her family in a suburb of Sydney and for many years led a life that was primarily attached to her family.*

*Shu-Hua believes that this came about because of her mother's low expectations, cultural beliefs and deep fears about her safety.*

*'Mum said I couldn't do things because I have an intellectual disability. She was worried about me being hurt. She said I didn't need to work because I had a pension.*

 *I was lonely sitting at home with mum and dad. I would not see friends. I had no fun.* 

*In 1997 Shu-Hua became a student at a local TAFE (Technical & Further Education). Her courses included ceramics, driving and office skills.*

*As a student, Shu-Hua started to engage with her*

*interests and had the opportunity to meet new people.*

*I developed skills and felt more confident.*

*A turning point in Shu-Hua's life came by chance. She went to a nearby shopping area and spoke with people from an advocacy organisation's display at an EXPO.*

*Out of that chance meeting she became a volunteer at the advocacy organisation and her skills and confidence grew further.*

*Over time, Shu-Hua became a valued member of the team. After about two years as a volunteer, Shu-Hua was offered paid employment.*

*Shu-Hua has now worked in her role at that advocacy organisation for fourteen years.*

*'I am an administration assistant. I have contact with people in my job. My work is about refugees, enquiries, information for the community.*

*I feel proud that I have a job in open employment.*

*I turn up on time and try hard to do a good job. I tell people the support I need to do my job.'*

*But fourteen years is a long time and Shu-Hua has not always felt completely happy about her role.*

*'When I don't get support, I feel sadness and I do not know what will happen next. I feel upset, less confident. I feel emptiness. This affects my whole life.'*

*A year after Shu-Hua became an employee, she also became a home-maker.*

*Shu-Hua rents an apartment not far from where she works. She now does all the things that go with this role.*

*But she has not always enjoyed the freedoms that are often associated with a young woman living in an*

# THE IMPACT OF ROLES

Continued from previous page

apartment in Sydney.

While Shu-Hua was developing connections, gathering information and nurturing positive ideas about what could be possible in her life via her roles, this was not happening for her parents.

Without support and information, Shu-Hua's mum continued to have low expectations and a focus on keeping her daughter safe.

As a consequence, there was a mismatch of expectations between mother and daughter with some unintended and unanticipated consequences.

'I was dependent. Mum did everything. Cooking, washing, laundry.

Mum would always call me and see what I was doing. She would come around. She told me not to go out with friends.

I would spend the whole weekend with my parents.'

About three years ago, Shu-Hua's life changed dramatically after the death of her mother.

Of course Shu-Hua was saddened by this event and remained close to her dad.

Around this time, Shu-Hua joined the management committee of a respected advocacy organisation in NSW – the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability. Shu-Hua is now the Vice Chair of that committee.

*'I learn things. I share information. I go to meetings. I feel proud.'*

Her engagement with NSW Council for Intellectual Disability led to Shu-Hua being invited to become a co-designer of resources that are easy to read for people with disability. In this role Shu-Hua was able to share her understandings and perspective.

'I enjoyed doing the work with CID. I felt satisfaction.'

Shu-Hua recently became a conference attendee as a result of her management committee role. Shu-Hua represented the management committee of NSW CID at a conference in Melbourne where she met with international experts in creating documents that are easy to read. Shu-Hua was able to share her insights due to her own work in this area.

Shu-Hua's role as an employee has changed in

recent times. It has become more complete and now involves doing fun things with colleagues outside of work time.

'We go for coffee and for lunch.'

Her relationship with colleagues was no doubt strengthened further after she embraced the role of cook. Shu-Hua took cooking classes and learned to cook a range of dishes she likes. She took samples of her work for colleagues to try and had a celebration at the end of her course.

 I can make desserts like banana cake and food from different cultures like Greek salad and sushi. 

Shu-Hua has also become a confident international traveller. She visits relatives in Hong Kong.

'The first time I went, my cousin did everything for me. She packed. Now I do things for myself. That is a big thing. I was very scared. It makes a difference to my whole life because I can do it myself. I think this has made the biggest difference in my life.'

Shu-Hua has recently added church-goer, singer and artist to her list of roles.

At the suggestion of her cousin, Shu-Hua joined a local church group where she takes part in social events and develops her interests.

This role has led to her social life becoming very busy.

'We go out to lunch, on excursions, for picnics, see friends.'

She sings with the group and is developing her artistic skills.

Shu-Hua says that all her roles have had a cumulative effect which makes new roles easier to embrace.

