

NEWSLETTER March 2018

CHAIRPERSON

Hello everyone,



We are having some glorious weather and last weekend I took the opportunity to sit in the sun and reread a book I had read a few years ago. This was partly motivated by attending John Armstrong's insightful workshop last week and partly motivated by the opportunity to relax and enjoy the sun. I reread *The Story of a Beautiful Girl* by Rachel Simon. The message from John's workshop, and the main point of SRV is 'the more roles a person has, and the more valued those roles, the more likely the person will be given access to the good things of life.' This book, set in the 1960's is the story of two people who live at the State School for the Incurable and Feebleminded (i.e. an institution) where they are denied valuing relationships and routinely shut off from society. Lynnise is a young woman with an intellectual disability and Homan, a man who is Deaf. It is the story of their journey to attain the good things in life – being able to design their own life and have valuing relationships with people. While the book is fiction, the author is the sister of a woman with an intellectual disability and is aware of the opportunities and obstacles that present in daily life. Lynnise and Homan have a couple of strong people who stand up for them and walk beside them on their journey towards the good things in life. It reminded me once again of the important work Citizen Advocacy does, the important relationships that are developed, and the importance having people prepared to stand up for and beside those who most need it.

I hope you all have a relaxing break, enjoy friends and family and hopefully this gorgeous autumnal weather continues.

Debbie Espiner

**Mid-winter shared pot-luck meal
For advocates, protégés and CA board.**

Enjoy an evening of friendship.

Save the date

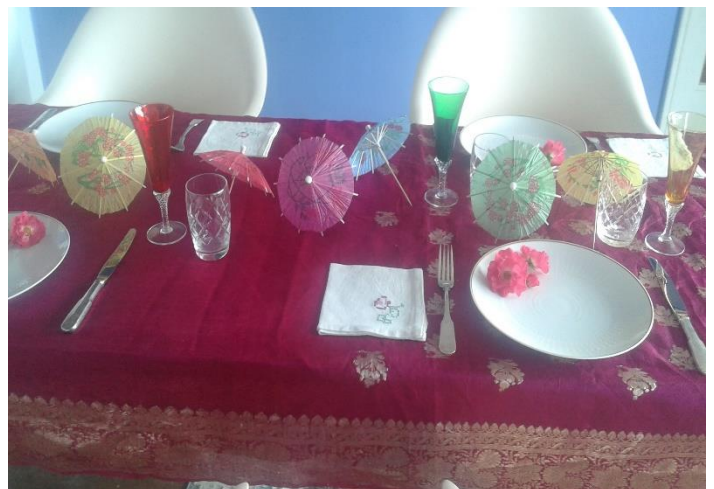
Sunday June 17th 6pm

Venue to be confirmed in April.

RSVP: Jules.

citizenadvocacyauckland@gmail.com

09 625 7994 027 625 7994





COORDINATOR

Greetings to advocates,

I hope you and your protégé are well and that your protégé is thriving. We had 25 participants at John Armstrong's talk about SRV. The interactive session was hugely informative and enjoyed by an audience of advocates, board members, family members and people from services. I recorded it so if you would like to get together and listen, please let me know. A few points from John are on page 3.

I will be in touch soon and also hope to see you with your protégé at the pot luck dinner on Sunday June 17th. It was a lovely event last year.

Warm regards

Jules

WELFARE GUARDIANSHIP – a potential formal role for advocates

Have you ever felt ignored or intimidated as an advocate? Advocates sometimes report that a service has made a decision for their protégé that the advocate feels is not in the best interests of their protégé, and without any input from the advocate. Some advocates have applied for the formal role of Welfare Guardian for their protégé. A welfare guardian must be involved in all decision-making processes for the person.

The Family Court appoints a welfare guardian under the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988, to make decisions about the personal care and welfare of a person who is unable to do this for themselves. The appointment is only made if the person with a disability does not have legal capacity to make their own decisions or has capacity to make decisions but is wholly unable to communicate the decisions.

