CHATS WITH
PEOPLE WHO USE SRV

asrva
AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL ROLE VALORISATION ASSOCIATION

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Kane Morgan has extensive experience in a variety of roles supporting people with a disability. He is a PASSING Co-Leader and board member of the Australian SRV Association (ASRVA). Kane and his wife live in Narrawallee on the NSW south coast.

GREG: Hello Kane. Let's start with how you became interested in SRV?

KANE: My interest in SRV began after my wife attended the SRV conference in Canberra (September 2011). She enthusiastically suggested that I should look into SRV. I had been exposed to normalisation theory and the work of John O'Brien through tertiary studies and during my human service work. I had never come across SRV specifically but I was very keen to find out more.

I discovered there was to be a PASSING workshop in Rockhampton in March 2012 run by John Armstrong (SRV Senior Trainer). I promptly enrolled and so my SRV journey began. The PASSING workshop was a massive eye opener. I was hooked; this was exactly what I needed to understand my role as the manager of a small family-controlled disability support service on the NSW south coast.

I followed up the PASSING workshop with a 3-day SRV 7-themes event run by Jane Sherwin (SRV Senior Trainer). Usually people do the theory events before PASSING but that is another story!

Later that year I attended the Family Advocacy-run conference 'The Odyssey'. I was inspired by the many SRV based presentations and the great people who presented them and who were there to listen to them.

The next year I attended another Passing in Sydney run by Jane which built on the foundational knowledge I had established.

PASSING so impressed me as the ultimate SRV learning experience that I promised myself that I would attend a PASSING every year. I knew this would keep my knowledge and enthusiasm fresh and activated.

I was asked to be a PASSING Team Leader the following year. I have now been involved in 11 PASSINGS in various roles and I can say that I gained valuable insights in each and every one. I can't recommend PASSING enough!

GREG: You're very keen about SRV. What is that you really like about it?

KANE:

- ***What I really like about SRV is that it gets to the heart of how we all treat each other and why some people always seem to miss out on the good things that others get so easily.***
- SRV helps us understand that devaluation is the reason that some people continue to miss out. It then gives a starting point to those who care, to change things for the better.
- SRV is simple and complex at the same time and I love how all the pieces fit together.

SRV gives strategies and clear thinking in specific areas if we truly want people to experience the good things in life:

- We should support the escape from devalued roles and stereotypes by the pursuit of Image and Competency measures that promote and sustain valued social roles.
- Image and reputation is shaped by what you look like, where you spend your time, who you are around and how you spend your time. So wise choices are needed in regard to image.
- To occupy valued social roles, one must focus on and demonstrate competency and a positive image in key areas like self-help, communication, intellect, motivation, self-control, social skills, individuality, etc. These areas will open doors to positive social roles and help protect from negative stereotypes.

Some other things I like about SRV are that:

- It exposes devaluation as the cause of bad treatment of the vulnerable and then challenges us to stand up against it.
- It challenges human services to understand people's needs and be potent in addressing them.
- It helps us understand that we all have more in common than not, so kindness should come more naturally.
- It demonstrates that when people do valued activities with valued people in valued places, good things happen.
- It encourages positive role models as a natural way for people to learn and grow.
- It reminds us that the negative branding of devalued people must be counteracted with positive images to protect from further wounding.
- It teaches us that everyone can learn and and move into more valued roles; this relies on the correct mindsets being created in the people in the person's circle.
- It cautions us that people with heightened vulnerability require ongoing action to protect them from harm.
- It encourages us that high expectations and positive mindsets can dramatically change people's lives.
- It demonstrates that positive role cues can create positive self-fulfilling prophesies that can establish and maintain people in positive social roles. This then give them access to the good things of life just like everyone else!

GREG: What challenges you the most in using SRV?

KANE: One of the biggest challenges is that, in the first instance, you can be the one bringing bad news. SRV exposes the devaluation that is often unconsciously held by others and oneself. Therefore, SRV necessitates some difficult conversations with others and oneself.

> ***SRV also challenges our understanding of how human services actually behave – this can come as a shock to the status quo as people often hold allegiance to the human services they have become part of.***

The challenge in implementing SRV comes from firstly changing the negative mindsets and then changing the behaviour of the people who are around the devalued person.

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GREG: Kane, what did you not expect about SRV and its use that you have found to be true?

KANE: When I first learnt about SRV and began my quest to find out more, I thought that all I had to do was to tell people about it. I assumed they would be as passionate as I was about it and want to learn more and implement it too. That is not always the case!

People can fight against SRV as it threatens what they have always thought and done. People can also give up on it because it does require a continuous prolonged effort. Therefore it is much easier to ignore it and be part of the status quo.

It is true that one must understand and stand in opposition to devaluation before doing anything else.

Doing so places SRV efforts as an effort to right what is wrong with how we treat each other. SRV becomes a worthy cause that is well worth fighting for.

GREG: In what ways does SRV impact your general lifestyle, how you live your life?

KANE: SRV impacts my life in many general and ongoing ways. The themes of SRV are universal and widely applicable and relevant everywhere. The themes of SRV are nothing new as they are taken from widely recognised ideas in sociology, psychology and other social sciences and so they are relevant everywhere in day-to-day life. For example, in how you:

- socialise and make friends
- support your friends and family members
- raise your children and help them to be their best
- stand by your grandparents and parents as they age and become more vulnerable
- view and empathise with vulnerable individuals and groups in your local area or far away
- process what is going on in the world today.

In a nutshell, using SRV as a lens is very helpful in establishing what is really happening for people and standing up to discrimination in all its forms.

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

KANE: My biggest regret about SRV is that I didn't know about it earlier. I have spent the time since my first encounter with it making up for lost time!

GREG: Who has most influenced you in understanding SRV?

KANE: Of course working closely with senior trainers Jane Sherwin and John Armstrong during numerous PASSING workshops has deepened my understanding each and every time.

Also working with and supporting numerous PASSING team leaders has been invaluable. I am always amazed how new insights are gained each and every time one reviews familiar PASSING ratings and the text within the manual.

And importantly, there is so much to learn from devalued people themselves and their families and supporters. Seeing SRV implementation in real time with one person demonstrates how it really works and what dramatic positive impacts it can have in that person's life.

Seeing mindsets and expectations change and open opportunities for valued social roles and the escape from negative roles and stereotypes is powerful stuff. This is true not only for the person themselves but also for all those who are there to see it. That is why I think real SRV stories that link back to the theory are so powerful as teaching aids and motivational aids especially when people experience doubts.

GREG: What has sustained you?

KANE: SRV creates a pro social response in those who are exposed to it and get it. It creates voluntary actions intended to benefit others because understanding devaluation generates empathy and compassion that can then be focused using SRV themes.

So what sustains people who use SRV is knowing that it works in allowing people to enjoy the good things in life and avoid the bad things in life. SRV is a noble cause!

The other important thing that SRV implementers need to sustain them is likeminded people around them

These may be family, friends, work colleges or whomever. But what is important is that you have people with which to share the highs and lows and keep you going even when things don't go according to plan.

GREG: What do you recommend that someone new to SRV, eg, just completed a theory event, do to start off well in using SRV?

KANE: I would recommend a few things.

- Join ASRVA and become part of a network of like-minded people who want to learn more about SRV and how to implement it well
- Do a PASSING workshop
- Join a local SRV group
- Read as much as you can on the topic
- Attend online and face to face SRV learning opportunities
- Take every opportunity to stand up for vulnerable people and challenge the limiting mindset that all too often surround them.

GREG: Thanks very much Kane, much appreciated.