*'I feel safer now I have skills. I can stand up for myself. I am more confident to try new things. I know how to approach people. I am better at approaching them.'*

Sitting having coffee with Shu-Hua, I am happy to say she now occupies an ongoing role in my life.

**Friend.**

# WHAT MIGHT SRV SAY ABOUT ... VERSTEHEN?

*Perhaps one of the most powerful appeals made by Professor Wolfensberger, and reinforced as an underlying premise of Social Role Valorisation theory is to, as much as possible, stand in the vulnerable person's shoes.*

*This however is not an easy thing to do. It's almost as magical as sci-fi's shape-shifting!*

Verstehen is from the German language meaning 'to understand'. Sociologists and anthropologists have taken this word and used it in applied research where the intent is to understand the meaning of action or the experience of life from another's point of view. It is entering into the shoes of the other. Adopting this stance requires seeing the other person as a person, not simply an object of one's observations.

In the Facebook posting below, Nathalie A, who has not been exposed to SRV, shows how much we can learn when trying to stand in the shoes of another person. Nathalie deliberately sought to briefly stand in the shoes of a Muslim woman. She did so for 20 minutes one day in August 2015. It had a huge impact on Nathalie. But she was sufficiently aware to know that whatever the impact was on her, it was nothing compared to what others experience frequently and continually.

Nathalie:

*My professor asked us to go to class today dressed as our favourite celebrity. So today I attended my college class dressed in a Hijab which covered every inch of my body (I had a long sleeve tee-shirt over this). As soon as my parents saw how I was dressed, they were terrified for my safety. I dismissed their concerns and continued to class dressed this way.*

*I was representing Malala Yousafzai, an 18 year-old Muslim woman who was shot in the face by Taliban gunmen at the age of 15 for being a female student attending school. She is now the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner and a Women's Rights Activist, Children's Rights Activist, and an activist for education.*

*It breaks my heart to say this, but on my way to school today I experienced first-hand the fear & hatred against Islam. As I was driving, I had more than a few people roll their windows down to stick their middle fingers up at me. Near the Dunkin Donuts drive-thru a young white man threw his coffee at my car, and two F-250 trucks chased me down on Jog Rd and tried to crash into my tiny Toyota Camry.*

*In just a 20-minute drive to class, I felt that my life was threatened. But this only made my eyes open wider. The message I'd like you to take from this is: terrorism is not a fair representation of Islam. Someone wearing a Hijab is simply a symbol of the Islam religion, but not of terrorist attacks.*

*We can't judge a book by the cover like many did to me today ... maybe people thought that because I was wearing a Hijab, I was responsible for the ISIS attacks that happened just recently.*

*As I drove in tears and arrived to class in tears, my respect for TRUE Muslims and my desire for peace only grew stronger. We don't realize how often stereotyping happens and how often it puts people in danger.*

*People are telling me that I'm brave ... I'm not brave ... I just need everyone to realize what discrimination is doing to society. There are people who deal with this prejudicing/ stereotyping constantly and continue to be proud of who they are ... THEY are brave, NOT ME.*

#terrorismhasnoreligion

*You never really know a man until you understand things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it*  
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. 1960

FROM THE

INBOX

20016/05/22 hrogers@goodfutures.org.au

Subject: SRV-only for individuals?

Hi Jane

I have been told that SRV is suitable for use only with individuals.

I work in a service model that groups people. Can SRV be used in services like day services, group homes, nursing homes and special schools?

Thanks for any insights, Hanna

#### Extract from Jane's reply in the last edition:

One of the strengths of SRV is that it gives ideas about how to work towards the best we can do in a particular situation. So if your sense is that while working with individuals is ideal but you are working with groups, then SRV helps us ask ourselves many questions to move towards the ideal. What I would like to do in this email is focus on questions that are about maintaining or building the skills of individuals within the group, *and look at image issues in my next email to you.*

#### Now for Part 2 - groups and image

Hi again Hanna, I have been looking forward to continuing the discussion about things to think about when working with groups of people. A good start is to reflect on whether our efforts are to help people with a devalued status be seen in a positive light. Being perceived positively is a dynamic that most people take for granted. That is, dressing appropriately and being associated with places and people that are likely to lead to perceptions of capability and approachability, and positive social status. SRV refers to these efforts (or lack of efforts) as attending to 'image issues'.

