

# **An international association to promote and strengthen SRV (ISRVA)**

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## **Background**

In 2013, our founding group was requested by the North American SRV Council to explore the establishment of an entity that would provide institutional support in order to assure the survival and indeed the flowering of SRV in North America and elsewhere in the world. We first met for a planning day in January of 2013 to begin an exploration and discussion about what needs exist that a structure such as an international membership association might be able to meet, and the development work has continued over the ensuing time.

With Wolf Wolfensberger’s death in 2011, the SRV movement is at a critical moment and at risk. There are a number of training initiatives ongoing in North America, Australia and New Zealand, the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe, but these are not fully coordinated or part of a broader strategy. There are few organized implementation initiatives. PASSING continues to be used as a powerful training tool in Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia with regularity, although it is offered in only a few places and sponsored by a few organizations. It is rarely used for professional evaluations. At the same time, there are a number of on-going initiatives and activities that show that SRV is quite relevant to the current human service scene around the world, continues to generate interest, and often has a deep impact on those exposed to the ideas.

There continue to be significant amounts of SRV and SRV-related training events around the world that are well attended and have an impact on individual trainees; dissemination is not widespread or strategic but it still moves people given the opportunity to participate and does

lead to some positive change where it occurs. Also, our SRV resource materials are increasingly available through the Internet with a number of websites highlighting SRV and SRV related materials. The SRV Journal produced by SRVIP in Massachusetts has a small readership that is prompting an increasing number of people to write about SRV, the theory and its application; one could say that there have never been so many writers of SRV, unfortunately very little of this is getting into more mainstream publications, and very little of it is research. There are a number of young persons who are taking up SRV and showing an interest in learning more about it and some of whom have make a commitment to developing leadership roles. There are small pockets of SRV study and use in various countries, but little organized support to these groups or easy tie-ins to other SRV groups which are stronger and can offer networks and resources.

Social Role Valorization (SRV) and PASSING as methodologies and as a movement have been considerably hampered by a lack of institutional structure to support dissemination and application. A number of times, Wolf Wolfensberger suggested that the heyday of normalization coincided with the years of support from the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (CAMR), the National Institute for Mental Retardation (NIMR-Canada), and the considerable support provided by a number of local ARC's in the USA. Such support led to a number of initiatives, some of which were national, that inspired much deinstitutionalization activity, led to considerable efforts of implementation and a number of large evaluation projects using PASS 3. Normalization was very much a worldwide movement in a way that SRV has not been able to replicate.

There is considerable SRV activity around the world. However, the activity is varied, disparate and very localized. Today, there are no national, provincial or statewide SRV-based initiatives anywhere in the world, despite the fact that SRV has been referenced in a number of policy positions in various jurisdictions.

### **Proposed Action**

We contend that we must slowly but surely develop an institutional support structure that will have the development and dissemination of SRV as its central focus. This will serve as a place where people can go to learn more about SRV, but more importantly a place that teachers, trainers, consultants, evaluators, coaches, implementers, researchers, and writers will want to connect to and that will increase the likelihood of implementation efforts around the world. Resources, coordination, and strategy are needed to organize and bring together global SRV activity, focus leadership on joint activity and collaboration, and create a “public face” for SRV.

We believe that even a small group of people with minimal resources can accomplish much-needed coordination and “public face” functions as follows:

1. **Develop a Public Face for SRV**\_Develop a useful and engaging website which ties to existing websites and links others. Engage social media in this effort. This will involve upcoming events, blogs, video footage, and global updates of SRV related events and gatherings.
2. **Be a portal** so that SRV-related books/publications can be ordered. All relevant SRV related books/publications can be listed, ordered and directly linked to make purchasing easy. Included in this will be a function to support the SRV Journal via a direct order link, as well as free downloads of resources and articles as allowable.
3. **Promote and coordinate functions** such as the International SRV Conference and other major teaching and learning events
4. **Provide an updated master calendar** for global SRV training events
5. **Identify and publicize people and groups** that are promoting, teaching, and using SRV

Other potential tasks and purposes that should or could be done in the future include:

- Develop an SRV intranet for the use of SRV trainers and groups which will serve as a “master mailing list” with the ability to breakout names by country/event attended/etc. At this point, we have many mailing lists and need a master one for existing people and the ability to easily add new people. This will also give us easy access to real data about who is receiving SRV education, how, and where.
- Support SRV leadership development by allowing those working on the credentialing process to track their own activities and accomplishments
- Offer an evaluation arm and coordinate SRV evaluation, referral, etc.
- Provide implementation support
- Keep an updated SRV-related research section available on the web

It is our intention that the establishment of the International Association will at least contribute towards the following aims, although it will certainly not be able to accomplish them in whole.

