

**CAPRICORN CITIZEN ADVOCACY
PROGRAM EVALUATION**

USING

**CAPE – STANDARDS FOR CITIZEN ADVOCACY
PROGRAM EVALUATION MANUAL**

AUGUST 9-13, 2010

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1. Overview of the CCA Program

1.1 Introduction

The Capricorn Citizen Advocacy Program (CCA) commenced in January 2000. In October, 2002 it held its first CAPE (Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation). It held its second CAPE evaluation in May 2006. Each of these evaluations took note of particular strengths and sometimes revealed hidden trends that have allowed the program to make necessary adjustments.

In both previous CAPE's, it was never an instance that CCA had drifted from the Citizen Advocacy Model, or was significantly ineffective in making many good matches. It was typically a matter of working so closely with people through the day-to-day work of visiting, finding, matching and supporting people into a new relationship that an emphasis in the work remained largely undisclosed until this type of external peer evaluation transpired to reveal a trend.

Such a circumstance demonstrates the importance of regular external evaluation that every Citizen Advocacy (CA) program should voluntarily undertake if it is committed to remaining effective in making many good matches.

Had CCA not shown the forethought and discipline to request *and act* on the findings of these evaluations, the disclosed subtle trends would have remained concealed and likely developed to have become fully fledged distortions. By this time, the distortion may have become embraced as a necessary, even essential feature of the program, with staff assuming a defensive posture with respect to its now revealed practice. Sadly, programs in this position rarely volunteer themselves further for external examination, wishing instead to flaunt the new distortion as legitimate CA practice.

As in keeping with the diligent practice of CCA, we are now pleased to present the results of this third CAPE evaluation, and hope that it will bring some new insights into the relationship between community and service, as it has for the team.

1.2 The Concept and Need for Citizen Advocacy¹

Citizen Advocacy was developed by Dr Wolf Wolfensberger in the 1960s. Citizen Advocacy was developed for at least 3 reasons: namely, that many people with developmental disabilities:

¹ This and the next section are updated from equivalent sections in the 2002 CAPE which was also by this author for those who have not read or have access to that earlier CAPE report.

- need assistance with the practical affairs of everyday life;
- require protection and advocacy because they are held in low esteem by society, and are likely to encounter “wounding” life experiences including rejection, exploitation, abuse etc.;
- do not have freely-given personal relationships.

Though there have been various definitions of the concept of Citizen Advocacy, the most recent formulation (October 1990) by the International Citizen Advocacy Safeguards Group is probably the best elaborated and clearly explicated statement of the function of Citizen Advocacy:

Citizen advocacy is a means to promote, protect and defend the welfare and interests of, and justice for, persons who are impaired in competence, or diminished in status, or seriously physically or socially isolated, through one-to-one (or near one-to-one) unpaid voluntary commitments made to them by people of relevant competencies.

Citizen Advocates strive to represent the interests of a person as if they were the advocate’s own; therefore, the advocates are supported, and usually recruited, by a Citizen Advocacy office with paid staff that is so funded and governed as to be essentially free from conflicts of interest.

In consultation with the Citizen advocacy office, advocates choose from a wide range of functions and roles. Some of these commitments may last for life.

1.3 The Capricorn Citizen Advocacy Program

Capricorn Citizen Advocacy commenced operation in January 2000. The program’s history extends back to 1994 when a group of agency leaders began to seriously question the lack of any form of advocacy for individuals with disabilities in the local region. These leaders became the Rockhampton Advocacy Development Focus Group (RADFG). They consulted extensively with others providing a range of advocacy responses within Queensland, throughout Australia, and even overseas! Significant information, guidance and support was provided by the then Advocacy Development Network, Advocacy agencies and several others who were well regarded in the Advocacy Movement. The group’s discussions and explorations culminated in a study being conducted in 97/98 by Jude Hose and Carolyn Friend. The findings of the study indicated that the advocacy needs of local people were consistent with the type of response the Citizen Advocacy model

could offer. Further discussions with Bob Lee and Eric Jones (Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy) sealed the group's decision to establish a Citizen Advocacy program to respond to the advocacy needs of local people with disabilities. In early 1999, the RADFG changed its name to Advocacy Works and submitted a funding application to Disability Services Queensland (the state disability services organisation). A local agency (Home Support Association) initially auspiced the group whilst its application to become an incorporated association known as Capricorn Citizen Advocacy was still being processed. Funding commenced in June 1999 with the first Coordinator, Marcus Richards being appointed in October 1999 but not commencing until January 2000. Capricorn Citizen Advocacy became fully incorporated in April 2000 at which time it asserted its independence and concluded auspice arrangements with Home Support Association.

The program today is located within the Region of Rockhampton in Central Queensland and operates across the four former shires that were amalgamated in 2008, comprising Livingston, Mt Morgan, Rockhampton and Fitzroy. Rockhampton has the largest population of approximately 76,700.

Rockhampton supplies needs of a vast surrounding region of cattle and other primary producers, situated some 50 kilometres from the coast. The town has many long-term residents, but also has quite a number of itinerant workers and people who settle for various lengths of time. 'Rocky' has a distinctly rural and cattle business flavour – for which it is well known. It sits on the Tropic of Capricorn, which gives many activities – including this program – its distinctive name. The city has many modern amenities and a rich history. The newer coastal communities of Yeppoon and Emu Park lie to the east, and the older and poorer ex-mining township of Mount Morgan lies to the west – each taking just under 45 minutes to reach.