The ideas are based on understanding that messages contained in one thing (like the clothes that people wear, or the activities they are doing) 'rubs off' on another when the two things are associated with each other. For example, parents generally want their teenage son/daughter to hang out with 'good' people so the police are less likely to bother them. Teenagers who wear hoodies and especially if they are with a group of other young people in hoodies are likely to be perceived less

favourably. Teenagers who are observed drinking and hanging about in the mall will be thought less of. You can see the theme here: a group of people are likely to be judged according to where they spend time, how they look and whatever they are doing.

*You might not be comfortable with this reality, but I encourage you to reflect on the accuracy of it, even if you don't necessarily like that it exists.*

So if you are working with a group, and if you have decided that your efforts should help people be positively regarded, then SRV helps us 'add value' to how they are perceived. It does this by trying to ensure that the physical environment where they spend time, their appearance and what they do are as typical and valued as possible. How we speak about the group of people and how we interact with them also sends messages to the observer about them.

You're probably familiar with the saying 'you're known by the company you keep', and that is relevant here too. So even though you might be working with a group, SRV helps us think about the image messages that are sent because of who is within the group. Try to have a mix of people in the group so that their perceived status is 'lifted up' rather than damaged. Age matters too: it is generally worthwhile having similar aged people in the group to avoid stereotyping them as children (unless they are children!)

Hope that is helpful Hanna, Bye for now

Jane

*Jane Sherwin is an Accredited Teacher of SRV (Senior Trainer) based in Brisbane, Australia*

*Aesop's fable tells us we are known by the company we keep. The entire message of this fable is that you ARE the company you keep, or at least that you become like it. We are products of our environment.*

## WHAT IS SRV? Here's a plain english interpretation below

(also check out the formal definition,  
bottom of final page)

## WHY WE USE SRV?

The values below encourage  
us to use SRV. What about you?  
Any others come to mind?

May 1999: Indianapolis, USA.

Professor Wolf Wolfensberger and Susan Thomas, when presenting the 4-day Advanced SRV event, spoke of the values and science intersection relevant to Social Role Valorisation. Here, their message is about what beliefs, if held, will encourage the use of SRV.

FIVE VALUES THAT ARE IN  
ACCORD WITH SRV (or which  
provide fertile ground for SRV)

The belief that there is something  
'wrong' with devaluing people

People ought to defend and protect  
those who are weak and devalued

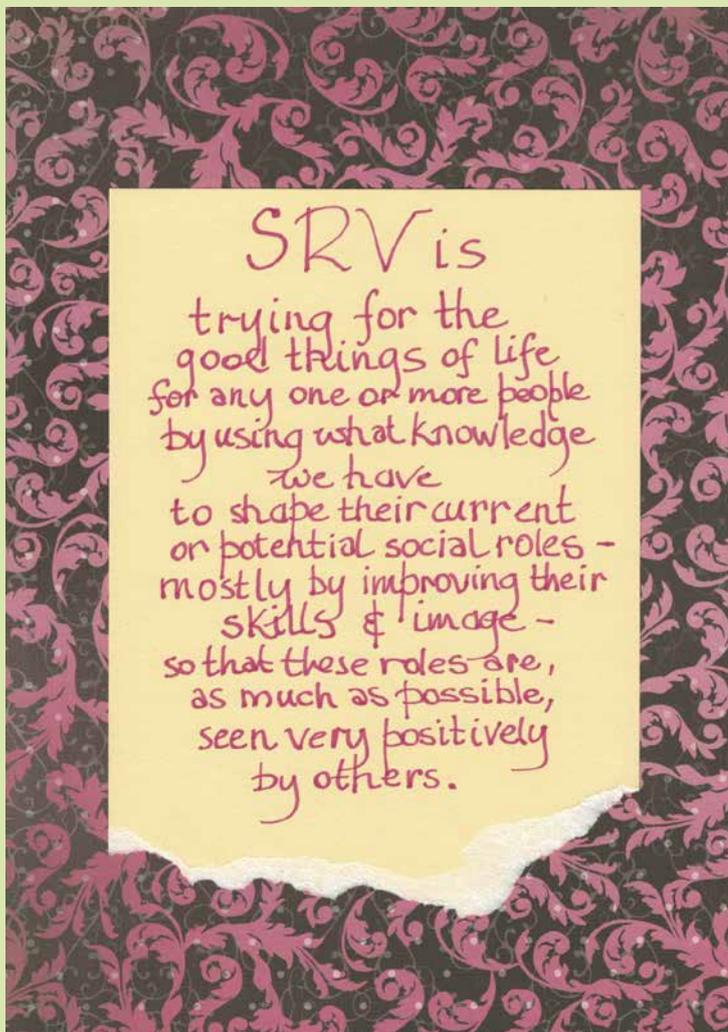
People ought to be kind, unselfish,  
generous and compassionate towards  
others

People should not be excluded  
from participating in the life of the  
community

Engaging with the problems of the  
world is valuable

A caution from the presenters though:

These values must not be interpreted to **be**  
SRV. However, an agreement with the values  
can become a motivation to **use** SRV.



