

# Validation News

A Newsletter from the Validation Training Institute

Validation is a method of communicating with and helping disoriented very old people. It is a practical way of working that helps reduce stress, enhance dignity and increase happiness. Validation is built on an empathetic attitude and a holistic view of individuals.



## NAVA 2014 Validation Conference

by Rev. James Day, M.Div., CVT and president of NAVA (North American Validation Association)

The 2014 Validation Conference from May 7-9 in Dublin, Ohio brought unity and honor to Validation. The conference was sponsored by Viaquest Inc., a company that is new to the Validation world of dementia care. Viaquest also hosted a number of conference meetings at their home office in Dublin and secured the venue of the local Abbey Theatre for Naomi Feil, to teach a day-long workshop on May 8<sup>th</sup>. The conference was also sponsored and organized by established AVO's: Country Meadows of Hershey, PA, Sunrise Senior Living, McLean, VA, and Volunteers of America, Minneapolis, MN.

The internal growth of unity and mutual strength was seen in the teacher meeting on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Just a couple of years ago, we had only 12 functioning Validation teachers nationally, but at this conference we had 25 teachers out of 29 in attendance. To have this many teachers teaching Validation around the country is a huge step forward for Validation in the USA.

There was a powerful interaction among the teachers, sharing ideas, frustrations, successes, and vision. A number of the new teachers were instrumental in helping the organizing of the workshop and completing key tasks to make it run smoothly.

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The highpoint of the teacher meeting was when Naomi stood and thanked all the teachers for teaching Validation around the country and said to them, “you are all my children”.

It goes without saying that Naomi Feil did a wonderful job teaching the workshop on May 8. It was a unifying event for the teachers, health care workers, and representatives of many companies.

The conference also was a critical one because of the honor that was bestowed on Naomi and her husband Ed R. Feil. Validation as a method of dementia care promotes the dignified care of seniors with dementia. This conference was strategic because it was held in Naomi and Ed’s backyard. They live in Cleveland and this conference was held in Dublin Ohio, just outside of Columbus Ohio. It is a wonderful thing for both of them to be recognized in Ohio, the place of their habitation throughout their lives.



Harvey Sterns, PhD and Naomi Feil

Naomi Feil, was honored with a life-time achievement award from the Ohio State Gerontological Awards Committee. Dr. Harvey Stearns, committee member and professor at Akron University, was in attendance to present the award and plaque to Naomi. Many of the leaders in the Validation organization stood to give their words of thanksgiving to Naomi for all her hard work and perseverance on behalf of the humane and dignified care of seniors over her lifetime. She was gracious in receiving their words and the award.



Validation Masters Steve Klotz, Rita Altman, and Kathia Munch, with Ed R. Feil

When Ed R. Feil, Naomi’s husband, received his life-time achievement award for film and video contributions to the Validation movement, both Ed and Naomi were beaming with joy. Naomi was proud and thankful that Ed was finally getting the honor he was due because of all his film-making for Validation classes over his lifetime. The Validation masters, including Vicki de Klerk and Kathia Munch representing Europe, took their turns in thanking Ed for his video contributions to the Validation movement and his support of Naomi for so many years. He was beaming with joy when the whole audience stood to give him a standing ovation.

### New Documentary on Alzheimer’s

The Volunteers of America will be presenting a series of private advance preview screenings of the award-winning documentary, “Glenn Campbell...I’ll Be Me. In addition to teaching Validation to caregivers, they are also working with the producers of the film to raise awareness of the challenges facing Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers. “Glenn Campbell...I’ll Be Me” will appear in multiple US markets in 2014 and the spring of 2015.

To learn more about private advance preview screenings, visit [www.VOAVValidation.org](http://www.VOAVValidation.org).

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## New Course for People Volunteering in Hospitals

Master Validation teacher Hedwig Neu and her colleagues at the Landesverein for Innere Mission in the Pfalz, in Germany has developed a new Validation course for people who volunteer in hospitals, nursing homes and in homecare. They will begin with training by the volunteers working in hospitals.

1. People enter hospitals in states of physical crisis that can very quickly turn into psychological crises. Oriented people become disoriented or develop deliriums. Disoriented people quickly become more disoriented when faced with the chaotic world of a hospital. Volunteers can make a difference. Well-trained volunteers can make a bigger difference by accompanying these patients from their first entry into the hospital until their departure. This specialized validation training gives volunteers the skills to have empathy, be non-judgmental, accept the personal realities of each patient, and the communication techniques to maintain a relationship with them.

Elderly people who are engaged in a trusting relationship with another person will most likely be able to go through the hospital experience without deteriorating psychologically. And that is the main goal, to help the elderly exit the hospital experience with no more disorientation than they entered.

2. In nursing homes for older people, volunteers can help to meet the needs of maloriented or disoriented people. If they are trained in Validation at a basic level, decisions concerning activities can be made more person-centered. These volunteers can help elderly people have more possibilities and be freer in the home.
3. In homecare situations, the Validation volunteer can help relatives have the freedom to go out feeling secure because they know that the volunteer has the ability to not just look after their relative but can also build trust and communicate on a deep level.

Validation volunteers are not certified Validation Workers. They are trained in observing with empathy and can make choices about how to engage elderly people using a validating attitude. They also learn some verbal and non-verbal Validation techniques. A basic course is followed by an “update” course, after which the volunteers meet on a regular basis, accompanied by a Validation Group Practitioner or Teacher. By working with case studies under the guidance of an expert, the volunteers gain experience and security in this way of working.

