

## WINTER NEWSLETTER

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### CLINICAL COLUMN

#### Q. WHEN DO YOU USE THE VALIDATION TECHNIQUE, MIRRORING?

A. Use Mirroring when very old disoriented people (called Alzheimer's or with related disorders): 1. shut out present reality; 2. lose their eyesight, hearing, recent memory, speech, reflective self-awareness, logic, commonly understood dictionary words and social controls; 3. word-doodle; 4. feelings become incontinent. To mirror, first observe their physical characteristics. Match their breathing, facial muscles, lower lip, arm movements, leg movements, and body rhythms. Dance to their tempo. Eye-contact must be on an equal plane. Move with the person. With genuine empathy, mirror their hand-movements. Genuinely match their feelings. Using short words, say their gut emotion out loud. If they do not respond with dictionary words, sing a culturally meaningful song that matches their emotions. Link their behavior to the unmet human need. (love, safety, work, usefulness, genuine expression of human emotions.) Validation Practitioners find that Mirroring can result in increased verbal communication, relaxed gait, breathing becomes more even and anxiety lessens. The Validation Team can indicate which behaviors to mirror, how often to mirror, and which staff members are comfortable in mirroring, using the Validation Treatment Plan. To succeed, the staff members must be consciously aware of their own feelings, to put their own feelings in the closet, so that they can tune into the strong emotions of the disoriented very old person.

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