*Know what your principles and values are;  
after all it is these that guide one's decisions and actions.  
Then comes the critical step -  
ensuring our espoused values match our lived actions - Anonymous*

by Jo Turner

Jo works in Toowoomba, Australia, as a Supports Facilitator in an innovative mental health program, Partners in Recovery. Jo is re-discovering SRV.

## A PERSONAL REFLECTION: MY ENCOUNTERS WITH SRV

I was first introduced to Social Role Valorisation in the mid-nineties. The theory was included in a workbook to be completed before beginning a casual job in a large residential for adults with intellectual disability. I was barely an adult myself. With limited knowledge and no role models to support my developing practice as a disability worker, I failed to grasp the most basic of SRV concepts. I did not last long in this work. Looking back, I can see the reason I left was because I didn't know how to improve the quality of life of the people I was paid to support. Every day I worked, I felt I was harming the people I was supposed to support.

My next encounter with SRV was at university, where it was introduced alongside some other theories in a course about social inclusion. Here I rejected SRV and favoured a different model. My previous experience with SRV was associated with the practices and values I had witnessed in the residential. Without understanding the theory, I nonetheless became quite critical of SRV's influence in disability settings. Had I read the articles thoroughly instead of skimming over them, I might have uncovered my unconscious bias. The Social Model, favoured by my lecturer, became a primary model in my professional practice framework because it gave me permission to fight. I was railing against the processes in our society that work to exclude some people and I liked the idea that people can resist and can effect change.

My next introduction to SRV occurred earlier this year when my manager introduced me to a colleague deeply immersed in SRV. I was intrigued by his ability to articulate the theory in ways more nuanced than I had previously encountered. I decided to attend a workshop, and have since completed three SRV workshops facilitated by a Queensland Senior Trainer in SRV. Through her skilful tuition, I have discovered

that SRV is a theory that can be applied in a very practical sense to improve the lives of people who have been devalued. I have started listening for the losses and the wounds in people's stories and looking for opportunities to assist people to develop valued roles. I hope for the people I support that by gaining or reclaiming these culturally valued roles, that others in our communities will see and value their incredible contributions.

Through my participation in the SRV workshops I have also recognised some major flaws in my practice. I do not expect people to conform to norms of thought and behaviour as a condition of their belonging, but that is not how most in our society operate. The 'acts of resistance' idealised in the Social Model provide a necessary challenge to dominant views about what a person with a disability can and cannot achieve. From personal experience I know that with these acts comes a cost for the individual.

**SRV has encouraged me to recognise that the burden of this cost can be unbearable for people of devalued status.**

Most importantly, I have learned that individuals, practitioners and services have much to gain through implementation of SRV. I regret the time I have lost rejecting SRV, but have learned from my folly ... in future I will look for teachers with mastery in the application of a theory before dismissing it!

*'The fool who knows his foolishness, is wise at least so far. But a fool who thinks himself wise, he is called a fool indeed' The Dhammapada*

*When you are looking in the mirror, you are looking at the problem.  
But, remember, you are also looking at the solution – Anonymous*

# THEORY TO ACTION: BRIDGING THE GAP

Mel Jackman and Kathryn Knaggs have brought their considerable experience together to explore some ways to bridge the gap between learning about SRV and actually putting it into action.

Mel is Chairperson for Training and Evaluation for Change (TEC), the Adelaide SRV group. She has worked in disability support, in teaching roles and now in advocacy. She is committed to both the teaching and practice of SRV and assists individuals, their families and support teams in applying SRV theory.

Kathryn is a member of the SRV study group in Adelaide, and takes any opportunity to study and learn with other SRV students. As a service manager for over 10 years, she has seen the application of SRV and striving for 'the good life' change the lives of people who live with disabilities.

