

STRENGTH BASED STRATEGIES 2006

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

JOHN ARMSTRONG

The “Tipping Point” to a Good Life: The magnitude of valued social roles

For many generations we have known people in our communities whose lives were characterised by poverty, isolation, rejection and failure. Whether due to generational poverty, disability, stigmatised identity, lack of opportunity, addiction, violence or other causes, the life course for people often descended into ever worsening situations. Research into resilience and role theory demonstrate that people employ strategies that contains universal qualities that are powerful and which have relevance and utility across cultures, times and places about how people come to have a better life. This paper examines that feature which so profoundly contribute to this changed experience and how to bring it about. Using what we know from empirical sources about how people are perceived and treated by others, the paper will demonstrate the major features of roles that provide discrete strategies in assisting a person and their supporters to develop the life they seek. The link between the experience of the “Good Life” and the attainment of valued social roles will be established. The majority of cultures do not positively perceive individuals with an intellectual disability, and few individuals themselves, whether because of their biological condition or because of social stigmatism, have the capacity to alone attain valued social roles. The support persons or service providers therefore play a vital role in assisting individuals to attain a life of their choosing that is valued by their society. This paper serves as a “how to” guide for those who are struggling with how to best support individuals with an intellectual disability in ways that empower them to discover their own strengths and develop their own resilience and capacity for growth. Information about SRV can be found at www.socialrolevalorization.com



John Armstrong has a long involvement in the lives of people with disabilities, in both informal advocacy and friendship roles as well as the formal roles of service provider, teacher, adviser and service planner. John originally trained as a special education teacher (teacher of the deaf) and worked in Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory as well as school principal and educational adviser to schools for disabled children in Victoria. Having been exposed to Social Role Valorization training since 1983, he finally went in 1991 to train directly with Dr Wolfensberger and his associates at Syracuse University and has since been one of three Senior Social Role Valorisation and PASSING trainers in Australasia. John has also been involved with Citizen Advocacy for many years, as an advocate, Chairperson, Evaluator (utilising CAPE) and roving teacher. He is now President of Citizen Advocacy Australia, which raises money on behalf of Citizen Advocacy programs in Australia.

Strength-Based Practice: Turning High-Risk to High-Yield

Strength-based approaches have gained momentum in the helping professions. This keynote address will outline recent gains made in applying Strength-based practice with clients who are difficult to help. How can helpers practice from a Strengths perspective with challenging clients? This address will feature an international Strengths advocate who will outline the research and practice methods that are being utilized for working with mandated (involuntary) clients. Consider that there is a problem with problem solving. Problem-focused (problem solving) models dominate our work and direct practice staff who use this approach can be easily seduced into the “error of error correction” where more attention is paid to what brought the fall rather than what the family needs to do to get up and get going again. Focusing on the problem and trying to “fix it” creates obstacles in our work. What is wrong, what is missing and what is abnormal keeps our attention while strengths and healthy patterns are passed over and ignored. This keynote address will focus on motivation, possibility and inducing positive behavior change. Our helping professions engage in efforts that can often diminish client participation and responsibility. It has been said that the most overlooked resources in the helping/treatment field are the strengths and capacities of our clients. Several motivational constructs will be examined in this presentation. This address will also review a new meta-analytic research that identified the key ingredients to positive behavior change. These factors will be reviewed at length as they embody the true catalysts for change and optimizing each client’s unique potential. Find out why it’s the client, and not treatment methods, that represent the real “engine for change.” Join this keynote address to understand how we can harness this potential with client-directed, outcome-informed practice. Begin to use what 40 years of motivational research has been suggesting for working with clients that may be reluctant to work with you!



Michael D. Clark (MSW, LMSW) is a Consultant, Trainer and an Addictions Therapist. Currently the Director of the Center for Strength-Based Strategies, United States, Michael is a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). He has provided training and/or onsite technical assistance to mental health, criminal justice and child welfare organisations throughout the United States, as well as Europe, Canada, the Caribbean and Micronesia. With over 20 publications on Strengths work to his credit, Michael has important information to share about motivating challenging clients.