"The first and paramount consideration of a welfare guardian shall be the promotion and protection of the welfare and best interests of the person for whom the welfare guardian is acting, while seeking at all times to encourage that person to develop and exercise such capacity as the person has to understand the nature and foresee the consequences of decisions relating to the personal care and welfare of that persons and to communicate such decisions." PPPR Act 1988

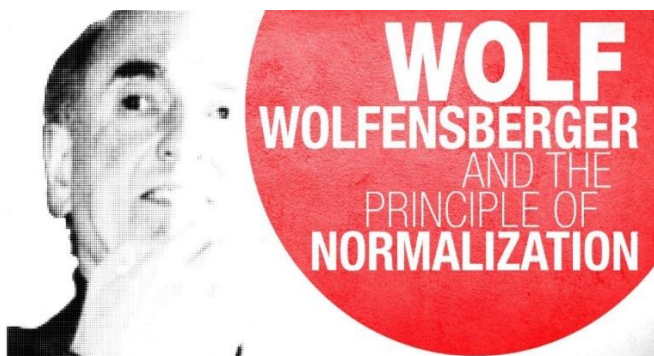
Becoming a welfare guardian is free when you complete the forms yourself.

During the year I will be inviting advocates to come together to share their experiences of successful advocacy for their protégés, for the benefit of the group. It might also be useful to hear about advocacy that did not go so well and to consider what, if anything, might have worked better.

If any advocates are at all interested in hearing more about welfare guardianship, I will invite a lawyer, possibly an advocate associate to speak to us on another occasion.

FILM

Open invitation to advocates to view this amazing documentary about normalisation and SRV. I can show it in the office or come to you and bring refreshments. Contact me!



JOHN ARMSTRONG – AN AFTERNOON ABOUT SOCIAL ROLE VALORISATION

As Debbie has already mentioned, the key point of SRV is that the more roles a person has, and the more valued these roles, the more likely it is that the person will be given access to “the good things of life.” John pointed out that it is hard work for the devalued person, and for those around that person to attain the good things of life for them, but that it is achievable.

However, there are two values questions to be answered that lie outside SRV:

1. Do I really want the person/people I know to have the good things of life – to thrive and flourish?
2. Am I ready to do what it takes (to bend over backwards) to make that happen? (this may involve sacrifice on my part – of time/effort/reputation).

SRV tells us what is likely to happen under certain conditions: if this, then that. So, if a person lives in a group home, mingles only with other disabled people, and attends a day programme, then, it is most likely that the person will not attain valued roles and will not gain access to the good things of life. In the same way, if a person lives in a group home, and has some friends who are valued in the community, and who goes to work (in an ordinary workplace), then, it is most likely that the person will have some valued roles and is more likely to gain access to some of the good things in life

The types of things that help people have the good things of life are – education (to build competence), high expectations, friendships and relationships, abilities, work, money. Each good thing opens a big door to more good things in an exponential way – this is the accumulated advantage (of valued people). The most gets given to the people who already have it. The types of things that lead to the accumulated disadvantage (of devalued people) are – being isolated, segregated, incompetence, abuse, rejection, increased vulnerability, idleness, poverty. As soon as bad things start to happen, doors are opened to more bad things happening. This is exponential as well.

Rights do not bring people the good things of life; as a legal construct they only bring basic things whereas the good things of life transcend rights and can't be mandated. John recommended that advocates put away the guns!

John reminded us that activities are not roles. Many people in services have an activity schedule and do not become anything i.e. activities do not necessarily lead to roles. John used the example of someone going ten pin bowling for ten years but not being a bowler. A role is much stronger than the impairment in shaping the mind of the observer. Although big roles are better, even a small role can change someone's life. This was heartening to hear as it gives us the opportunity to start with a very small role as a goal.