With the excitement (and fears) surrounding the rollout of the NDIS, SRV can guide us in how we go about creating good lives for devalued people. However, people continue to face barriers as they try to apply SRV. This article looks at concepts including praxis, paideia and the hermeneutic circle and suggests that they will help to bridge gaps between SRV theory and application.

Michael Kendrick (2009) argues that 'social role valorisation theory continuously unearths the manifold expressions of social devaluation, and provides abundant room for collective and systemic remedies while remaining remarkably accessible to the ordinary person. There is grandness in the reach of the theory, even if its grasp remains to be seen over longer periods of time'. Kendrick says SRV remains useful because it:

- identifies the way that social devaluation works
- raises consciousness of devaluation
- gives us clues about how we can take a stand against devaluation
- allows valued people to ally themselves alongside devalued people
- shines a light on how the systems engage in devaluation itself
- gives strategies for change.

Whilst the theory itself does all of the above, it's not clear how commonly SRV is applied to real lives, nor whether it is 'remarkably accessible to the ordinary person'. There remain gaps between how SRV is taught and how (or if) it is applied.

Two possible reasons for this gap exist. One reason is that the application of SRV is subtle. Countless opportunities arise daily to apply it but that subtlety can prevent those opportunities from being seen.

Secondly, not all people who could apply SRV get exposure to SRV, and those who do get exposure often do not then go onto the very helpful practicum called PASSING.

What would certainly help people who attend the workshops to apply SRV is to have mentoring to consistently, persistently and vigorously apply what they have learnt.

The Ancient Greeks give clues to ways the gaps between teaching and application can be bridged. In Ancient Greece there was a commitment to a type of education called paideia. The Ancient Greeks believed that in order for people to be successful in the politics and running of society they must not merely receive 'education' (that is, formal teaching) but that society must also actively participate in applying what they know through active education, mentoring and practice. The Greeks extend this concept to the idea of praxis, which is the place where theory and practice meet (Figure A next page).

Complete learning embraces the importance of practice: being able to repeat what one has learnt so as to reapply the new knowledge to get the most out of it. This reapplication of knowledge can be envisaged as a spiral or a circle (known as the Hermeneutic Spiral)

# THEORY TO ACTION: BRIDGING THE GAP

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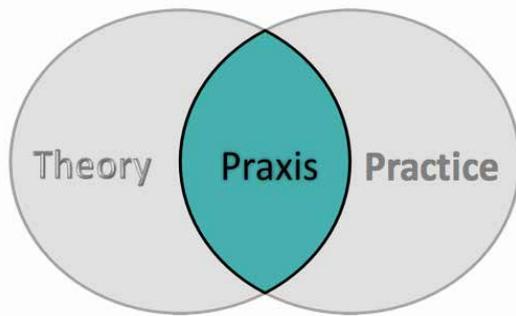


Figure A - Praxis

where you begin in one place of time and revisit it after further exploration and practice (Figure B below). Starting at the point of exposure to SRV theory, one must go back to one's workplace, home or community and see and experience the relevance of what was learnt. Once people link what they have learnt in the theory (for example the importance of image), they can then use strategies to create better imagery (for example, by assisting people to dress well). This experience reinforces what SRV teaches, allowing one to practice applying what has been learnt, thus coming full circle (or spiral) to where they started.

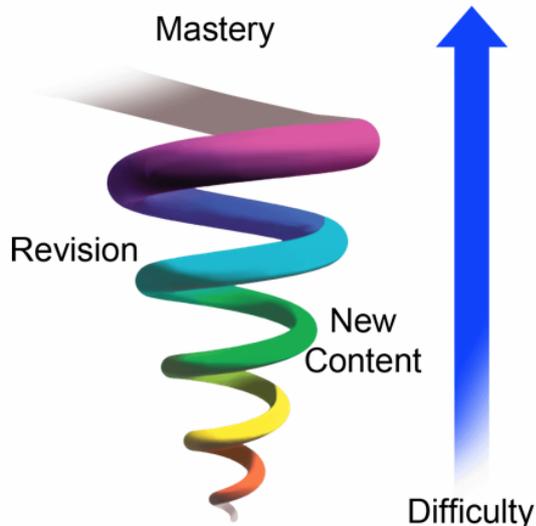


Figure B – Hermeneutic Spiral

The second (or third or fourth) time, however, will include knowledge and wisdom gained the first time around regarding the issues at hand (the devaluing of vulnerable people). This will then continue as one, bit by bit, builds knowledge and experience in applying strategies to overcome these barriers.

