

## Social Role Valorization

*Exercise: 10 minutes*

In psychology, education and social work practice, social role valorization (SRV) is the name given to an analysis of human relationships and human services; the theory is based on the idea that society tends to identify groups of people as fundamentally 'different', and of less value than everyone else. SRV is a description of how societally differentiated people are devalued, assigned low-value roles, and treated poorly. This poor treatment is given to members of any group that is given low value by powerful forces in society.

We are going to explore what this means for marginalized populations, specifically for people with disabilities, and in turn, what this means for the work that all of us are here to learn today and take with us in our work as advocates and activists.

Let's begin by identifying what our society values:

*On white board, write:*

- Intelligence
- Wealth
- Health
- Beauty
- Independence

Discussion: do we agree this what our society values? We like to believe that our communities are above this, but we must agree on the whole, the majority of our society places a higher worth on these values

Ask the room: what are the opposites of these values?

*On white board, write what the room shares:*

- No education/stupid
- Poor
- Sick
- Ugly
- Needy

This is how marginalized societies are viewed, as the values they have to offer. The majority of society sees people with disabilities as lacking the first five important values, thus this last list is how society on the whole views people with disabilities.

Today we are here to recognize why these intrinsic devalues are placed on people with disabilities and what we can do to combat these prejudices.

## The Work to be Done

*Discussion: 5 minutes*

We need to recognize why these societal prejudices exist and understand the tools we have to combat this in order to educate and empower our participants to engage in this movement.

How do these societal prejudices play out; what do we recognize to be true?

- No education/stupid = can't get a job
- Poor = cycle of poverty
- Sick = can't take care of themselves, need supports
- Ugly = unkempt, unpolished
- Needy = group homes, can't live on their own

It is our responsibility as advocates and activists to show that these values should not be placed on people with disabilities; we know that people with disabilities are smart, excel in the workplace, make great friends, live independently, etc.

How can we do this?

*Discussion*

People with disabilities:

- Advocate for speaking opportunities
- Showcase self-advocacy skills as leader, board member, chapter officer, employee, etc.
- Present oneself in a professional, polished manner (clean dress, appropriate attire)
- Participate in independent activities
- Speak about your job, participate in employment social activities

People without disabilities:

- Be an ally, but let people with disabilities speak for themselves
- Help find opportunities for friends with IDD to showcase their skills
- Employ people with disabilities; let their work ethic speak for itself
- Use people first language
- Be intentional and mindful of your impact
- Don't just tell; *show* the equality of people with IDD
- Keep status to spare in mind

## From → To

*Exercise: 5 minutes*

How can we take actionable steps in our lives to showcase the equitable values of people with IDD?

Make a list on the board of "From" – where we are now and "To" – where we need to get to

### From

- Undervalued/underestimated
- Unemployment
- Misconceptions
- Prejudices
- Loneliness
- Protecting one person but devaluing an entire population

### To

- Build advocacy opportunities
- Let people with IDD speak for themselves
- Present yourself professionally and independently
- Keep these points in mind when developing speeches and/or speaking opportunities
- Jot down three people you can share this information with
- Write one activity you can do in your office or classroom/chapter to showcase abilities of people with IDD
- Write down one thing you can do to hold others accountable for this
- Be mindful of your intentions and impact