The Program receives the majority of its funding from the State Government of Queensland, through the Department of Communities, Disability Services Branch (DS). As such, the program is required to meet the Quality Standards provision of that department, and has done so since the Standards were introduced in 2008. CCA does provide detailed updates of its efforts on an annual basis to DS. CCA is unusual in that it is the only Citizen Advocacy Program funded by the Queensland State Government.

DS also funds another program across Queensland that matches ordinary citizens to people with an intellectual disability – for friendship. Some in the department believe that this 'Volunteer Friends' program is equivalent to or even superior to

Citizen Advocacy, even though many reports provide alternative data. There is a Volunteer Friends program in Rockhampton but there is no contact between the two (nor should there be), and there appears to be no adverse effects for CCA.

There is a Management Committee consisting of eight members from varied human service, business, professional, and parent backgrounds who oversee the Program. They meet monthly and attend to the various items of business and oversee all aspects of the program's operation.

The program's Coordinator is Jenni Keerie, who was previously the administrative assistant, who successfully obtained the position after the former coordinator (Les Pearce) left for Launceston in 2003. Jenni was born in Rockhampton and has significant connections throughout the town as a result of a lifetime of involvements with primary and high schools, (and those of her children), sporting and service clubs, with Rotary² being an important highlight in the past few years. Jenni together with the office assistant, Louise (who is also actively engaged in several sporting groups) now support 37 relationships in the program, with just over 100 relationships having been formed over the history of the program. Jenni is also part of a small but very active Social Role Valorization group in Rockhampton, organising SRV and PASSING events for the region and conducting very short induction talks for 2 agencies in the Gladstone area twice yearly.

CCA has set out to facilitate the beginning of a new independent CA program in Mt Morgan. Thus, in addition to the typical evaluative questions CAPE is concerned with, the program has asked that its venture in Mt Morgan also receive some attention and comment from the Team.

1.4 The Process of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide the program clear answers with respect to three questions:

1. Is it a Citizen Advocacy Program?
2. Is it effective?
3. Is it viable?

After an overview of CAPE and a discussion of the programs perceived strengths and challenges for the future, held on the Sunday, the team embarked on gathering

² For example, she is a member and past attendance officer, Secretary (twice) and President and has been involved in projects such as Suicide Prevention, Youth and Change projects etc.

core information concerning the program, and in particular the work of the office and its support by the management committee.

Structured interviews were held with:

- the Coordinator (close to 12 hours), & Louise-office support;
- seven of the eight Committee Members;
- three advocate associates;
- four family members of protégés;
- 16 protégés;
- 20 advocates
- Two crisis advocates;
- And one consultant to the program
- reviewed program documentation included committee minutes, relationship files, newsletters, promotional materials, orientation resources, annual reports and previous CAPE reports.

The verbal feedback was provided late on Friday 13th August, 2010 after the team had assessed all the collected evidence against the CAPE ratings and extracted the major themes of the evaluation.

2. Findings

2.1 Response to the Three Key CAPE Questions

Having reviewed all the evidence, analysed it against the 36 ratings of CAPE, the team can declare that:

1. Is it a Citizen Advocacy Program? Yes, it *is* Citizen Advocacy, but there are precautions that need to be taken to ensure this identity is maintained;
2. Is it effective? Yes, this program is effective, but there are factors that could weaken that effectiveness including some potential for ‘churning’;
3. Is the program viable? (Can it thrive and survive?) Yes, the program is presently surviving, but more development in its governance practice is needed if it is to thrive and to withstand the future inevitability of personnel changes.

We now want to expand these issues with the intention of strengthening the program’s good efforts in making many good matches.

2.2 Strengths of Capricorn Citizen Advocacy:

Human endeavours with clear intention frequently produce many beneficial outcomes and some less so. What is apparent though is that so many human activities contain such complexity that it is hard to predict the results of one's even well intentioned actions. Thus, one of the benefits of regular evaluation is that a group of well intentioned individuals obtain a stronger and more conscious appreciation of the connection between their well developed decisions and the actual impact of their practices. This is true for good results as it is for unfortunate ones.

What follows is an examination of the strengths seen by this team in this program, so that consciousness can exist about these features in order to protect and enhance them.

2.2.1 The Coordinators civic knowledge and presence affords many benefits and some potential challenges to the program

The program coordinator has an extensive history within Rockhampton and its surrounding communities. This comes as a result of a life-long history with the town and the many institutions it contains. In addition, she has actively sought to affect beneficial change within the community concerning many disadvantaged groups and individuals while utilising many subtle, serendipitous as well as calculated opportunities to further the knowledge of and interest in Citizen Advocacy to other people. The team heard public declarations of the coordinator's reputation as standing for Citizen Advocacy.

Additionally, as Jenni serves in community roles, she serves her community beyond her CA role, which reflects positively upon Citizen Advocacy as a powerful informal concept congruent with how adaptive communities function and not at all like formal, bureaucratic structures.

A major benefit of this community involvement has been the ability to know and observe many people across multiple settings and situations, permitting a well-spring of character assessment for the many potential roles prospective citizen advocates might perform. Indeed, Jenni's community roles serve as a fitting example for other CA coordinators should they wish to make matches via such close associations with community organisations and people.

The downside is the potential for community members to discover a wide variety of disadvantaged people and refer them to the program, assuming citizen advocacy to be the most suitable response. The consequences of this will be discussed in the next section.