This is what is often missing in learning and then applying it. A tool could potentially address this barrier. A tool could assist and guide mentors and community leaders in day-to-day application that fosters active learning (paideia); bridges gaps between theory and practice (praxis); and offers guidance, mentoring and support that facilitates potent learning and re-learning over a period of time (Hermeneutic Circle). While practical tools could facilitate this, safeguards would need to be in place to prevent bad things being done through misunderstandings of SRV concepts.

One tool that we are currently refining and trialling uses the ten SRV themes to give a practical guide to leaders and mentors in applying SRV. It does this through explaining, simply, what the idea or theme means in practical terms (for example unconsciousness, mindsets, interpersonal communication). It is somewhat similar to the PASSING process which slices and dices SRV concepts into chunks. The benefit of this slicing and dicing is that it makes SRV theory more manageable for application purposes. As noted earlier, sometimes participants leave a theory event motivated and inspired to make changes but have no idea where to start.

What is important about SRV application is that there are often no quick fixes or revolutionary moments of big change. A commitment to small, slow change is needed for it to work effectively. Slicing and dicing the major concepts helps people to focus on one concept at a time and to work on strategies for application from

# THEORY TO ACTION: BRIDGING THE GAP

cont. from previous page

there. It also helps people see the small 'wins' which is motivating in the big scheme of things.

The (draft) application tool explains why a concept is important to understand; how it can be used in a daily manner; and poses questions with positive and negative examples to illustrate its relevance. This guides a user through the process. For example, consider the concept of interpersonal identification

(Figure C). The tool maintains that it is important to understand this concept because when one identifies with another personally then a) devaluation is less likely and b) freely given relationships and valued roles are more likely. Questions are used to guide understanding like 'what are the gifts and talents of the person?' Negative examples are offered (that is, a devalued person is excluded

Figure C – Example of application tool – Interpersonal Identification

Based on Wolfensberger, 1998

## What?

- Process by which a person gets to see herself/himself in another. Empathy with ones past present and future possibilities

## Relevance

- People who identify with others generally want good things for others, because they can see harm/possibilities. They can bend over backwards to make the good things happen.

## Useful because

- People can be encouraged to connect with a person with disabilities based on shared interests, roles and/or experiences. Therefore, support to a person is based on their 'real self', not their impairment.

## Questions

- Who is the person, their gifts, personality, background interests and talents?
- Does the supporter appreciate the person's past wounding experiences and is able to work to a future that matches who they are not what disability they have
- Check what perceptions are held. Is the individual seen as a person with potential?

## Positive, for example:

- Sue likes folk music and was supported to attend a folk music group on a regular basis. In addition to attending, support assisted Sue to find ways to express this interest so others would see her love of folk music not her impairment. This led to her peers being able to identify with her as a musician. This led to her being asked to be a ukulele player (*role*); she was offered an instrument and given lessons. Support was then able to step back. This could be planned in advance or opportunistic and can take months or years to happen.

## Negative, for example

- Ben likes music and is supported to go to a music group that is for people with disabilities. He is given random instruments and no lesson. Bens love of rock music is completely neglected because he is seen as a disabled person rather than a rock music lover. Consequence: Ben is isolated, skills are not developed and he continues to be viewed as a devalued person with limited capabilities, not connecting with his community and people having limited expectations of him.

*Leadership in practice includes a commitment 'to pursuing quality responses that are measured by the extent to which each person has valued roles and freely given relationships – Jane Sherwin*

# THEORY TO ACTION: BRIDGING THE GAP

cont. from previous page

## The links between roles and experiences of community life

(Jane Sherwin, 2011)

