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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 of life, while people who fill negatively valued social roles will find it much harder--sometimes impossible--to get the good things of life; in fact, they may only be given bad and harmful things. SRV further posits that the two major avenues towards positively valued social roles are enhancement of image, and enhancement of competencies; the more positive one's image, and the more competent one is, the more one will have access to valued social roles, and therefore to 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 people being cast into devalued roles, or being able to obtain and hold valued social roles. However, SRV cannot and does not 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 and decisions 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); see "Vendors" on the last page of this flyer.

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 superceded by SRV, and so in this new edition, PASSING is a name, not an acronym.

PASSING is partially derived from the PASS (Wolfensberger & 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 from the Training Institute, free of charge.

PASSING's Purposes

PASSING was designed to try to meet the need for an evaluation method which would be able to do seven things, some of which it has accomplished better than others.

1. Assess the quality of human services in relation to their adherence to SRV. PASSING assesses only those aspects of service quality which reflect a program's adoption and implementation of SRV.

2. Be universally applicable to all, or at least most, services to virtually any group of people. PASSING is intended to be applied to a very wide range of service types, and to enable them to be compared in terms of their quality. Examples of services that might be assessed with PASSING include child development and (special) education programs, treatment and training centers, camps, sheltered workshops, clinics, rehabilitation facilities, psychiatric settings, nursing homes and homes for the aged, hospitals, advocacy agencies, detentive facilities, other residential institutions, group homes, foster homes, etc. Such services might be addressed to a wide range of human problem areas, including physical and sensory impairment, mental disorder, mental retardation, social incapacity, poverty, delinquency, addiction and habituation to alcohol or other drugs, law-breaking, etc. However, PASSING is also applicable to informal services, i.e., those that are not part of a formal, organized agency, and perhaps where not even any money changes hands, but where people are served nonetheless. Examples of such informal services might be an adoptive home, some other sharing of a home by handicapped and non-handicapped people, certain advocacy services, or an informal (perhaps even unpaid) work arrangement for a handicapped adult.

3. Teach and explicate SRV and its implications very thoroughly and specifically. PASSING is the most extensive printed resource so far on the specific implications of SRV.

4. Teach SRV in a way that participants could use to structure or re-structure services for greater programmatic quality, and better recipient outcomes.

5. Have content, format, and procedures that would enable most motivated, literate, and reasonably intelligent people (including ordinary citizens and some service recipients) to learn SRV principles and apply them in the evaluation of human services.

6. By virtue of being made accessible to larger numbers of people, enable a sufficient number of evaluators to be trained within an agency or locality to be able to conduct regular evaluations of local services. PASSING could be adopted in a given locality as an instrument for regular, ongoing, and repeated evaluations of local services of any type, provided that PASSING training is available in the area or nearby on a routine basis so as to generate a large enough pool of trained local personnel.

7. By enabling a significant proportion of people access to systematic service evaluation with this instrument, local change agents would be able to foster greater understanding and acceptance of SRV ideals among local decision-makers and the citizenry.

PASSING's Characteristics

Altogether, there are 42 "ratings" in PASSING, i.e., 42 separate criteria derived from SRV against which a service's performance would be measured. (In PASS, there were 50 ratings, 34 of which were in the normalization category.) These 42 criteria are organized in PASSING into the following 2x4 schema.

		SERVICE FEATURES BEING ASSESSED	
		FEATURES RELATED PRIMARILY TO RECIPIENTS' SOCIAL IMAGE ENHANCEMENT	FEATURES RELATED PRIMARILY TO RECIPIENTS' COMPETENCY ENHANCEMENT
HUMAN SERVICE DOMAINS BEING ASSESSED	PHYSICAL SETTINGS	11 ratings	6 ratings
	SERVICE-STRUCTURED GROUPINGS, RELATIONSHIPS, & SOCIAL JUXTAPOSITIONS	7 ratings	6 ratings
	SERVICE-STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES & OTHER TIME USES	3 ratings	3 ratings
	MISCELLANEOUS OTHER SERVICE FEATURES	6 ratings	no ratings in this category

Because the two major sub-goals of SRV are enhancement of people's image, and enhancement of their competencies, each of the 42 ratings in PASSING is categorized as to whether it primarily affects service recipients' image or personal competencies. Ratings are further subdivided within these two major categories into one of four service feature domains: physical setting of service; service-structured groupings, relationships and juxtapositions of service recipients with each other and other people; activities and other uses of time within a service; and miscellaneous service features. This makes eight potential categories into which a PASSING rating might fall, though one category contains no ratings. For instance, a rating that has to do with how an aspect of the physical setting affects recipients' image would be one of the 11 ratings 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: the first contains a brief statement of the rating issue and focus; the second gives one or more examples of the rating principle as actualized in ordinary society; a third gives one or more examples of the rating principle as it would be actualized in hypothetical human service situations; and the last provides one or more examples of human service violations of the rating principle.

