

Achieving the Good Life for Protégés

John Armstrong, Social Role Valorisation (SRV) senior trainer, presented an entertaining and an enlightening workshop at the Citizen Advocacy Office on 17th June 2013. The purpose of training was to help us understand how to achieve the Good Life for Protégés

John began the workshop by giving us a history of the development of SRV which is a set of approaches designed to enable devalued people in society to experience the Good Life. The theory was largely developed by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, founder of the Citizen Advocacy movement.

John asked us to think about what the good life means for us –family, friends, health, job, money and travel etc.

He then asked us to consider our response to adversity such as illness, unemployment, loss of loved ones, etc.

People generally respond to adversity in one of four ways, they succumb, survive with improvement, develop resilience or not only overcome the adversity but thrive because of it.

Our social roles define how we see ourselves and how others see us. Our roles in society give us our status and identity and define where and with whom we belong; our roles give us autonomy and freedom, opportunity for personal growth and to contribute. We experience the Good Life when we are accepted by others.

Advocates play a very important role in improving life experiences of protégés, not only through their role as friend and advocate but also by helping the protégé develop other roles and links in society.

This forms the strongest safeguards to protect a person with heightened vulnerability by seeking to prevent further burdens developing and actively compensating in areas which can be strengthened. Advocates can tip the balance of the scales in favour of Protégés to improve their chances of experiencing the Good Life.

Bridie Smith