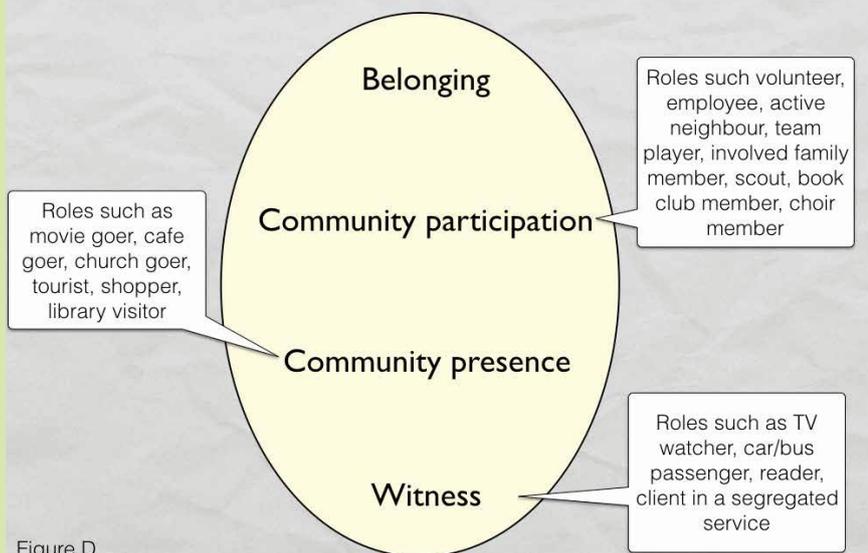


Figure D

with currently available schemas (that have informed the development of this application tool) such as Jane Sherwin's Links between Roles and Experiences of Community Life (Figure D); and the work of Janet Klees in her outline of strategies to help build relationships and roles (Figure E). It is hoped that a combination of such tools can bridge the gaps that exist between theory and application and make SRV closer to being 'remarkably accessible to the ordinary person' (Kendrick 2009). References available.

from all conversation between two parties) as well as positive examples (that is, a person is assisted to say hello and included in conversations by helping them share who they are and what they are interested in). This gives a brief overview of the what, why and how and points to action.

A tool such as this is not intended to be used in isolation from SRV theory and accredited events, but rather aims to supplement it. It is designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to facilitate application through active learning processes. It is also aimed at working collaboratively



Figure E - Janet Klees's Four Pillars

*Reflective practitioners are concerned about the contexts of their practice and the implications for action. They reflect on themselves, including their assumptions and their theories of practice, and take action grounded in self-awareness. Finally, reflective practitioners recognize and seek to act from a place of praxis, a balanced coming together of action and reflection – Elizabeth Anne Kinsella*

# Resource Review:

## Friendship: A guide to finding friends and building community

by Danielle Mason

*Danielle's work has included direct support of people with disability and coordination of a small service - she has found SRV theory useful for guiding her work and appreciates the rich conversations that often ensue in discussions about the theory. Here, Danielle provides a review, using SRV, of a helpful resource.*

Mills, K. 2015. "Friendship: a guide to finding friends and building community." *The Centre for Welfare Reform: Sheffield.* [www.centreforwelfarereform.org](http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org)

*In this article, Kay Mills offers practical suggestions for those wanting to assist people with disabilities to form lasting friendships and be embedded in their communities. Although the author does not explicitly state that her thinking and practice is informed by SRV, it is clear that there are many parallels with SRV principles. The consistency with SRV makes this publication a useful resource for people looking to apply the theory to their life or work.*

*Mills starts by underscoring the importance of understanding people's histories. What she terms 'looking backwards' could be seen as developing an understanding of the wounds that many people with disability, and other devalued groups, have experienced. We know that wounds shape a person's life and without knowledge of these life defining experiences it will be difficult to adequately support people to achieve their goals. As well, the importance of starting with the person and working with their strengths and interests is regularly emphasised.*

*Although not stated explicitly, it appears that Mills thinks about how anybody else of a similar age, gender and culture would have a need met, or pursue an interest (SRV's culturally valued analogue – CVA). There is an emphasis on people with disability having the same desires and basic human needs for connection and friendships as other people have. Chris's story is a helpful demonstration of the power of how 'thinking typical' led to the acquisition of valued roles. Chris had been communicating to his family that he was frustrated that he did not have the same freedom and respect that was afforded to his sister. When the family realised that Chris was keen to pursue a life like his sisters, he was supported to move into the roles of friend, boyfriend, employee and*

*eventually home owner.*

*Importantly, Mills seems to understand that simply being in, or present in community is not enough. It is participation in community life that will lead to people developing roles and relationships. Many of her stories involve the person actively participating in a valued activity, in a valued setting, with other valued people. Mills never states that this is her intention which is a shame. It is important to be very clear that the same outcomes (that is, roles and relationships) are unlikely to be achieved if supporters are not conscious of role communicators.*

*Another underlying theme is the development of competencies through the acquisition of valued roles. One story tells of a man who befriended a couple at a folk club; the man is described as gaining many new skills, including '... much better communication skills and had a wider range of topics to discuss due to being in different people's company'. No doubt his burgeoning conversational skills would lead to greater success with developing new friendships in the future.*

