

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN SERVICE PLANNING, LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE AGENCY
518 James Street Suite B3
Syracuse, NY 13204
315/473-2978

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OVERVIEW OF “PASSING”:
A TOOL FOR ANALYZING SERVICE QUALITY ACCORDING TO SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION
CRITERIA

Introduction

PASSING is an instrument for evaluating the quality of any human service according to how well it implements Social Role Valorization theory. Social Role Valorization, or SRV, posits that people who fill positively valued social roles will be likely to obtain and receive the “good things in life”, while people who fill negatively valued social roles will find it much harder – sometimes impossible – to get the good things in life; in fact, they may be given only bad and harmful things. SRV further posits that the two major avenues towards positively valued social roles are image enhancement and competency enhancement; the more positive one’s image. And the more competent one is, the more one will have access to valued social roles, and therefore the good things of life. Obviously, SRV is of special relevance and applicability to people who currently hold devalued roles, or are at risk of being cast into such – in other words, to people who are devalued by their society.

SRV draws on a wide and historically deep body of empiricism, in spelling out what contributes to being cast into devalued roles, or being able to obtain and hold valued social roles. However, SRV does not and cannot say whether any of this knowledge should be used in order to contribute to the role-valorization of any party. In other words, SRV deals only with what the realities of human perception, learning, social valuation, and behavior are; questions of whether anyone, or a particular party, should be valued or devalued, or should hold positively or negatively valued social roles, in what contexts, which specific roles, etc. – all these questions go beyond SRV because they are issues above the level of empiricism.

PASSING is based on SRV, but PASSING gives only a brief explanation of SRV. Much more detailed and lengthy elaboration of SRV can be found in teaching events on it. Also, some aspects of SRV not covered in PASSING are found in a small book entitled A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorization: A High Order Concept for Addressing the Plight of Societally Devalued People, and for Structuring Human Services. (Wolfensberger, 1998)

PASSING first began to be developed in the summer of 1979, was first published in 1983, and the new revised edition with the new name was published in 2007. PASSING was once an acronym that stood for “Program Analysis of Service Systems’ Implementation of Normalization Goals.” However, Normalization was superseded by SRV, so in this new edition, PASSING is a name, not an acronym.

PASSING is partially derived from the PASS (Wolfensberger and Glenn, 1973, 1975) method of service evaluation; PASS stands for Program Analysis of Service Systems. PASSING replaces all of those parts of PASS that deal with programmatic rather than administrative issues. The residual uses of PASS are described in a separate flyer that may be requested by the training institute.

PASSING’s PURPOSES:

PASSING was designed to try to meet the need for an evaluation method which would be able to do the following: Assess the quality of human services in relation to their adherence to Social Role Valorization(SRV) after Normalization and been re-conceptualized as SRV. SRV posits as the most important goal of services the establishment of valued social roles for people who are societally devalued or at value-risk.

Areas Primarily Concerned with Image Enhancement	Areas Primarily Concerned with Competency Enhancement
PHYSICAL SETTING OF SERVICE: 11 RATINGS	PHYSICAL SETTING OF SERVICE: 6 RATINGS
SERVICE-STRUCTURED GROUPINGS & RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PEOPLE: 7 RATINGS	SERVICE-STRUCTURED GROUPINGS & RELATIONSHIPS AMONG PEOPLE: 6 RATINGS
SERVICE-STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES & OTHER USE OF TIME: 3 RATINGS	SERVICE-STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES & OTHER USES OF TIME: 3 RATINGS
OTHER SERVICE LANGUAGE, SYMBOLS & IMAGES: 6 RATINGS	NO RATINGS - NOT APPLICABLE

Each of the 42 ratings in PASSING is categorized as to whether it primarily affects recipients image or personal competencies; these are the two major goals of SRV. Ratings are further subdivided within these two major categories into one of four service domains: physical setting of service; service structured groupings and relationships; activities and other uses of time within a service; and miscellaneous. This makes eight potential categories into which a PASSING rating might fall. Thus, a rating that has to do with how an aspect of the physical setting affects recipients' image would be located in the top left cell of the above chart.

Each rating in PASSING consists of five sections:

1. A narrative explanation of the rating issue, called "General Statement of the Issue."
2. A "Rating Requirements and Examples" chart, which has four columns: one contains a brief statement of the rating issue and focus; one gives one or more examples of the rating principle as actualized in normative society; a third gives one or more examples of the rating as actualized in hypothetical human service situations; and the last provides one or more examples of human service violations of the rating principles.
3. A "Differentiation from Other Ratings" section, which explains how the rating at hand differs from other ratings with which it is likely to be confused.

4. A chart entitled “Suggested Guidelines for Collecting and Using Evidence” which lists typical sources of evidence for the rating, some key questions that must be answered in order to make a judgment on the rating, and some important and often overlooked considerations in regard to the rating.
5. Criteria for a continuum of five “levels” of service performance (explained below), called “Criteria and Examples for Rating Level Assignment.”

Each rating in PASSING has five levels, i.e. statements about a continuum of service quality and service performance in the particular issue assessed by the rating. Each level represents the same degree of service quality across all ratings. That is, Level 1 stands for the same level of quality on all 42 ratings; Level 2 stands for the same level of quality on all ratings; etc.

The rating levels are structured to form a balanced continuum, where the lowest level (Level 1, atrocious performance) represents the opposite of the highest level (Level 5, the “attainable ideal”), the intermediate levels (Levels 2 and 4) represent opposites of each other, and the middle level (Level 3) – the fulcrum of the balance – represents a service performance that is the balance of both strengths and shortcomings, so that the good and the harm done cancel each other out. The percentages of weight given to a particular rating are distributed the same way (within rounding error) across the five levels of each rating. Thus each Level 1 = -100% of the weight assigned to a rating, each Level 2 = -70%, each Level 3 = 0%, each Level 4 = +70%, and each Level 5 = +100% of the weight assigned to a rating.

Level statements of positive performance in PASSING are phrased in terms of the likely impact that service practices will have in recipients’ image or competencies, because it cannot always be known with certainty that a particular outcome in terms of denigration or enhancement of recipients’ image or competencies was caused by any one particular service feature.

For further information about PASSING or PASSING training materials or workshops, please contact the Training Coordinator at the Training Institute.

References

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