2.2.2 The program's ability to directly recruit competent advocates

Having found protégé's (which will also be commented on later in the report), the program has very effectively identified competent advocates of considerable capacity who have effectively assessed the situation and developed adaptive responses in resolving urgent issues in the protégé's life. The program's capacity for 'spotting' potential advocates is a significant strength, as it indicates a clear perspective on the qualities needed in an advocate and even an intuitive insight as to when to approach such a person. The program is not afraid to sometimes approach potential advocates of significant standing and position within the community to assist people with the lowest standing; the strongest assisting the weakest.

Of course, not all advocacy efforts succeed, but that isn't of itself an indication of ineffective advocacy, but a potential indication of the intractable nature of the entity an advocate is facing. Of course, some advocates reported to us their shock that people (the protégé) could experience such harsh treatment and life conditions, but also the resistance to reasonableness and common sense by elements of the service system.

The ability to seek and identify people who become competent advocates is associated with the program coordinators extensive association with community individuals, collectivities and associations and over many years which have yielded a reliable supply of advocates with the attributes discussed above.

2.2.3 Many matches have the potential to become long-term and even life-long

The team met many people who expressed significant commitments to each other. It was clear that the advocates and protégés clearly identified with each other and that this extended the potential protective strength of the relationships including the benefit of an ongoing, rather than discontinuous experience so common in the lives of protégés.

2.2.4 The Committee of Management relate with warmth and friendship

All Committees go through periods of distress and the history of CCA is not an exception to this rule. However, this committee might be presently characterised by its warmth, friendliness, humour and most importantly, its commitment and love of the Citizen Advocacy Model. Of course, the potential downside of such good relations is that members can become restrained in expressing concerns about program operation for fear that it might damage or interfere with such warmth and fellowship.

An additional danger comes from the current emphasis of so-called “accountability” that could seduce programs and Boards into becoming more official, “professional” and bureaucratic when citizen advocacy is more akin to community than to system’s and bureaucracy. Why would CA want to mirror the cultural style that is the embodiment of disconnection and detachment, which energizes the very devaluation suffered by devalued people everywhere? Well of course it wouldn’t, and so CA program’s everywhere will always need to purposely recognise and create those occasions for celebration, gathering, sharing and giving that is integral to how adaptive communities function including the citizen advocacy community.

2.2.5 The trusted qualities of the coordinator

Self directed and responsible people are a huge asset to any organisation. The Coordinator is known for her complete reliability and trustworthiness, within and outside of citizen advocacy. Jenni gets the work done with great efficiency and diligence but is particularly regarded as someone who is genuine and uncontrived.

These qualities present the coordinator as a competent self governing person but possibly as someone not requiring the usual levels of support and encouragement; but this is not at all the case. Responsibility does not mean self sufficiency and Jenni, like all CA coordinators, still has a great need for involvement and consultation with other knowledgeable and reliable people and the nourishment and support this provides to keep doing the work over and over again, and not stop.

2.2.6 The program has a strong community presence

With all that has been discussed so far, it is not surprising that CCA enjoys a very favourable community reputation and profile. The work of the last two coordinators have presented CCA in a consistently positive way; acting correctly and with integrity, being at all times trust worthy, representing the interests of devalued people in a highly respectful and positive way, and in engaging with people across many community avenues that gives rise to much respect.

It’s often said that there is nothing more valuable than a reputation and therefore something that should always be preserved by high moral and ethical conduct.

2.2.7 CCA has engaged citizens to be caring

One of the major impacts of a modernistic period in world history is that people everywhere are insecure about their own welfare; the “Good Life” is mainly seen in materialistic terms, seeking technical quick fixes to intractable human problems, where people flee and avoid suffering. Yet with all of the above, CCA has managed to counteract these trends by bringing ordinary citizens into long-term

engagements with people when the trend within modernistic contexts is to leave the unwanted to the service system (the technical fix) to deal with. In so doing, you are showing ordinary citizens how others get treated by such systems and that there really is no ‘fix’ to so many problems; but that people can still stand by each other and make life very worthwhile.

2.3 Challenges to the Program

The coordinator, in view of her natural inclination, talent and history has developed a bold approach to protégé and advocate recruitment that is characterised by the utilisation of the strong associations within the community she has developed over many years.

As we have discussed above, there are many positive features to this work that others in Citizen Advocacy could learn from. For example, how to approach the community, its groups and associations; how to be involved in the community but not lose identity with CA and the work of making many good matches; how to speak with plain language the community understands; how to judge the timing of one’s interactions when advocate seeking, to name a few of the abilities Jenni is refining.

2.3.1 The Program has lost a degree of control over protégé recruitment

However, as alluded to in the strengths discussion (See 2.2.1), the team has discovered some potential and actual distortions emerging in the program that we believe can be easily remedied. But first, we want to warn the reader that as we expose and thoroughly explicate this subtle distortion (like a subtle tint in a photo) that it doesn’t invite an overreaction that could produce a new or even greater problem. We invite the Committee and Jenni to a careful study of what is said here and a considered response to the issues it raises, taking into account the subtleties there-of.

The first overriding issue we believe is that the program has lost a degree of control over who the protégé is and this is having a complex array of repercussions that are likely to grow stronger over time. We believe that once having understood this pattern, it will be relatively easy to make appropriate adjustments. What follows is an examination of the main sequence of events and the likely implications for the program’s practices.