*One of the nice things about this resource is that the author includes stories of people who have been seen as 'too challenging' to be able to live an ordinary life in community. People who have reputations for being difficult are people who carry the wounds of rejection, segregation, congregation and being cast into negative roles like menace. The examples given demonstrate that it is possible for all people to have access to the good things of life.*

*I found the article helpful for thinking about how paid and unpaid supporters can assist people with a devalued status to develop friendships and relationships, to find new valued roles or strengthen existing valued roles. I would recommend the publication to others, particularly given the practical recommendations and use of story-telling to illustrate how the work can be done.*

*The publication is free to download from: [www.centreforwelfarereform.org](http://www.centreforwelfarereform.org)*

*Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. 'Pooh!' he whispered. 'Yes, Piglet?' 'Nothing,' said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw. 'I just wanted to be sure of you.'*  
— A.A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*

# To use SRV, do I need a practice framework?

by Greg Mackay, President of Values in Action,  
the publisher of SRV in action

Frameworks for practice, usually professional practice, are common. Such frameworks define expertise, assist in certifying practitioners, and allow professions to claim and define a professional community.

However, it is also beneficial for individuals to clarify their personal practice frameworks - doing so gives clarity and guidance in people's day to day work.

A framework for practice is useful for being accountable in our work (to ourselves and others), through articulating our lens for looking at the world, for how we understand, how we analyse information, and how we make the decisions we make.

In our efforts to define our practice framework we could use the Heart, Head, Hand, Feet analogy:

- ✱our core values and beliefs and principles - HEART
- ✱our theories, knowledge, cultural understanding, research - HEAD
- ✱the skills we use - HAND
- ✱the context in which we operate and which helps determine what we do and how and why we have to do what we do – FEET.

Most importantly, a framework can be as useful to everyone, for example, to a family member, or a member of a devalued class, as much as to a practitioner. It principally serves to guide people through complex territory, built around a shared understanding of the practice/profession/effort. Identifying or building one's own practice framework can be hugely rewarding.

For people who rely on SRV as their principal guide to their work in human services, there is a basic question to ask: am I best to create my practice framework relevant to my role (or profession) OR is it better to create my framework starting with the notion of being an SRV practitioner?

Either way, the effort to develop a practice framework will be illuminating.

The content of a person's practice framework might vary according to their context of practice (for example, working in formal disability services compared to working in aged care or in Citizen Advocacy or as a

family member). Nevertheless, it is helpful for all of us to articulate our practice frameworks. Doing so helps us identify our lens for looking at the world, and helps us to understand how we make sense of the world around us and our role in it.

This sense-making will occur through examination of our underlying belief system, that is, our paradigm relating to our world view. Paradigms are the basis of the way we work, whether or not we have worked out our professional or personal practice frameworks. Disciplines tend to be governed by paradigms; they guide the way we do things, or they may formally establish a set of practices. This can range from thought patterns to action.

According to Guba (1990), a paradigm is determined through merging answers to the following: 'What do I understand reality to be?' (ontology), 'How do I think I know something?' (epistemology), and 'How do I go about finding out?' (methodology). These characteristics create a holistic view of how we view knowledge: how we see ourselves in relation to this knowledge and the methodological strategies we use to uncover or to discover it. Importantly too, it brings to consciousness how we analyse situations and make decisions. It also means that we can work more effectively by becoming better equipped to notice what is missing or what could be added to our arsenal. A practice framework will also provide us with a language common to peers - this makes it easier to communicate about complex matters.

If you choose to pursue a framework it becomes a work in progress; you will refine it by adding to it, making connections with various elements of it, and even removing some elements. This is a sign of growth in our practice and indeed, in our understanding of the world.

**Next edition:**

**What might a practice framework contain? What are the likely areas?**

**What might it look like illustrated in a diagram, figure, or drawing?**

**How might you start to identify and layout your own practice framework?**

*We are inclined to think of reflection as something quiet and personal. My argument here is that reflection is action-oriented, social and political. Its 'product' is praxis (informed, committed action), the most eloquent and socially significant form of human action – Stephen Kemmis*

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## SRV DEFINITION

*The pursuit of the good things of life for a party (ie person, group, or class) by the application of empirical knowledge to the shaping of the current or potential social roles – primarily by means of enhancement of the parties' competencies & image – so that these roles are, as much as possible, positively valued in the eyes of the perceivers.*