

SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION

A social role as defined by Talcott Parsons as "a socially expected pattern of behaviours, responsibilities, expectations and privileges."

Many areas of our lives are affected by how we are seen within our roles, including:

- ◆ **status and reputation**
- ◆ **self-image**
- ◆ **acceptance and belonging**
- ◆ **association and relationships**
- ◆ **freedom**
- ◆ **personal growth and development**
- ◆ **giving back**
- ◆ **material gains**
- ◆ **lifestyle**

How do we determine if an individual is really part of their community with a valued social role? It often seems that simply being brought into the community is passed off as real community living, that they are believed to be part of the community simply by virtue of being there.

But are individuals active, engaged and valued participants, or are they only surface or visiting participants? What is their role? How do we improve their participation? We could switch our thinking from simply considering activities to thinking more deeply about what roles our loved ones can take on. If you take on roles, activities will follow, and one valued role leads to another, and another, and so on.

Individuals may want to participate in specialized programs designed for individuals with disabilities; these programs can be helpful, and can be fairly easy to access, as there are plenty of structures and supports in place to support them. However, further innovation is needed to assist your loved one in finding their rightful role in the larger community.

Taking someone into the community but not helping them to be a part of it is NOT community living- it's only community visiting, or "window shopping".