Protégé seeking has become protégé accepting

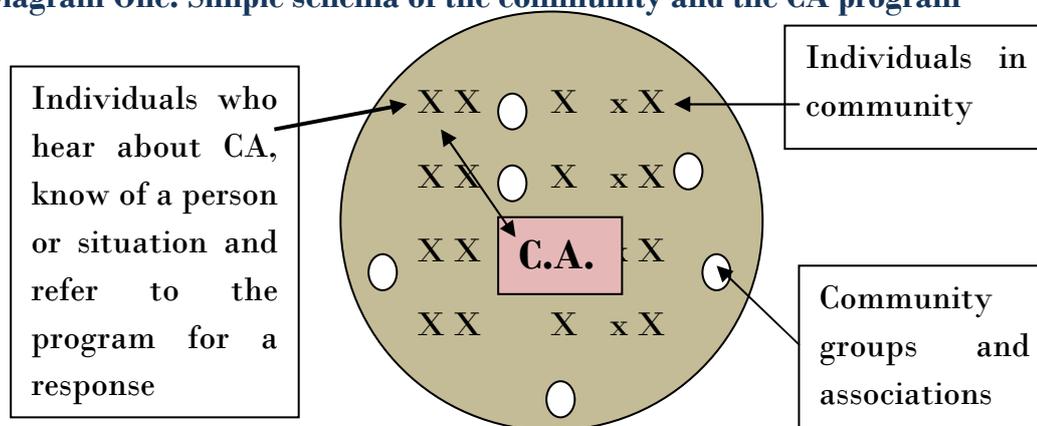
As community members have become knowledgeable about the work of CCA and attentive to the existence of disadvantaged people, community members have begun to refer people to the program to become protégé’s. There may be many reasons behind such referrals, including circumstances of true concern for the

welfare of someone, right through to disquiet about the noise a family makes within a street – especially if it's a child's voice they hear. Whatever the reason, it might not be for reasons the program would necessarily use to select someone: heightened vulnerability, incapacity to comprehend a situation or speak to it, no one in the person's life that would otherwise do so etc. Thus, the presence of potential referring parties have extended and multiplied the 'eyes' and 'ears' of Jenni across the community, but not with the knowledge and insight Jenni brings to the situation.

In some instances, a family or a person has self-referred, showing recognition of their own problems, but also arriving at their own solution—"I need an advocate". This too might be based on many untested and unexamined assumptions about what their problem is and what it would take to fix it.

Clearly, while the existence of close community contacts has yielded many excellent advocates, it has also produced a large number of protégé referrals. In some cases, the people referring the potential protégé have become (as a result of the program's selection) that person's advocate, typically with satisfactory results in the circumstances we reviewed.

Diagram One: Simple schema of the community and the CA program



From the teams observations, such referrals tended to be for people visible to members of the public because of:

- Relationship trauma or breakdown;
- A carer or relative not coping with a situation;
- Or a person physically deprived by being on the edge of society but also remaining largely free from the potential intrusion from the service system and authorities.

This visibility perhaps accounts for the fact that presently 2/3rds of all protégés currently live in their own or family home, and therefore are people who have other contacts and relationships already in their lives.

Thus the people most likely to be referred to the program are visible and troubled for many reasons—including their own poor judgement. The potential here is for the program to receive referrals for tribulations that extend from the trivial to the profound across a vast array of disadvantage; a big challenge for a single program with one coordinator to respond to.

The assessment of the appropriateness rests with the referring party

Part of the dilemma is that communities typically work by reciprocity; there is the subtle often unstated expectation ‘that one good turn deserves another’; ‘that what comes around, goes around’ and that if the community is to help, then the program best respond as well. That is, it could be hard to say ‘no’ to such referrals without the risk of cutting off the connection to associations that have been so ably built.

Citizen Advocacy *is* an attractive option, especially when presented by someone with such integrity and authenticity. It could be seen as an invitation to ‘fix’ all the lives of troubled people, with a compelling and ‘natural’ response.

Whatever the reason for the referral, the issues that are revealed are assumed to warrant the same response so that considerations of the content and/or urgency of matters are not tested against the range of possible responses that could feasibly be available or even preferable to providing a citizen advocate.

In any case, the role of the office in finding and recruiting protégé’s that most ordinary citizens would never see (because they are so rejected and so isolated from a community) is displaced by responding to the numerous referrals. The program is able to now wait for referrals, undermining its own intention of finding protégé’s according to its own recruitment plan.

Referrals tended to carry implicit urgency

A referral is sometimes characterised as a crisis, as assessed by the referring party, who might in some few cases also be the prospective protégé. When a situation is more visible, the observer naturally sees more urgency. The apparent gravity does indeed increase with certain identities where daily life might include frequent or at least regular high intensity episodes. Indeed, one might build a reputation upon such qualities. People frequently caught in episodes of ‘self determination’ vis-a-vis authorities are the mentally ill, homeless, those with addictions and otherwise poor

self regulation. The episodic and high intensity nature of interactions can ‘burn-up’ many relationships—including those of an advocacy nature.

Yet it is the heat of the interpersonal dealings rather than any constant underlying devaluation that makes the referral most pronounced. Referrals might also come from the usual dysfunctionalities of a service system in its (inadequate) dealings with the people it serves. The more dysfunctional it becomes, the more a program like CA will be approached to solve it.

The upshot can be that some referrals are for matters that are actually trivial in comparison to the relentless nature of much devaluation. The perceived and subjective impression of crisis might not always equate with tangible and concrete heightened vulnerability. These factors have not only effected the pattern of the long-term matching, but also that of crisis matching. Because this first overriding issue concerns the matter of taking referrals, we have included material developed for presentational purposes by Mitchel Peters in Appendix 2 regarding this practice, though not every situation Mitchel speaks to would necessarily apply here.

