

Pave the Way Newsletter

JUNE 2013

The importance of valued roles when planning

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Even though we live in a modern and progressive society, it is disappointing that many people with disabilities are still marginalised and devalued. Social Role Valorisation (SRV) theory speaks to this and suggests a way of thinking and a set of approaches that people can use to counter a devalued status. SRV research has revealed that one of the most powerful strategies to counter a devalued status is to assist people to achieve valued roles in a variety of contexts including their families, communities and work.

The type of valued roles we are talking about in this article can vary from typical family roles such as brother, sister, uncle or aunty to societal roles such as tenant, employee, neighbour or volunteer etc. It's any role that is generally recognised by society as a role that is worth pursuing and is considered of value.

Why are valued roles so important? There are a number of reasons including the following:

- Valued roles provide an opportunity for people to contribute to their local community and society in general. Whether we have a disability or not, we all enjoy contributing our gifts and talents. Valued roles are one mechanism through which people with disabilities are able to contribute and counteract negative stereotypes of what people with disabilities can achieve.
- It's a safeguarding strategy. People who have valued roles are generally out in their local communities or workplaces interacting with people through their roles. This provides an opportunity for relationships to be established and deepened.
- It provides an opportunity for people with disabilities to shine. If people with disabilities are only perceived as receivers, this may limit opportunities for them to be able to demonstrate what they are truly capable of. With suitable support and the appropriate expectations, valued roles provide an opportunity for people to use their gifts and strengths.

Do valued roles feature in our thinking when planning? Are there current activities that could be turned into valued roles? Are there opportunities around valued roles that need to be explored further? If this topic is of interest, Pave the Way has a document called **Participation and Contribution through Work, Study and Valued Roles**. This document has been recently updated and is available from our website at www.pavetheway.org.au or can be sent to you upon request. You can also find out more information about SRV at their website- <http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/index.htm>.

Hard copies of information, including stories on our website, can be obtained by contacting the office on (07) 3291 5800.

Staff news - welcome to Aimee McVeigh



It is exciting to join a team that is passionate about assisting families to plan for a positive future.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work that Jeremy Ward has undertaken at Pave the Way. I realise that I have huge shoes to fill.

As a lawyer I have always sought opportunities to use the law to assist people to make positive changes to their lives. I have worked and volunteered at a range of community legal centres, a non-government organisation in the Philippines and I have recently been engaged as a consultant by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. Until recently I was the Principal Solicitor of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service.

My interest in legal matters that involve families and people with disabilities has been developed throughout my career. In my work as a lawyer I have acted for numerous clients who have disabilities and for family members who have children with disabilities. In addition to this, I was briefly a board member of Queensland Advocacy Incorporated.

I have a strong interest in using human rights as a framework for advocacy. Last year I attended the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva as an assistant to the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. Earlier this year I attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York as part of a delegation of community sector women who are members of the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance.

My view is that using human rights as a framework for advocacy empowers people because, as rights holders, they are able to ask for what they are entitled to – rather than seeking charity or sympathy. Because the work of Pave the Way empowers people through the planning process it is apparent to me that the service is informed by a human rights framework.

Although I cannot provide legal advice, I look forward to providing legal information, resources and referrals to families who may have legal questions arising from planning or caring for their loved ones who have a disability. Later in the year I will begin conducting planning workshops that include information about the legal issues that arise when planning, developing and implementing a vision for the future.

Please contact me at the Pave the Way office. I am happy to respond to any legal queries that family members may have.

"As a lawyer, I have always sought opportunities to use the law to assist people to make positive changes to their lives"

For further information please contact Pave the Way on
(07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402 or by email to:
pavetheway@pavetheway.org.au

Support circle work and Pave the Way

Pave the Way continues to develop our support circle strategy, as circles are an approach that we believe provides a very real way to safeguard family members with disability both now and into the future. We have assisted a number of circles over the last 10 years and we have learnt a great deal during that time.