The Drylands of Hope

There is an inextricable and unseen web that connects faith, hope, science, agriculture and sustainability. For the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), practising research to ensure sustainable agriculture is probably both a natural and an enlightened action. We believe that agriculture cannot be sustainable unless we work within the natural order. Expressed in biological and spiritual terms, sustainability can only be realized by insights into our place in the natural order. ICRISAT's mission is to reduce poverty, enhance food and nutritional security and protect the environment of the semi-arid tropics by helping empower the poor through science with a human face. By this we mean raising the hopes and aspirations of the poor, inspiring them to better their homes and communities, as well as providing them opportunities through science and technology to become self-reliant. Our research over the last 34 years has led to the creation of societal hope, and brought an overwhelming change in the lives of the poor in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The dryland farmer has been the beneficiary of our research with strategic partners. We realise that sustainable agriculture exists within dynamic change and we also strongly believe in retaining the integrity between humans and nature. While we continue to use conventional methods of science to improve the livelihoods of the poor, we do not fight shy of new science and the advanced tools it offers. We have adopted integrated genetic and natural resource management (IGNRM) as our overarching research strategy to attain scientific excellence and relevance in agriculture, with the core principles being equity, multidisciplinary, sustainability and community participation. Whether it is the 570 improved varieties released by partners from ICRISAT parental lines, the wide-ranging impacts of our innovative ideas in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, new production systems, the social cohesion we seek to bring about or facilitating an improved marketing environment, they have all ultimately brought hope to poor families – this is the drylands of hope we envisioned.



William D Dar, Ph.D. is a man on a mission and a champion of the poor. Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) near Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, India, since January 2000, he has had a long and distinguished career as an agricultural scientist and humanitarian in his native Philippines and abroad in Africa, Australia and the Asia Pacific region. Dr Dar held the distinction of being the first Filipino and Asian to be Chair of the Alliance Executive of the Alliance of Future Harvest Centres in 2005, a collegial body that facilitates collective action among the 15 CGIAR Centres. Dr Dar has also been a member of the UN Millennium Task Force on Hunger. Prior to joining ICRISAT, he served as Presidential Adviser for Rural Development, and Secretary of Agriculture in the Philippines (equivalent to Minister of Agriculture), the first ever alumnus of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) to become one. Before this, he was Executive Director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) and Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA). Dr. Dar has received a number of awards and honours, including the Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of the Philippines, Outstanding Young Scientist of the Year, and Crop Science Society of the Philippines' Achievement Award for Research Management and Outstanding Science Administrator given by the Philippines Department of Science and Technology. He was also awarded as Distinguished Alumnus of UPLB and Most Outstanding Alumnus of BSU and the Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC). In November 2002, PCARRD honoured him with its highest and most prestigious award, the Symbol of Excellence in R&D Management. In 2003 he was awarded both an honorary doctorate in the Philippines and in Vietnam the "For the Sake of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam Award". Dr. Dar's passion is to help alleviate the conditions of the poor people living in the semi-arid tropics of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Rethinking and Reforming Child Protection Systems

The history of statutory child protection and child welfare in many Western nations is characterised by significant achievements in highlighting the incidence of abuse and neglect, promoting protective interventions and ensuring the safety of vulnerable and at risk children. However, there is increasing evidence from research and government and judicial inquiries that State-based forensic child protection systems in Western nations are failing many children, their parents, staff and management. There is growing disquiet about interventions that irreparably harm those who need help as well as those who seek to render assistance. The punitive and blaming orientation of these systems requires critical examination for its ideological underpinnings. This keynote address argues for a fundamental rethink and reform of the underlying paradigm of child protection in order to reorient it to be strengths based, ethically oriented, and neighbourhood and community-based child wellbeing practice. Importantly, developing countries need to evaluate both the benefits and consequences of mimicking child protection systems that can disempower families and communities. Strengths based responses offer a more complete and ethically appropriate way of protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and facilitating the active participation of their families and communities in these processes.