An increasing emphasis on rights versus protection

As protégés are drawn from classes of people capable of speaking up for themselves, even if inappropriately, there will likely be an increased adoption of ‘empowerment’ and ‘rights’ approaches in the ‘advocacy’ provided to a protégé. This is largely because of the cultural and political emphasis placed upon individualism and the promotion of empowerment where one is encouraged to claim one’s ‘rights as the vehicle to a better life. (It is also a common perspective voiced by advocacy and government circles generally as though it were a self-evident ‘good’).

This can occur even in the presence of staggeringly poor judgement on the part of a protégé; a situation which requires perceptive citizen advocates capable of securing more adaptive responses from the service system while rescuing the protégé from their own poor judgement, and whilst obtaining their permission to do so! The team encountered several matches that were shaped by such dynamics.

There has been no comparable period in history where a society supported empowerment *together* with incompetence. But the program will need to proceed carefully as it responds to such a confounding societal dynamic.

Never-the-less, an intensified ‘self-determination’ mode of advocacy could potentially characterise the program in the future, if this orientation in protégé recruitment were to continue.

The confusion associated with some “third party” matches

As referrals emerge from community people and contexts, they often contain one or more intact freely-given relationships, though these relationships might be significantly stretched to provide adaptive support.

In some instances, we saw that it is the non-disabled party in these freely-given relationships and not the protégé who was the primary beneficiary of the advocacy, which served to bolster, advise or protect the role of the non-disabled party in relation to the disabled party and/or their support service. Nonetheless, in such instances, the advocate had been directed to be an advocate to the disabled party (which is appropriate within the CA Model)—but given that the recipient of the advocacy had been the non-disabled party, it led to a potentially confusing scenario for everyone concerned. In other words, the real beneficiary of the advocacy could be someone other than the protégé.

In other instances, the citizen advocate has been asked to form an expressive relationship and sometimes provide instrumental support with a protégé amidst an already existing freely-given relationship that is also responsible for both functions. This would require sufficient ‘role space’ to approve and legitimate the presence of an additional person, and sufficient confidence held by the incumbent of the pre-existing relationship(s) to permit the entry of the advocate into ‘their person’s’ life. The success of a match seems dependent upon the advocate not threatening the role security of the naturally present, but struggling or unconfident party. In other words, the presence of an advocate may be interpreted as a threat by the non-disabled third *party* in an existing freely-given relationship(s) to permit the entry of the advocate into ‘their person’s’ life. (In SRV terms, the advocate could ‘devalue’ the role of the existing role incumbent). This is easily the case when parents separate, or where a parent might be construed as neglectful or abusive by other parties, including the protégé. The team referred to these matches as ‘third party’³ matches and they can be particularly problematic, especially when the protégé is a child.

Clearly, the ‘one-to-one’ nature of a CA relationship could become confused with other forms of advocacy that could be legitimate under these conditions, or in over-extending the CA model into circumstances it wasn’t designed or particularly coherent for. Sometimes, another advocacy form (like advocacy to parents) is more relevant, clearer and doable.

³ A ‘party’ can be one or more persons.

Such over-extension, in those few relationships where it was evident, could jeopardise the reputation of CCA and the CA Model when it fails to live up to its potential—which it will likely do under these conditions.

2.3.2 A drift into perfecting the community through CA

Overriding to all we have discussed in section 2.3.1 is an assumption held by many in human services that it is the community that causes of *all* the problems human service clients face. One frequently hears statements like, “You have to educate the community”, or “If it wasn’t for the community...”, or workshops on “How to make the community more inclusive”. This language and the sentiments that go with it are so pervasive within human services generally that many people function as though this were entirely true and self evident.

The truth is that the community is perfectly capable of welcoming people when the conditions are right⁴—but its human services which violate those conditions almost all of the time.

It’s easy to see how citizen advocacy might be seen as a mechanism for perfecting an imperfect community (which of course the community is) as though devaluation might actually be resolved and the devaluation of certain classes be eradicated; thus CA is an ‘antidote’ against devaluation. And of course it might be just one antidote, but the issue here is *where* the antidote is applied; is it really the community or should it be the human service system?

A trend within the matches is that many exist within community contexts rather than human service contexts, and involve many people other than those with an intellectual disability. As a result, *some* of the advocates end up directing their actions towards other freely-given relationships (because of the ‘third party’ matches discussed above) and not necessarily towards structures or systems. In this very subtle way, CA could be an instrument of correction towards imperfect ‘extra-structural’ commitments within the community.