We know that support circles function well when:

- there is a clear and expressed purpose
- there is a good match of vision, purpose and people
- someone is responsible for facilitating the meetings

But we have also learnt that even for circle groups that continue to meet for many years and with good facilitation, sustaining a support circle can be challenging.

To assist families to meet some of these challenges Pave the Way will hold a number of events over the next 18 months to support families' efforts to develop a support circle or to strengthen their existing circle. These events will also be an opportunity for families to share their wisdom with one another.

The events will include

- a 1 day workshop for new families, *Introduction to Support Circles*
- a 1 day workshop, *Introduction To Support Circle Facilitation*
- a Family Conversation series, *Sustaining a Support Circle: Ideas and Strategies*
- a live-in workshop, *Sustaining a Support Circle: Ideas and Strategies*

We will continue to offer individual support to families and circle facilitators at their request.

While many of these events will initially take place in Brisbane, we will continue to explore how we can offer the same events to families in regional areas.

One of our hopes for the not too distant future is to develop an Internet forum for families, their networks and facilitators to communicate about their circles. This is a big task and one that will take considerable time, resources and discernment. We will seek input from families about this process at some point, but in the meantime please keep an eye out for these up-coming events.

If you would like a conversation generally about support circles please get in touch.

"We have learnt that even for a circle group that continues to meet for many years and with good facilitation, sustaining a support circle can be challenging"

A list of Pave the Way's workshops appears on the back of this newsletter, or on our website

Pave the Way – our mission

Pave the Way assists families throughout Queensland to clarify their vision for their family member with a disability and to plan to implement that vision. We encourage planning which is vision driven, 'whole of life', developmental, outside service planning and which safeguards family members in the long term. We believe it is other people who keep people safe and support the development of personal networks, including Support Circles.

Contact Us

Please contact us if you would like to be on our mailing list, or would like information or assistance developing a vision and plan or developing a support circle. If you are part of a group of families and would like us to come and talk about these issues, let us know.

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Website: www.pavetheway.org.au

Upcoming Events: June – Sept 2013

Pave the Way workshops

Planning for Now, Tomorrow and the Future

Nambour	25 June
Atherton/Cairns	19 & 21 June respectively
South Brisbane	23 July
North Brisbane	30 July

Building Lifelong Supports & Safeguards

Gold Coast	22 June
Ipswich	19 July
Toowoomba	20 July
Atherton	29 August
Mackay	11 September

Documenting Personal Information

McDowall	5 June
Townsville/Charters Towers	9 or 16 July
Stanthorpe	7 August
Nambour	7 September
Goondiwindi	11 September
Gold Coast	17 September

Introduction to Support Circles – NEW WORKSHOP

Mt Gravatt	13 July
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Pave the Way Regional Visits

Helen Baird – Atherton /Cairns area – 14 - 17 June

Peter Vacca & David Isitt – Rockhampton area 12 – 16 August

David Isitt – Longreach – 27 – 29 August

Julie van Oosten – Goondiwindi – September

Other Organisations' Events

Community Resource Unit (CRU) presentation:

"Finding my Place"

A 1-day forum of local presenters sharing stories about people with disabilities making their way in the community. Includes down-to-earth strategies to assist people with disability to find their place in their own communities.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Southbank
Saturday 15 June 2013.

Contact CRU on 3844 2211 by 7 June 2013

Queensland Advocacy Incorporated

In association with **Health Law Research Centre**
Presents a forum on *Supported Decision Making*
Friday 28 June 2013 – 8.30 – 5.00
Gardens Theatre Complex,
QUT Precincts, 2 George Street Brisbane
RSVP Friday 7 June 2013 to (07) 3844 4200

To book into a workshop, or to make a time to see one of the team members on their regional visits, please phone Pave the Way on (07) 3291 5800 or 1300 554 402. You can also view the workshop and events calendar online at www.pavetheway.org.au/home/workshop-calendar.php.