CHATS WITH
PEOPLE WHO USE SRV

asrva
AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL ROLE VALORISATION ASSOCIATION

BRIDGET WICKERT

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Bridget is an NDIS Support Coordinator across NSW and QLD and part-time teacher of Individual supports

GREG: Bridget, can you say a little about how you become interested in SRV?

BRIDGET: Thanks Greg. I became interested in SRV through work many years ago. At the time, I worked for a large organisation, supporting four young men in their early twenties every Saturday. We supported them as a group, but the only thing they had in common was that they all lived with autism. It quickly became apparent that they were not happy being together—this showed through their weekly 'reactions', which often included anger directed at each other and at us, the support workers.

So I approached my manager at the time, Matt Stone, and he asked me to suggest a better model for supporting the men. I suggested individual support, as I had come to realise that each person had their own interests and strengths. Matt then sent me to my first SRV 2-day event (Towards a Better Life), ...

... and from that moment on, my mind opened to what we were doing to people–and what we could instead be doing with and alongside each person.

GREG: What do you really like about SRV?

BRIDGET: I like thinking typically, culturally valued analogues and, in particular, valued roles—and how, with enough practice, SRV becomes embedded in both your life and work. It starts to just make sense, especially when supporting marginalised people. I like the way SRV makes you think, opens up your mind to the positive and the possibilities for people.

GREG: Are you challenged in using SRV Bridget?

BRIDGET: I don't feel challenged in my using it; I've had good teachers. But I am challenged by how some people don't believe it's possible—and I find that both frustrating and an injustice to the person's life. There is so much to be gained from living a life you choose,

... and what you choose is most likely to happen when using SRV principles

– this is much better than leading the life people often place you in.

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GREG: Bridget, how about whether SRV impacts your general lifestyle? Perhaps some of your other commitments; perhaps with family, friends, and in community engagements.

BRIDGET: It certainly does in all those areas. As I said earlier, it embeds itself into your psyche, and there is no other way of thinking, which, of course, influences family and friends, and that's a good thing.

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

BRIDGET: I began teaching Individual support thirteen years ago to 'spread the word', to influence the very people that would be or are working alongside people, and I would like to see SRV taught in school - I am always open to learning more about SRV and, in particular, being around people interested in SRV. I've been to PASSING, to study groups, even participated in an SRV writing group.

GREG: What do you recommend that someone new to SRV do to start off well in using SRV (they might have just completed theory)?

BRIDGET: As Jane Sherwin suggested at my first 2-day event all those years ago: put one person in your mind and start there. This shifted my perspective to focus on the individual—one person at a time—and moved me away from default groupings toward a vision of a good life and all that it entails.

Greg: Thanks very much for taking the time to do this Bridget.