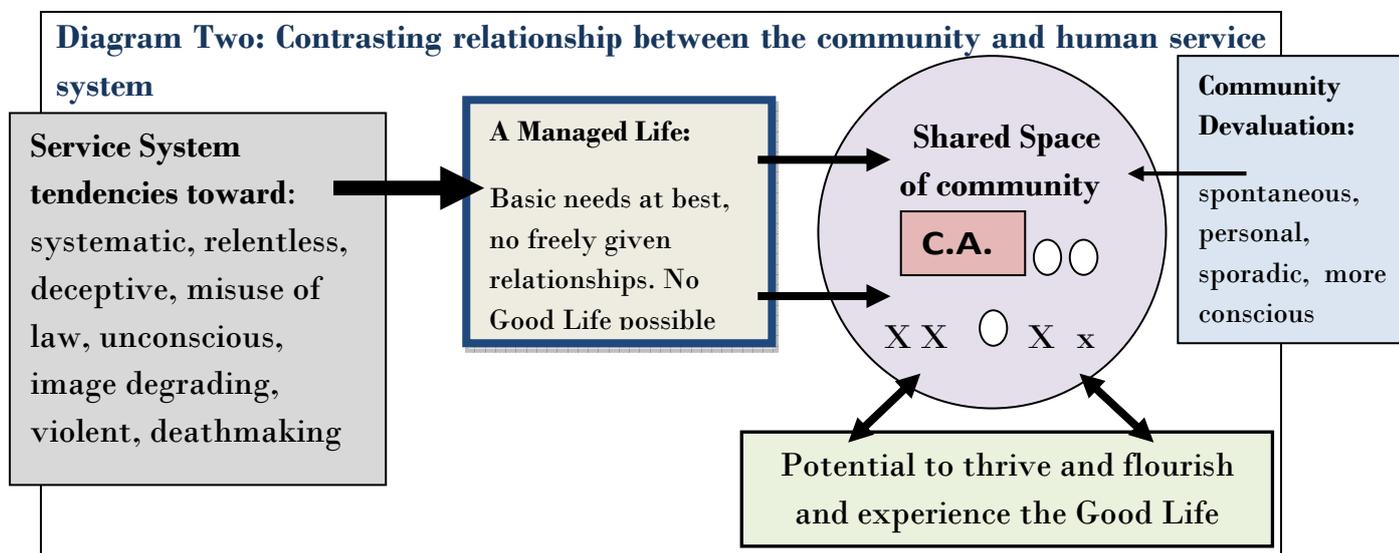
Recall that Citizen Advocacy *is* an “extra-structural” measure (outside the formal structures of the service system), whose response includes advocates having to combat the intrinsic dysfunctionalities and incapacities associated with the “human service super system”, including its inability to meet people’s expressive needs.

⁴ Many also believe that community acceptance should be unconditional and tolerance be unlimited; a modern utopian mythology applied to human nature, community and society.

Communities are places where people can thrive and flourish, though they are also places where devaluation can occur. However, such devaluation tends towards being sporadic, individual, personal and relatively conscious (because of its personal nature).

In contrast, structures have a distinct propensity towards devaluation that is collective, systematic, systemic (built-in), relentless, unconscious, detoxified and hidden, denied, and violent even to the point of deathmaking. And it is much less escapable. Of course there is a massive gulf between the life of someone “living” within the system and life as it potentially can be in the community. For instance, service system life has virtually no potential for achieving the ‘Good Life’. As Dr Wolfensberger mentions in his history of human service workshop, “people aren’t consumers of the human service system; they are *consumed* by the human service system.

Importantly, a few of the protégé’s in the program have either avoided the service system or been thrown out of it *and* have elected to remain outside of the mainstream community as well—with all manner of associated detriments and deprivations, but with their ‘freedom’ intact. A citizen advocate too might be perceived as an entity of the system or the conforming elements of a community, and also be likewise rejected.



It is the power of one freely-given relationship to be *the* bridge between the devalued world and the valued world. It’s also *the* thing that can prevent a person from being made dead. Hence the critical role of Citizen Advocacy in bringing freely-given relationships to unseen people whose lives are engulfed and endangered by the human service system.

2.3.3 The Committee's style of involvement has left the program vulnerable

The third and final overriding issue that has shaped the practices of the program at this time is the type and nature of the involvement of the Management Committee. While the team earlier noted much strength to the Committee, it was also clear that the type of program assistance given by the committee to the coordinator was lacking in some crucial elements. Some of this was due to new people 'learning the ropes' and of course the busyness of modern life placing demands upon availability. However, even in its general practice the Committee seems to have assumed that its coordinator is so competent as to not need very much assistance. For example, her report is tabled but doesn't appear to receive appraisal or discussion. Rather the Coordinator's report should occupy *the* central position of any general Committee meeting of citizen advocacy.

Several committed members of the current Committee are required to become very competent with the detail and operation of the Citizen Advocacy Model and the key activities thereof so that they can provide the coordinator with needed moral, emotional and technical support. There are several ways well motivated Committee members might gather such expertise and experience, including (and not always in this order):

- Be part of a CAPE evaluation, even repeatedly;
- Visit prospective protégé's with the coordinator and together develop a profile and help delineate advocate roles and characteristics;
- Make sure all Committee work and functions are done by members of the Committee and not the coordinator or office staff;
- Develop a key-office –activities sub-committee who meet regular with the Coordinator;
- Be part of the annual internal relationship review and develop goals for the coming year with the coordinator;
- Attend an internal relationship review of another program;
- Visit other programs;
- Do an SRV and PASSING workshop (which your past president has done);
- Be part/sit in on the orientation of new advocates;
- Drop in frequently and sit and talk with the coordinator about their work;
- Discuss how well the coordinators goals were achieved in the last week, and what they plan to work on in the coming week;
- Attend match meeting, celebrate together.

These activities are crucial for any program that wants to thrive, and will be particularly important for this Committee to do if it is to survive the loss of their

current coordinator and properly recruit, train and supervise the next coordinator of the program. And speaking as a past Committee member who did this, it is also very enjoyable.

3. Recommendations

The team wish to provide a small array of recommendations for your consideration over the months ahead. Most flow of course from the above discussion and should therefore seem self evident.