### West Coast Web-Supported Level 1 Worker Course

The Validation Training Institute is teaming up with the Sunrise Senior Living AVO to offer the second ever Internet-Supported Validation Worker certification course. Beginning on October 7, 2014, this course will consist of two weekend classes in Mission Viejo, CA (December 2015 and April 2015), twice monthly interactive webinars, pre-recorded video lectures by Vicki de Klerk-Rubin, and the usual 26 weeks of practice with clients in all four phases of resolution. The teacher of the course will be Eric Portnoff, CVT and Regional Director of Memory Care for Sunrise Senior Living.

This Internet-Supported course offers the advantage of only requiring travel for two 2-day in-person sessions rather than the 5 sessions required for the traditional Validation Worker course. This structure is more economical for people attending the course from outside the meeting area, and also makes the course accessible for students who may not be able to travel for five in-person sessions. The webinars give students an opportunity to communicate with instructors and other students every few weeks rather than every two months or so. Greater accessibility, lower cost and more consistent contact are some of the benefits of the Internet-Supported approach, and the reasons why it was developed. If you have any questions about the course or would like to register, please contact Jana Stoddard [jana@vfvalidation.org](mailto:jana@vfvalidation.org). You can get more information at:

<http://www.vfvalidation.org/web.php?request=telecourse>.



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## York College Hosts Validation Worker Course

York College of Pennsylvania has become the first academic institution in the US to offer the Level 1: Validation Worker certification course for academic credit. It is scheduled as a "Special Topics" Gerontology course in the Behavioral Sciences department. It will span both the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 semesters. Those who complete all requirements will receive their CVW certification through the Country Meadows AVO. York College will grant them three academic credits each semester. The class will be taught by Steve Klotz, CVM from Country Meadows, and Dr. Mary Ligon, PhD and CVW, chair of the Behavioral Sciences department. Most of the weekly class sessions will be held in a nearby Country Meadows building. That will facilitate weekly access to older adults for Validation practice followed by immediate discussion of experiences in the classroom.

## Scientific Approaches to Validation Workshop



Speakers from left to right: Margit Wimberger, Katharina Heimerl, Hanna Mayer, Peter Fasching, and Barbara Pichler

Around 70 people found themselves in the Academy of the Vienna Red Cross on April 25th, to consider Validation from different scientific perspectives. The morning presentations centered on the disciplines of nursing science, medicine and palliative care; in the afternoon there was lively discussion about the themes presented in the form of workshops. The critical question of how new avenues of evidence-based research must be found in order to adequately reflect the effectiveness of validation (or similar nursing interventions that are based on communication and interaction) that are experienced in practice was quite exciting. The overall tenor of the day was: "Validation and Science" is important, validation research is needed and a critical, productive discourse must be continued. This meeting was an important first step! One participant said: "I want to congratulate everyone on the really successful meeting. I should have left at lunch, because I still had so much to do, but then I found it so exciting and inspiring and stayed. Thank you! "



Participants at the Vienna workshop

## In Development

The VTI is continuing its exploration of web-supported training by developing a special course for family caregivers. Family caregivers have special needs and are under unusual pressures. They need support and skills to handle the daily burdens of caring for a Maloriented or disoriented relative. By using the internet, family caregivers can have more flexibility and control over their learning. In-person training is kept to a minimum of 2 days and contact with other participants is maintained with bi-weekly webinars. We hope to have this course ready for testing in the autumn.

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## AVO News

This year the M&R Institute has supported the development of two new AVOs.

- ♥ Plateforme Suisse romande de l'animation (Switzerland)
- ♥ Relay (Spanish AVO – in collaboration with Freddy Clavijo and Vicki de Klerk)

## Happy Anniversary!

The French AVO M&R Institute celebrates its **10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** this year. Over this period, Kathia Munsch, a French speaking master, has trained 29 Teachers/Presenters (Level III), the M&R Institute taught 33 Worker Courses (approx. 14 participants per session), 350 basics courses (approx. 18 participants per session), 8 Group leader courses (approx. 14 participants per session), and since 2005, 10 sessions a year for family members.

The Austrian Validation Institute (OIV) is celebrating its **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** in December 2014.

## Save the Date

The Symposium "Vulnerability: Empathy for the Relationship Ethics " which will take place in Paris, France on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2014. Naomi will be there to talk about empathy. Following the symposium, will be the Annual European Validation Teacher meeting, spoken in French, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. These events are sponsored by the M&R Institute.

For more information go to: <http://validation-nava.org/documents/resources/en/EVA2014.pdf>

## Words of Wisdom and Laughter from Our Elders

### Quotes from older individuals during Group Validation conversations:

In a Validation group meeting, Barbara stated that “you can’t be quiet if you want freedom. You have to stand up and get what you want.” “When it has been forever since you get to do what you want, you have to take it for yourself. It is the only way to still be.”

#### **ABOUT DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE:**

In response to a question about how they deal with a person they don’t get along with, one Validation group member stated, “Kick them in the ass!”

#### **ABOUT THEIR SPOUSE:**

“My husband was a prankster. He draped my bra from the headboard to let me know he was in ‘the mood!’”

#### **ABOUT THEIR YOUNGER YEARS:**

“My backside took the punishment that my front side got me into!”

- ♥ Thanks to Steve Klotz, CVM of York, PA for providing the quotes. We would love to read about any words of wisdom or laughter you’ve heard from an elder during a conversation, or Validation group or individual session, please send them to [jana@vfvalidation.org](mailto:jana@vfvalidation.org).

## *We want your feedback!*

Please email Newsletter Publisher [ed@vfvalidation.org](mailto:ed@vfvalidation.org) with any question, comments, or suggestions. We accept submissions for further newsletters.

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