1. **Create a vibrant, healthy SRV culture**
2. **Promote and foster an effective leadership development process**
3. **Strengthen the Body of SRV work through Research, Writing and Academic Presence**
4. **Support Entities that Correspond with our Mission**
5. **Support SRV use and implementation**

### Purpose Statement of the IASRV:

“To promote SRV development, education, assessment, and leadership to assist people and organizations to implement SRV concepts so that vulnerable people may have access to the good things of life.”

### **Collaboration with Existing Groups and Organizations**

There are a number of organizations already in existence in North America that provide institutional support for SRV activities. These are modest and localized and some are beholden to relatively large corporate human service agencies. SRVIP in Worcester Massachusetts organizes a number of SRV and PASSING track A and B training events and has over the years done a fair amount of leadership development. Its singular contribution to SRV in the world is the SRV Journal. SRVIP is dependent upon the financial support of Shriver Clinical Services and Family lives. The Keystone Institute delivers many SRV training events and has started to do a fair amount of leadership development. The Southern Ontario Training Group (SOTG) is a consortium of trainers hosted by the Brockville and District Association for Community Integration (BDACI) representing a variety of organizations that yearly organizes a number of track A and B training events. And finally the Valor Institute, mostly a Francophone organization, organizes track B events, and has recently established the Valor press to publish a number of Wolf Wolfensberger's unpublished works and republish other works no longer in print. It was agreed that this new entity, ISRVA, would not duplicate already established initiatives and activities, but could indeed coordinate and broaden them, not to mention also profit in them. ANZSG leads SRV activity via a number of organizations in Australia and New Zealand, and a small training Group in the UK (VERA) takes the lead in SRV and PASSING training there.

It was also agreed that these entities could take the lead to create ISRVA and indeed at least initially their coordinated activities could stand for ISRVA. However, substantial resources would be required to enhance current activities and build on them. It has been envisioned that ISRVA should eventually be established in a more formal fashion, and have some funding if it is to continue over the long run.

Funding sources could eventually include membership fees, product sales (articles, books, manuals, etc.), brokerage and sales of services such as professional evaluations, implementation support and coaching. This entity could develop grant proposals and respond to RFPs.

First efforts will focus solely on:

- (1) getting the website up and running
- (2) maintaining an up-to-date global calendar of SRV events
- (3) getting the bookstore portal operational

Current members of the planning committee have agreed to contribute in-kind efforts (to keep contact with all SRV groups for updates and events, to coordinate SRV blogging, as well as funds to start the website, to complete the mechanics of the bookstore processes, etc.) These limited measures can be maintained with some significant voluntary efforts, while more permanent strategies are explored. The website will offer visible opportunities for people and organizations to contribute financially to the organization to support hard costs of the website and communications. We are planning for a go-live date for the website to correspond with the 2015 International SRV Conference.

### **Early activities and accomplishments:**

Many of the proposed actions above have begun to be implemented:

- 1- Membership: In late 2016, ISRVA commenced its first formal membership drive. As of October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 ISRVA has 31 organizational members, and 112 individual members.
- 2- ISRVA revamped and launched the [socialrolevalorization.com](http://socialrolevalorization.com) website that includes a calendar of current SRV training events going on around the world. It also lists training groups and recognized SRV-PASSING trainers, and includes easy access to SRV related documentation.
- 3- ISRVA organized a first ISRVA members event to be convened in Dublin Ireland, on October 12 and 13 2017, with over 30 participants from 7 countries who will share current SRV activities, and help define ISRVA activities going forward.
- 4- ISRVA launched an all new [wolfwolfensberger.com](http://wolfwolfensberger.com) legacy website in honor of doctor Wolf Wolfensberger (1934-2011)

Updated October 1<sup>st</sup> 2017