- Recognise that the epicentre of wounding and deathmaking as residing in formal structures than within community;
- Understand the vulnerability that arises from an intellectual disability and being part of, or threatened by/with the Human Service Super System;
- Be cautious of associations and alliances with human service groups – even those portrayed as community groups and be more discerning of community that is truly representative of the community’s interests;
- Find and use ways to directly infiltrate the Human Service System. To find people who deeply need the protection of an extra-structural relationship;
- Define protégé needs and corresponding advocate roles with greater clarity;
- Be clearer in defining what a crisis is and what a crisis match looks like (i.e. don’t believe what you are presented with as being accurate);
- Clarify when other forms of advocacy can fulfil a more appropriate response to a presented need;
- Clarify language and practice in relation to discontinuation;
- The Committee to develop a greater level of expertise and practical involvement with the program as outlined in 2.3.3;
- Anticipate the need for, and immediately develop, plans to strengthen the Committee and Program in the event that Jenni leaves.

4. Some Reflections on the Mt Morgan Project

The opportunity to extend citizen advocacy to another locale is indicative of the board's appreciation of the benefits CA can bring to the lives of protégés and for communities to not assume people's needs are met within the service system alone. There is also much that other CA programs can learn from your efforts, so we would encourage someone writing about this experience and what it has taught you.

For example, we were impressed to learn of your efforts in gaining local support to the idea of CA. Though your initial public meeting only had one respondent (someone with a CA past from Western Australia!), you remained undaunted and embarked on a series of conversations with people of key importance to the town and then with other locals in a series of cafe based meals, introducing people to the ideas and concepts of Citizen Advocacy in the hope the idea would be picked up and carried by local people seeing the need.

The team understands that there had been interest in establishing a new program within the region for some time. We also learnt that funding had been applied for that could have involved other wealthier localities like Yeppoon and Emu Park, but the selection committee awarded the project location to Mt Morgan.

We understand Mt Morgan has a population of approximately 3000, and was a gold, silver and copper mine until its closure in 1981. The town now has very mixed economic fortunes and is regarded as a somewhat disadvantaged community—hence the funding committee's interest in awarding the grant to this area. In fact, Mt Morgan may be so depleted, so unique and so distinctive, that it is very hard for outsiders to have much influence, especially one that would involve significant amounts of extra work to form a Committee and apply for funding and all the work of founding a new legal entity.

However, the team suspects that certain conditions would favour the introduction of a new citizen advocacy program to a new town/region. Such conditions would include:

- A reasonable population (say 20,000-100,000) of adaptive people;
- A reasonably high level of employment – else nearly everyone is disadvantaged;
- A reasonable economy and abundance of valued social roles;

- Deeply wounded and vulnerable people—perhaps living vastly different lives to others in the community—that a local program could identify and identify with;
- Parents and human service workers who hold positive ideologies who together might initiate the interest in CA and draw others to share their concerns. (Usually, someone has to ‘see’ the discrepancy of how people live with how others live. This discrepancy then becomes the basis for action—the burning desires to do something to change things.)

When a community is clearly disadvantaged, they will often have little stake in lifting others up, especially if any association with clearly devalued people is likely to further endanger their already tenuous social position. This is why the strong can afford to protect the weak; the weak can’t afford to. An effort would need enough people whose own status will not be injured by such associations and who are willing to act. We suspect Mt Morgan is not quite there yet, but perhaps Gladstone is?

5. Conclusion

This has been a most interesting evaluation. This is a busy, vibrant program involving people with very impressive credentials and abilities. The team really has learnt a great deal from this experience. We also hope that we have left you with some worthwhile things to work on that are supportive to your continued efforts of forming many very good matches.

Special thanks to Jenni Keerie and Louise who did so much work in bringing us altogether and for the open warmth and fellowship provided by everyone on the Committee.

A particular thanks to all the protégé’s and advocates who gave of their time to meet with us and share their stories that gave us so much to learn from.

John Armstrong

On Behalf of CAPE Team 2010

Appendix One: CAPE Checklist

CAPE CHECKLIST

CAPRICORN CITIZEN ADVOCACY

DATE: August 9-13, 2010

Advocate independence

R111 Unpaid Roles Level 4

R11211 Internal promotion Level 4

R11212 External promotion Level 2

R1122 Advocate practice Level 4

Program independence

R1211 CA program separation from direct service Level 4

R1212 Independent CA office location Level 4

R122 Independence of funding sources Level 1

Clarity of staff function

R131 Focus of staff role definition Level 5

R132 Staff independence from other advocacy forms Level 3

R133 Ties to the citizen advocacy movement Level 3

Protégé characteristics

R1411 Protégé age Level 4

R1412 Protégé capacity for relationship reciprocity Level 4

R1413 Protégé need for spokespersonship to defend human and legal rights Level 4

R1414 Protégé need for long term relationships Level 4

Diversity of advocacy roles

R1421 Diversity of current advocacy roles Level 3

R1422 Balance of current and planned advocacy relationships Level 4

R1423 Availability of crisis advocates Level 4

R1424 Involvement of youth advocates	Not rated
(R143) Avoiding social overprotection	Level 4
(R15) Positive interpretations of handicapped people	Level 4
<i>Citizen Advocacy office effectiveness</i>	
R21 Vision and creativity of protégé recruitment	Level 3
R22 Advocacy recruitment	Level 3
R23 Advocate orientation	Level 3
R24 Advocate - protégé matching	Level 3
R25 Follow up and support to relationships	Level 5
R26 Ongoing training	Level 5
R27 Advocate associates emphasis	Level 3
R28 Balance of key CA office activities	Level 3
R29 Encouragement of advocate involvement with voluntary associations (insufficient evidence)	Level
R210 Sufficiency of CA office staff	Level 2
<i>Community leadership involvement</i>	
R311 Feasible governance and guidance structures	Level 2
R312 Composition of governance and guidance bodies	Level 2
R313 Level of leadership involvement	Level 1
<i>Funding related issues</i>	
R321 Long term funding potential	Level 4
R322 Local funding participation	Level 1
R323 Program legitimisation	Level 4