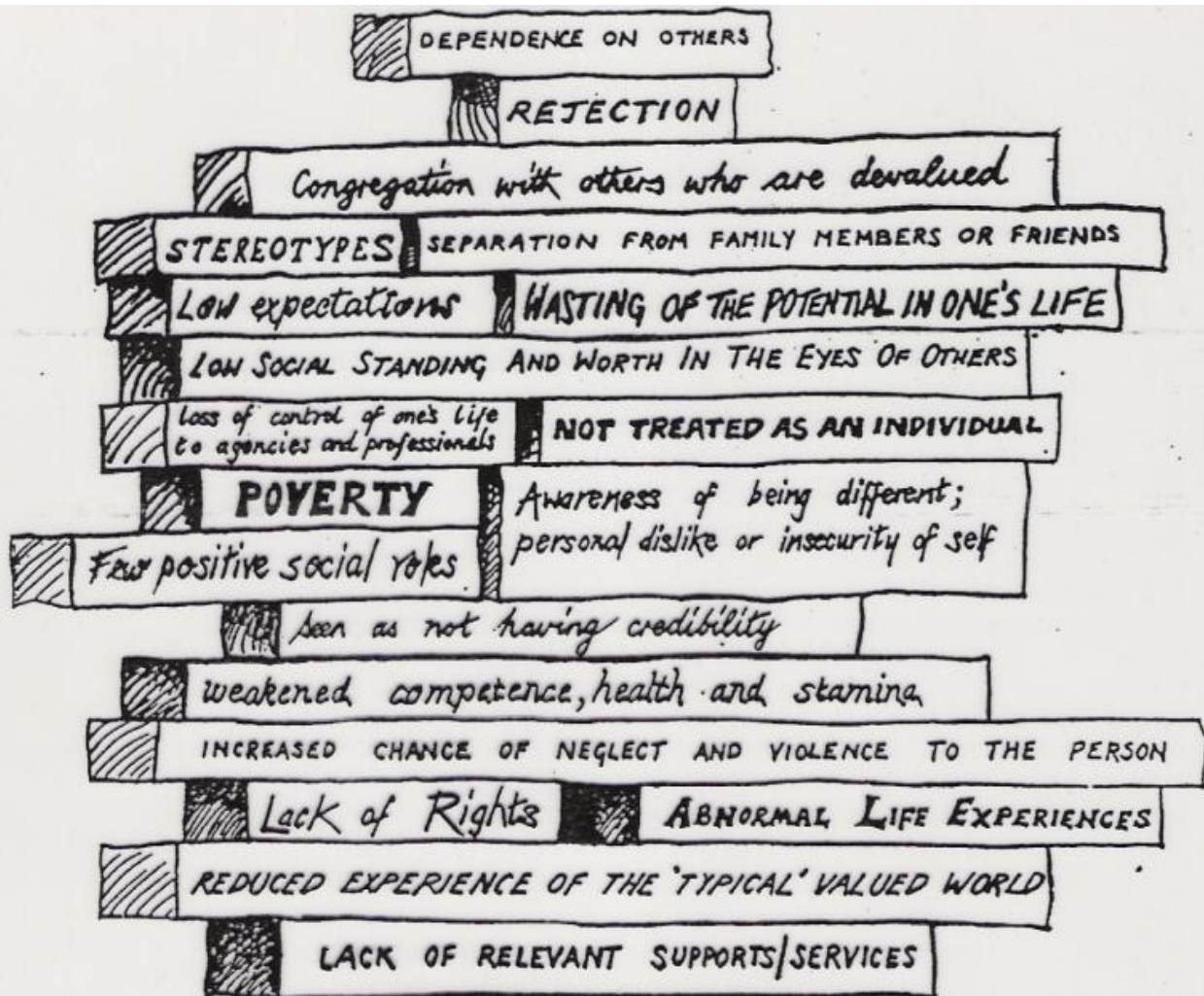


John Armstrong's SRV afternoon in Auckland



Save the Date

CA Christmas party for advocates, protégés and CA board members:
Sunday November 25th



USED WITH PERMISSION FROM
COMMUNITY RESOURCE UNIT INC.

16 00. 1. ...

The many wounds of vulnerable people.....the accumulated disadvantage...
From John Armstrong's workshop.