

Definition/Primary Purpose

- Validation is a way of caring for and communicating with older adults suffering from Alzheimer's type dementia that helps reduce stress, enhance dignity and increase happiness. Validation caring and empathetic approaches can be used to support meaningful communication and interaction. When one can "step into the shoes" of another human being and "see through their eyes," one can start to enter the world of those with memory loss and understand the meaning of their sometimes bizarre behavior.
- Caregivers who use these techniques validate expressed feelings, rather than focusing on disorientation and confusion.

Three Components

- Validation is a theory that older adults suffering from Alzheimer's type dementia struggle to resolve unfinished life issues before death. Their movements reflect human needs. Validation classifies these behaviors into four progressive stages.
- Validation is based on a basic, empathetic attitude that respects and values without judgment.
- Validation includes specific techniques for individual as well as group work, based on the needs of the individual and his or her phase of resolution.

Four Phases of Resolution

- Malorientation: Expressing past conflicts in disguised forms.
- Time confusion: No longer holding onto reality; retreating inward.
- Repetitive motion: Movements replace words and are used to work through unresolved conflicts.
- Vegetation: Shuts out world completely and gives up trying to resolve living.

Eleven Principles of Validation

- All aging adults with Alzheimer's type dementia are unique and worthwhile.
- Those with Alzheimer's type dementia should be accepted as they are: we should not try to change them.
- Listening with empathy builds trust, reduces anxiety and restores dignity.
- Painful feelings that are expressed, acknowledged and validated by a trusted listener will diminish. Painful feelings that are ignored or suppressed will gain in strength.
- There is a reason behind the behavior (unmet need).
- The reasons that underlie the behavior can be one or more of basic human needs.
- Early learned behaviors return when verbal ability and recent memory fails
- Personal symbols are people or things (in present time) that represent people, things or concepts from the past that are laden with emotion.
- Those with Alzheimer's type dementia can live on several levels of awareness, often at the same time.
- When the 5 senses fail, they see with their "mind's eye" and hear sounds from the past.
- Events, colors, sounds, smells, tastes and images create emotions, which in turn trigger similar emotions experienced in the past. They react in present time, the same way they did in the past.

Theoretical Foundation

- Rogers: Client centered approach-using empathy. Accept your client without judgment.
- Maslow: Hierarchy of needs
- Freud: Preconscious, conscious and unconscious
- Piaget: Movement comes before speech in human cognitive development.
- Jung: Know your client as a unique individual.
- Penfield: Human beings can stimulate their brains to recreate vivid visual, auditory and kinesthetic memories.
- Schettler & Boyd: Early, well-established emotional memories survive to very old age.

Value of Validation

- Aging adults with Alzheimer's type dementia respond to Validation. Change in behavior is slow and fluctuates from day to day, but permanent change does occur.
- Caregivers are empowered with a sense of connection with loved one, client, etc.
- Caregivers morale is increased and burn-out is decreased.
- Caregivers express a greater sense of fulfillment at work.
- Caregivers feel more capable of handling difficult situations.
- Families will visit loved ones more often.

Training & Workshop Options

- Community Workshops
- Seminars
- Validation Associate
- Validation Certification
- Validation Teacher
- Private Consultation

Reference

- Feil, N. V., Klerk-Rubin, V. (2012) The Validation Breakthrough: Simple Techniques for Communicating with People with Alzheimer's and Other Dementias. 3rd ed. Health Professions Press. Baltimore
- For more info on Validation visit www.voavalidation.org
- Volunteers is an Authorized Validation Organization (AVO)