

Some of the Universal “Good Things of Life” Which the Implementation of Social Role Valorization Can be Expected to Make More Accessible to Devalued People

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Quelques-unes des “bonnes choses de la vie” qui deviennent accessibles à des personnes dévalorisées avec la mise en oeuvre de la VRS.

À l'occasion, les buts et méthodes de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux sont remis en question par la suggestion qu'il s'agit de l'imposition des valeurs et normes de la classe moyenne. Bien que la VRS propose de faire participer les personnes dévalorisées à la vie des classes valorisées par l'attribution et l'établissement de rôles sociaux valorisés, il reste que les “bonnes choses de la vie” dont parle la VRS sont universelles et transcendent l'histoire et les cultures. Les “bonnes choses” peuvent inclure la famille, un foyer, l'appartenance à un groupe social, l'amitié, un système de croyance, le travail, et la sécurité. En tout les auteurs décrivent dix-sept “bonnes choses de la vie” qui sont liées à l'attribution

Not uncommonly, people who teach—or attempt to implement—Social Role Valorization (SRV) are confronted by the assertion that they (and SRV) are trying to impose on devalued people what they—the teachers and implementers—value and want, but without regard for what devalued people themselves want and aspire to; and in fact, that devalued people would pursue different things than what valued society aspires to and values. Sometimes, this challenge is phrased in terms that SRV promotes “white middle class values,” or that SRV proponents are trying to “impose alien values.” (Both these things also used to be said about normalization.)

Promoters of SRV who are thus challenged often feel uneasy. Some of them desire to various degrees to be “politically correct” (which these days means, among other things, exalting “choice,” “self-determination,” “diversity” and “multi-culturalism”), and therefore they may concede that perhaps SRV is indeed “imposing” values that are “white middle class.” At the very least, SRV promoters and would-be implementers can become confused and consternated, and may not reply well to the challenge.

However, a recent article (Wolfensberger, 1995) on the empirical nature of SRV and its boundaries

should help decisively to address this issue. This article makes clear that SRV can only describe—on the basis of social science knowledge—what is likely to happen to a societally or personally devalued person, group, or class if particular courses of action are taken. What course of action is then actually adopted is determined by one's values, which are outside and above SRV. In other words, SRV describes, values prescribe. Thus, a person's own value system would inform questions about whom one should value (if anyone), and under what circumstances; whether someone “deserves” the good things of life; whether one should do good or bad things to a person; etc.

However, there is also a great deal that one can say on the contested issue of whether devalued people would choose the same “good things in life” as people in more privileged circumstances.

While there are certainly differences in what is valued by people in different cultures and subcultures, and at different points in history, there is also a tremendous amount of agreement or convergence among people as to what they desire. This convergence on what people consider the good things of life is also brought out by some on the work (e.g., Maslow, 1959) on universal needs that people share, such as for security, belongingness, and

