


The Power of Roles for Education Advocates



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Definition of a Social Role

A social role may be defined as a socially expected pattern of behaviors, responsibilities, expectations, and privileges.

- Talcott Parsons

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List valued social roles:

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Our Society Values:	Therefore, we devalue, or don't value :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wealth, material good</li><li>• Health, beauty of body</li><li>• Youth, newness</li><li>• Competence, independence, intelligence</li><li>• Productivity, achievement</li><li>• Adult individualism, unrestrained choice</li><li>• Pleasure and happiness as a way of life</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor, lack of goods</li><li>• Sickness, not beautiful bodies</li><li>• Old, things that are old</li><li>• Being dependent, incompetent</li><li>• Being unproductive, wasteful</li><li>• Lack of choice</li><li>• Life has pain, hardships, trial</li></ul>

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### A Definition of Devaluation

The attribution of low, or even no, value to a person or group...

by another person or group...

on the basis of some characteristic perceived as a negative

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### How Devaluation Happens:

**A Person Becomes Perceived or Defined as Devalued:**

- By being different from others...
- In one or more dimensions...
- Which are perceived as significant by a majority or ruling segment of society...
- Who value this difference negatively

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**Common wounding life experiences for students with disabilities:**

- Becoming known as one's impairment
- Profound Rejection
- Being Segregated and Congregated
- Lifewasting

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**Labels in schools where students known as impairment or negatively imaged:**

EBD	Sped
MIOD	504
Behaviors	IEPs
LD	

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**REJECTION:**

- By School Staff
- By Families
- By the Community

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### Wounding Life Experience of Segregation:

The US Supreme Court has said segregation of people with disabilities violates their civil rights and causes harm by:

1. "Perpetuating **unwarranted assumptions** that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life"
2. "**Severely diminishing the everyday life activities of individuals,**" including participating in school, working, being part of a family and developing social contacts

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### Wounding Life Experience of Segregation:

Research on effects of segregation and isolation:

- Makes people feel angry, resentful, frustrated, hurt, different, inferior, worthless, unwanted, unaccepted, and ashamed
- Excluded students are relegated to a devalued social status and taught dependence, compliance, and subordination

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### Common Negative Roles Students in Special Education Get Cast Into:

- Non-human/"Other," alien
- Menace, evil, or object of dread
- Waste material
- Trivial or object of ridicule/Object of pity
- Client
- Sick/diseased

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"Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach... What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts, adding, adding to, adding more, continuing."  
– Clarissa Pinkola Estes

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### Social Role Valorization (SRV)

The enablement, establishment, enhancement, maintenance, and/or defense of valued social roles for people – particularly those at value-risk by using, as much as possible, culturally valued means.

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graph BT; IE[Image Enhancement] --> VSR[Valued Social Roles]; CE[Competency Enhancement] --> VSR; VSR --> TGL[The Good Life]
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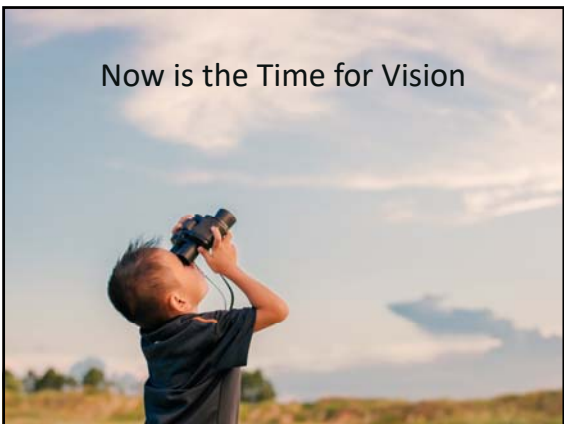
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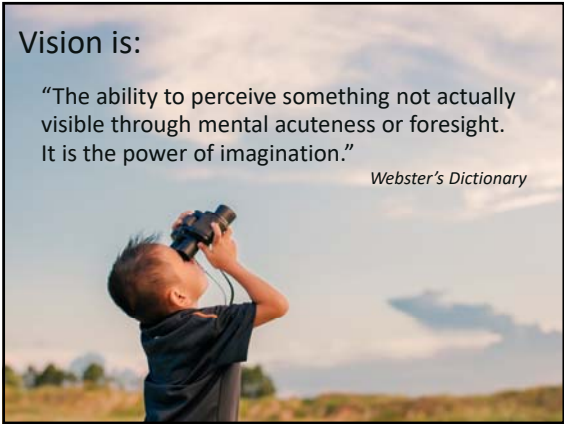
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Vision is:

“The ability to perceive something not actually visible through mental acuteness or foresight. It is the power of imagination.”

*Webster’s Dictionary*



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Vision is:

“The act of seeing things invisible.”

*Jonathan Swift*



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Vision is:

“Vision is a dream plus a commitment to make the dream come true.”

*Stephen Covey*



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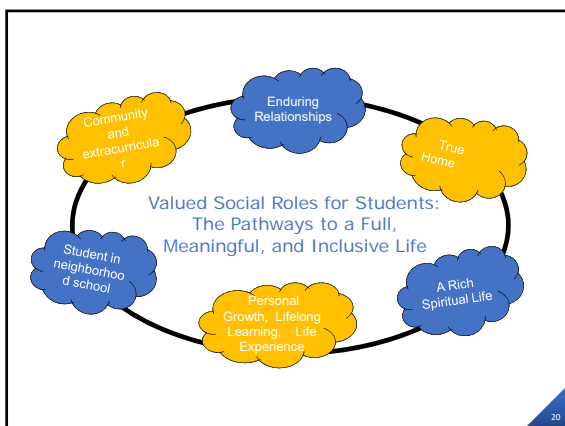
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Common, ordinary, typical experiences:

“It is about common, ordinary experiences. What we have always wanted for Shawntell was common, ordinary experiences. We wanted her to live in a wonderful home, attend school with all of the children in the neighborhood, have friends, have a social life, move out at age 18 to her own place, have a job and then a career, travel, to have a relationship with God whomever he or she might be, be a good citizen, find love, and enjoy life. These are not extraordinary experiences, but just common, ordinary experiences that we want for all of our children.”

- Jeffrey Strully and Cindy Strully

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### Assumptions that are Helpful in Advocacy:

- All students have meaningful gifts and contributions.
- Every student is an important and valuable member of the school community.
- Ordinary citizens are the most powerful advocates.
- Valued Social Roles are the best mechanism for social integration.

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### Assumptions that are Helpful in Advocacy:

The **local school** is the place where all students...

- will be safe.
- will have the opportunity for a full, rich, meaningful school experience, where they are truly members.
- More services do not equate to a better education or a higher quality of life.
- Enhancing the competency of both advocates and students lessens the likelihood of devaluation.

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### New Supreme Court Case Endrew F.



"In other words, the school must implement an IEP that is reasonably calculated to **remediate and, if appropriate**, accommodate the child's disabilities so that the child can "make progress in the general education curriculum," **commensurate with his non-disabled peers**, taking into account the child's potential." (emphasis added)

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Advocacy is for **counteracting** and trying to prevent more wounding experiences that occur as a result of devaluation of people with disabilities. Our job as advocates is to bring people into the **center of community** where they can experience a full life with **valued social roles**.

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For SRV:  
<http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/en/>  
[http://www.srvip.org/about\\_mission.php](http://www.srvip.org/about_mission.php)

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