CHATS WITH
PEOPLE WHO USE SRV

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AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL ROLE VALORISATION ASSOCIATION

AMIE STORER

NOVEMBER 2025

Amie Storer is an accredited Lead Co-Teacher of Towards a Better Life (TaBL), General Manager of Better Together, and is a Board Director of the Australian SRV Association.

GREG: Hi there Amie. Can you tell us how you become interested in SRV; was it through professional, personal, family interests, or what?

AMIE: I first became interested in SRV in 2010 when I joined the community sector working for Better Together in Caboolture, Queensland. My manager at the time, Donna Duncan, supported me to attend the two-day SRV workshop, Towards a Better Life (TaBL). At the workshop it felt as if the blinds had been lifted from my eyes. I finally began to understand what I had been noticing in my work. And the same awareness applied to my son's journey towards inclusion as a child and in school. I could now see the reasons why some people in our society experience more of the bad things than do others.

After attending the workshop my interest grew and grew. A couple of other things really cemented my value of what SRV could offer people with a devalued status in our society. One was having rich, ongoing conversations with mentors like Donna. The other was taking part in Passing, the SRV practicum workshop, a few years later.

My appreciation of SRV also grew at a personal level. My son was six when I discovered SRV. The framework gave me great motivation to explore the strategies to assist him and other people I supported to get the good things of life.

There is a common saying amongst those keen about SRV: 'once you see things through an SRV lens, you can't unsee it'.

GREG: And what is it that you really like about SRV Amie?

AMIE: What I like most is that SRV makes sense of things I had observed but couldn't quite name. It gives me the language and clarity to understand why people experience devaluation whilst also offering practical ideas about what can be done differently. I also value the probabilistic nature of the SRV, for example, the 'if this, then that' way of thinking. For example, if we want to see the good things of life for someone, then roles are highly likely to help. I like that SRV points out the way things are, not the way we wish or think they should be. It strips back the BS we often tell ourselves in order to make a situation seem not as bad as what it is.

CHATS WITH
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CONT.

GREG: Now let's turn to challengeas in using SRV? What's been the most challenging for you Amie?

AMIE: The biggest challenge for me is my frustration in getting everyone to apply it consistently. I am often reminded that it's not easy.

It is challenging to truly understand it and it requires a lot of effort and intention.

It's one thing to understand the concepts, but in day-to-day work it can be easy to let things slide. The challenge is to hold people accountable without overwhelming them. Translating SRV into simple, accessible language for colleagues, families, or community members takes practice.

I often need a remember that SRV might not provide everyone with the answers to issues they are hoping for and so it's not always going to be for everyone.

GREG: Does SRV impact your general lifestyle?

Yes, SRV has changed the way I see the world beyond my job. I notice things differently now, like how people are portrayed in media, or what roles are available in my local community for people who are vulnerable.

It's influenced the conversations I have with family and friends, and the way I encourage my son and others in my community to take up valued roles.

It can also create tension at times, because once you see devaluation, you can't unsee it, and that means I often feel called to act even when it's inconvenient.

GREG: Looking back at how you use SRV, what would you like to do differently or to improve or learn more about?

AMIE: One area that I want to improve is my understanding of the experiences of other groups of devalued people.

I have the goal of getting a greater understanding around the universality of how SRV principles apply to other devalued groups.

If I could do something differently it would be to have more conversations with others who have implementation experience so that I can continue to learn.

CHATS WITH
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CONT.

GREG: Now to the final question. What do you recommend a person new to SRV do to get started well, especially if they've just completed the theory?

AMIE: For someone new, I would suggest ...

> ***... undertaking the 2-day workshop, Towards a Better Life, and then starting small. Perhaps pick one or two concepts, like valued roles or imagery, and begin to notice them in everyday life. Don't feel you need to master the whole framework all at once.***

Find a mentor or a study group if you can, or join the Facebook pages or groups because SRV is much easier to understand in conversation with others. And importantly, practise using SRV as a lens when you're planning supports, when you're in meetings, or even when you're at the shops. The more you use it, the more natural it becomes.