Dr. Bob Lonne, PhD, has extensive practice, managerial and research experience of statutory child protection and welfare, and juvenile justice, particularly in rural and remote communities in Australia. He has presented widely on the benefits and limitations of the contemporary approaches to child protection adopted in many Western countries. Bob is a senior lecturer with the School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences, University of Queensland, Brisbane Australia and is the current National President of the Australian Association of Social Workers a 6000 member professional membership organisation.

The Strengths Philosophy: Strengths-based ways of sharing power and creating change

The Strengths Approach takes us into a paradigm that confronts practices (however inadvertent or unintentional) that are based on deficits and blaming, the use of power over others, prescribing solutions to problems, assuming what's best for others, relying on experts, and excluding people from decision making about their lives. In his address to the conference Wayne will articulate the philosophical underpinnings of the Strengths Approach and its practical implications for working for change in just ways with individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations. These include respect for people's dignity, rights, capacities, uniqueness and commonalities; the sharing of power and resources, self-determination, collaboration, inclusion, transparency, and the mobilisation of people's strengths and capacities to meet their own aspirations. Wayne will provide an overview of the key frameworks and core skills and processes that have become integral to the approach.



Wayne McCashen is author of the books *The Strengths Approach: A strengths-based resource for sharing power and creating change* and *Communities of hope: A strengths-based resource for building community*; and co-author of the card-based resource *Name the Frame: Reminders for building respectful socially just decisions*. Presently he is Education and Training Coordinator for Family and Community Services in the Northern Territory, Australia, and was until recently the principal trainer and consultant for St Lukes Anglicare (Bendigo, Australia) in strengths-based practice to a diverse range of organisations throughout Australia and New Zealand. He is a leader in the articulation and development of the strengths approach to working in the human services. He has written material on strengths-based ways of working with individuals, families, groups, communities and organisations that is used nationally and internationally. Wayne has 30 years experience in the human services including youth work, family work, community development, training and professional development, staff supervision, and management. His qualifications are in the fields of social work and community development. He was part of the original team at St Lukes, Bendigo, which initiated work to develop the strengths approach. He has carried this work forward with others at St Lukes and elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand through a range of innovations such as 'client-owned recording' and the development of a range of practices.

Human Resources Development in our Society: Some Thoughts for the Future

HRD at the societal level may be defined as building enabling capabilities of individuals, families, groups, communities, countries and cross national agencies to enhance the longevity, skill base and quality of life of its people through various interventions. While the interventions for HRD may aim at literacy of adults, schooling of children, empowerment of women, creating opportunities for all those discriminated by birth, investments in science and technology, and caring for the environment; government agencies, NGOs and the corporate sector are the three distinguishable categories that can make these interventions succeed. Distilling from the last 50 years of living, experience in India and other countries the author attempts to outline an agenda for the future focal points for HRD interventions as well as roles for various agencies including the corporate sector, Government, NGOs and International Funding agencies. Dr Rao will draw lesson and set an agenda for the future of the HR profession. The keynote address focuses on the fact that HRD can be a tool for peaceful and healthy co-existence of all on this earth and talks of how a new HRD can make this possible.



Dr. T V Rao is Chairman, TV Rao Learning Systems Pvt. Ltd. a company committed to HRD and Behaviour Systems. Formerly Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, and L & T Professor of HRD at XLRI, Jamshedpur 1983-85 and is the founder President of the National HRD Network and was President of the Indian Society for Behavioural Science (ISABS). Dr. Rao is widely published in the areas of HRD, education, entrepreneurship, health, population and management training. These include: Performance Appraisal: Theory and Practice; HRD in the New Economic Environment; Designing and Managing HR systems; The HRD Missionary, Handbook of Training for Education Management and others. One of his publications, *The Power of 360 Degree Feedback: Maximizing Managerial and leadership effectiveness* is an award winning book which won two prizes in 2005. Dr. Rao worked as a short-term consultant to UNESCO, Ministry of Health, Indonesia, National Entrepreneurial Development Association, Malaysia and the Commonwealth Secretariat, London. Dr. Rao has designed and assisted in implementing performance appraisal and other Human Resource Development systems for a number of organisation both in India and abroad.