3. A "Differentiation From Other Ratings" section, which explains how the rating at hand differs from other ratings with which evaluators might confuse it.

4. A chart entitled "Suggested Guidelines for Collecting and Using Evidence," which has three columns: some important and often overlooked considerations in regard to the rating, some key questions that must be answered in order to make a judgment on the rating, and typical sources of evidence for the rating.

5. Criteria for assigning one of five "levels" of service performance (explained below), called "Criteria and Examples for Rating Level Assignment."

Each rating in PASSING has five levels, representing a continuum of service quality and service performance on the particular issue assessed by the rating. 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 either neutral on the issue, or a balance of both strengths and shortcomings, so that the good and the harm done cancel each other out. In other words, 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 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 service performance in PASSING are phrased in terms of the likely impact of service practices on recipients' image or competencies, based on empirically known dynamics of how service practices will tend to impact on recipients.

PASSING's Relationship to Other Resources

PASSING-related resources are published in several volumes, some of which are equally usable with PASS. Availability of these items is given under the "Vendors" section at the end of this flyer.

1. The core of the series of PASSING-related publications is the Ratings Manual, which currently also serves as the major elaborative de facto text on SRV. This manual contains discussion of major SRV issues and goals; and narrative, principles, examples, and guidelines for each of the 42 ratings that comprise the instrument.

2. The French version of the 2nd edition of PASSING was published in 1989, and is entitled PASSING (Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes de Services Application des Buts de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux): Manuel des critères et des mesures de la valorisation des rôles sociaux. (2ième éd.) It incorporates some improvements over the original 1983 English version. A French translation of the 3rd (2007) edition of PASSING is anticipated.

3. Guidelines for Evaluators During a PASS, PASSING, or Similar Assessment of Human Service Quality. This monograph is essential for the conduct of a valid and reliable assessment. It provides instructions to evaluators on how to prepare for an assessment, and how to conduct themselves at each stage of an assessment. Therefore it is imperative that people obtain this monograph if they will be participating in a PASSING or PASS assessment, or if they want to become knowledgeable about PASSING and/or PASS for other reasons.

4. In 1991, a small monograph-length overview of SRV was published, and then revised editions were issued in 1992 and 1998. It constitutes a more extensive introduction of certain aspects of SRV than appears in the PASSING Manual, and is very useful as a preparation for learning PASSING, or for other purposes of introducing people to SRV. The first 1991 edition is also available in French, German, and Italian. As noted already, the monograph is 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, and is available from the Training Institute.

The Training Institute also has available a number of materials useful for teaching people SRV and PASSING. Contact the Training Coordinator at the Training Institute for more information on the availability of these various teaching materials.

There also exist a number of unpublished manuscripts by different authors that are meant to instruct or guide PASSING team members and team leaders in the application of PASSING. For research on PASSING, readers are referred to Flynn (1999). A bibliography on SRV, PASSING, and PASS is available from the Training Institute. Special instructions on how to use PASSING in combination with parts of PASS are also available from the Training Institute. Inquiries into the availability of all of these can be directed to the Training Institute.

The development of the first edition of PASSING was carried out during 1979-1980 under a contract between the Training Institute and the County of Dane (Madison, Wisconsin) Developmental Disabilities Services Board. This edition was never available for general distribution. The revision and continued development of a 2nd edition of PASSING was supported by a grant from the Research Foundation of the National Easter Seal Society, from which came the 2nd improved edition that was published for general use by the National Institute on Mental Retardation (now called the G. Allan Roeher Institute) in Toronto, Ontario, that also published the Normalization and PASS texts. The 3rd edition of PASSING was financially supported by the Prescott-Russell Services to Children and Adults/Valor Institute of Ontario, Canada.

PASSING training is now available through several bodies in a number of countries around the world. For further information about PASSING, or PASSING training materials or workshops, please contact the Training Institute.

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<u>Vendors</u>

Most of the items in the reference list are available from the Training Institute.