

*Validation: An Approach to
Helping Persons With Dementia*

*Creating Meaningful Connections with People Living
with Dementia
A Different Point of View
Presented by:*

*Maureen Magrath, ACSW, CCM, LNCJA
Executive Director
Neosha Owens, CNA Reminiscence Coordinator
Sunrise Senior Living (Sunrise of Chesterfield)*

**It's All About Touching The
Heart...**





**Validation Therapy
Naomi Feil, MSW**

Developed from 1963-1980 Used in Europe long before it came to US-

Developmental theory for disoriented elders (ages 80-100)

Method for categorizing behavior, using specific techniques to regain dignity

Primary Principles of Validation Therapy

- Understanding attitudes about older adults
- Realizing thoughts, opinions and memories are important
- Using empathy... providing assistance to relieve pent up emotions, express inner needs, and resolve unfinished life tasks

Previous Approaches with Persons With Dementia

- Reality orientation
- Insight oriented counseling
- Therapeutic Fib
- Redirection
- Activities

Most importantly...
Seniors need to have relationships



Four Phases of Disorientation/Resolution

Mal-oriented (Alice)

Time confused (Jean M.)

Repetitive Motion (Ellen)

Vegetation (Rosemary)

(technique handout)

Validation Techniques- Malorientation

- Centering
- Asking who, what,where,how questions(never why)
- Rephrasing
- Using the preferred sense
- Asking the extreme
- Imagining the opposite
- Reminiscing

Validation techniques-Time Confusion

- Centering
- Touching
- Maintaining eye contact and a caring tone of voice
- Observing, matching, and expressing the emotion with emotion
- Using ambiguity:he,she,it,something
- Music
- Linking behavior with a basic human need

Validation Techniques- Repetitive Motion

- Centering
- Touching
- Linking behavior with a basic human need
- Mirroring
- Using music

Validation Techniques- Vegetation

- Centering
- Using music
- Using sensory stimulation
- Touching

Using the Five Senses



Allegory of the Five Senses - Oil on canvas Sold

*"When eyesight fails elders use the
mind's eye to see..."*

(Ellen and Kristin)

*"Painful feelings that are expressed,
acknowledged, and validated by a
trusted listener will diminish. Painful
feelings that are ignored or suppressed
will gain strength"*

*(Jean)
(Emily)*

*"People live on several levels of
awareness, often at the same time. We
never lie to them because we know that
on some level they know the truth"*

(Georgia)

"We understand and except that for individuals present day events act as triggers for events from the past"

(Edna)

Validation Groups



Feeling accepted
To have friends...face
to face interactions

The need to be a
"social being"
Being heard; opinions
count

Validation Groups



To be involved in the process of life
Using one's abilities and powers
Experiencing the deepest source of
satisfaction and joy
To have a purpose to be alive!

Known Benefits of Validation Therapy

- Restore feelings of worthiness
- Reduces feelings of stress
- Justifies living
- Allows for work towards unfinished conflicts of the past
- Reduces the need for chemical/physical restraints
- Increases verbal and non-verbal communication
- Prevents withdrawal that moves inward to vegetation
- Improves physical wellbeing

Gives one the opportunity to live a more dignified life all the way to the end!

Bringing It All Together...

(Gladys Wilson and Naomi)

Sunrise Assisted Living

For more information about the use of validation therapy with individuals living with dementia:

Contact: **Maureen Magrath**
636-536-3800
Chesterfield.Ed@sunriseseniorliving.com