Appendix Two: Article by Mitchel Peters

Implications of Indiscriminate and Passive Acceptance of Referrals for People with Disabilities to be Matched with Citizen Advocates

1. People most in need of advocacy are not likely to come to the attention of the Citizen Advocacy office because:

(a) some of the most vulnerable people remain isolated or otherwise have limited means to contact the Citizen Advocacy office;

(b) when referrals are made, any bias or vested interest of the referring party is apt to influence its rationales for nominating “who” and “why”—with the possible consequence that those in genuine or serious need of advocacy will be overlooked;

(c) responding to referrals will displace the Citizen Advocacy office’s efforts to actively seek out people with the most serious or significant advocacy needs.

2. Referrals, by definition, provide reasons why a particular party should be matched with an advocate, which has the potential of usurping the role of the Citizen Advocacy office in independently identifying the needs of the party referred.

3. The Citizen Advocacy office will gain an ever-increasing waiting list, but given its typically small-scale response:

(a) for some people, considerable time may elapse before the office can even begin to recruit an advocate on their behalf;

(b) many people will never be matched with an advocate, thus compounding their pre-existing wound of rejection.

4. Referrals can serve as a means to manipulate the Citizen Advocacy office into responding, prompted by the referring party’s ulterior motives such as the desire to:

(a) absolve itself of the legitimate responsibility to take further action which is within its capacity or mandate;

(b) control the character and direction of the office;

(c) incapacitate the operation of the office by placing demands on its (possibly already stretched) resources.

5. In terms of the composition of matches arranged by the Citizen Advocacy office, there is unlikely to be a wide range of protégé characteristics and needs, and a corresponding diversity of advocacy roles, as stated in the principle, “Balanced Orientation to Protégé Needs” in CAPE.

6. If a significant portion of referrals is about “requesting a friend,” then the consequent matching practices of the Citizen Advocacy office will transform its identity to that of a “buddy” programme.

7. If the Citizen Advocacy office exclusively or primarily responds to referrals from service-providing agencies, it is likely to invite the perception that the office is merely an adjunct to the service system, rather than be seen as an independent entity.

Mitchel Peters

Appendix Three: Members of the Team

Bob Lee(QLD)

Bob has been involved in providing services for people with disability since 1978, and since 1984 has been actively involved in advocacy efforts aimed at protecting and defending the rights of people with disability. In 1996, Bob was employed as the founding co-ordinator of the Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy Program and continues to work in that role. Bob has been involved in four Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluations (CAPE) as a team member, one each at Illawarra and Adelaide, and twice at Perth West, and as the team leader in the Launceston CAPE in 2010. He is also a regular participant in SRV and PASSING events, and has been a PASSING team leader at five events.

Peter Hill (SA)

Peter lives in Southern Suburbs of Adelaide. He is a licensed technician for Telephone/Data Cabling and Portable Appliance Testing, He currently tests & tags Electrical Equipment in his own Business. He became involved in CA in 2000 when Patrick Ruthven of CASA told the story of Andrew a man with mild intellectual disability and of profound vulnerability and became that man's advocate. In 2002 Peter became involved on the Board of CASA and later became the Vice Chairperson. He left the board in 2005 due to other commitments that included Kairos Prison Ministry and other community activities. He continues his involvement to this date as a member of the CASA Key Office Activities Committee

Vanessa Henry (Tas)

Vanessa is the Assistant Coordinator for Citizen Advocacy Launceston Region Inc, and started there in 2008. She has attended SRV events, National Conference on SA and visited a number of programs as part of her training.

Prior to working for CA she has been working within the Human service sector for 15 years, as a support worker in various areas including Aged Care, Mental Illness, Acquired Brain Injury and Intellectual and physical disability.

Mitchel Peters (WA)

Mitchel is the chairperson of Citizen Advocacy Eastern Suburbs in Perth, Western Australia. Mitchel has been involved in Citizen Advocacy for over 20 years, having started work at Citizen Advocacy WA (now known as Citizen Advocacy Perth West) in 1989. In the mid-90s, he was a founding member of Citizen Advocacy Eastern Suburbs, and then its first co-ordinator. Mitchel has also served as editor of the international journal, the Citizen Advocacy Forum. In addition to providing training to Citizen Advocacy programs, he has participated in a number of evaluations using the CAPE tool, variously as team member, report writer, and team leader.

John Armstrong (NSW)

John is a self-employed human services consultant and SRV trainer who has also served as a CA Board Member, Chairperson, and Advocate, and is now the Secretary of the CA Trust of Australia. He has led many CAPE evaluations within Australia and one in the USA. He has been used by many programs in Australia, North America and New Zealand to conduct Board and Coordinator training sessions over many years.

Elsie Burke

Elsie Burke has been a Board Member of the Sunshine Coast Citizen Advocacy program for eight years, filling a number of executive roles. She is currently the Vice – president of the program. Elsie is a parent of a person with a disability, and before her involvement in Citizen Advocacy, worked for 25 years in management of Human Services. Participation in SRV and PASSING training made Elsie acutely aware of the impact of services on the lives of people with disability. She sees Citizen Advocacy as a powerful tool to reduce the negative impact of the human service system and contribute to making positive changes in the lives of people with disability.