Summer 2003 Newsletter

A Newsletter for the Validation Training Institute

SUMMER 2003

CLINICAL COLUMN "Dealing with Aggression" Conclusion

By Naomi Feil

After six sessions with the Validation Worker (VW), Jill, Agnes' daughter, gains insight into her own fears of being abandoned.
She is shocked at the ugliness of her behavior; behavior that reminds her of her 89 year old mother. Jill resolves never to become like her mother.

"I'll do my best to learn how to Validate Mom, but it won't be easy. What if I make mistakes? And with "Alzheimer's", will she remember from one minute to the next?" Jill's voice mixes anger with tears. Her husband, Phil, tightens his hold on her hand as they face the "VW" in the nursing home.

"She needs you, Jill. She'll overlook your mistakes, providing you don't keep making the same ones. Your mother's recent memory is gone, but her emotional memory is intact. She'll remember your voice-tone, your constant caring, your ability to read her needs and get into her world. She'll feel less alone each time you Validate her. Her need to lash out and hurt *you* to relieve her fury at being old and dependent will decrease."

Jill swallows and nods. "How do I start?"

"Most important, when your Mom hurts you, "Center". Acknowledge your hurt, put it in the top shelf of the closet of your mind, and close the door. Later, let it all out with Phil. Spill your anger and pain. He can take it." Phil nods. Jill learns how to breathe slowly and "Center" to rid herself of the hurt.

The VW continues: "Re-phrasing" is a good way to start when you're speechless. Once you've "centered", you can stop thinking of yourself and tune into your mother with *all your energy.* Look at her eyes: Are they narrow? Squinting? Her lower lip: Is it tight? Pulled down? Her fingers: Are they pointing? Accusing? Her voice: Is it harsh? Whining? Now, pick up your mother's rhythm. You are not mimicking her. You are listening so closely that you speak the way she speaks. Your empathy shows. Say what your mother says in your own words.

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2 "Dealing with Aggression" continued

Let her know that you really hear her and are on her side. If she complains, use the technique, "Polarity." Ask her "how bad? What is the worst thing that happened?" Let her tell you the extreme. Stay away from emotions. Don't ask her how she feels. She'll tell you anyway. She doesn't want to get in touch with her feelings. She doesn't want insight. She'll deny her panic. Let her express herself *her* way through blaming. Ask factual, open questions: "What happened?" Who did it? When did it happen?" Most important, don't argue. And don't lie. Don't agree with her if what she says is not true. But don't disagree. Imprint these three magic methods: "Listen," "re-phrase," and ask her the "extreme." Jill practices the three Validation techniques as the VW assumes the role of her mother. "I think I'm ready to try Validation with Mom." Jill's voice quivers, but she is eager to begin. Jill walks with new confidence into her mother's room.

"Well," Agnes spits, "look what the cat dragged in. You finally made time to visit your own mother, with your busy schedule. I'm not interested. You can get the hell out."

Jill notes her pain and tucks away the stab of hurt. She "Centers," for ten seconds, then looks at her mother's angry eyes, her tight lips, and listens to the harsh, whiny voice-tone. "You don't want me here because I haven't seen you for a week?" Jill re-phrases, picking up Agnes' staccato rhythm.

"You hit the nail on the head, you bitch. Where were you? Fiddling around with that no-good husband of yours. That's gratitude for all I've done for you. Just get out and leave me alone." Agnes turns her back on Jill.

"You worked hard for me, Mom. All your life. Now, you're angry because I can't be with you all the time." Jill re-phrases, but uses a feeling word. As the VW worker warned, Agnes denies her anger.

"I am *not* angry." Agnes shouts. "I have never raised my voice with you. Even when you put me in this rat-hole with these old people. I don't belong here."

Jill remembers the warning, "Stay away from feelings." Her mother cannot be honest with herself. And she doesn't want to learn. Agnes holds tight to her life-long defenses: denial and blaming. Jill hopes that her mother will forgive the mistake. "Mom, you can't stand this place. And you can't stand me because I put you in here. What is the worst thing about living here?" Jill uses the "extreme."

"Everything. The crazy old people. The crabby nurses. This room." Agnes points to the bare, white walls, the tiny window, the pine dresser.

"Mom, you're used to having a big house, doing what you please, cooking and taking care of us. Now, you have to do what they tell you. And live in one room with people you don't want to be with." Jill's voice holds her mother's resentful tone.Agnes pauses, and looks at her daughter with open eyes for the first time. The two women become one for a moment.

"How is that no-good husband of yours, anyway. Why doesn't he come with you? Are you getting along?" Agnes, embarrassed by the moment of intimacy, turns from Jill.

Jill and Agnes talk simply, their emotions tucked safely away. For the next six months, Jill visited once each week accepting her mother's anger, which lessened. Agnes was able to visit Jill's home, and gradually made a friend in the nursing home. With Jill's faithful support and empathy, Agnes slowly became less aggressive.

RESEARCHING VALIDATION

Although Validation has been successfully implemented in nursing homes and day care centers world-wide since 1983, governments have not acknowledged the positive results of Validation through legislation that will promote training and increase practice.

The medical community has not yet investigated the results of Validation with Alzheimer-type populations. Instead, some prestigious medical organizations still espouse "gentle reality orientation." Reputed experts apply "diversion," "redirection," "the therapeutic lie," and when these techniques fail, medication. Hard core research is essential if Validation is to be considered part of the mainstream treatment for older people with mental impairment. For the first time, we have trained Validation practitioners who can apply Validation techniques correctly. It is our hope that some of our readers who work with mentally impaired old people will find the resources to research Validation and publish the results in a medical journal. To accomplish this, we are offering the following tool:

Empirical Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Validation Therapy for the Disoriented Aged and their Caretakers

Rationale

The population is aging with the upcoming elderly baby boomers. Currently in the ____, there are ____ people ages 75-100 representing ____% of the population. Nursing homes serving the most disoriented elderly have few tools to improve the quality of life for the patient and reduce job stressed for the caretakers.

Validation (Feil, 1982, 1991) is a method for improving communications with disoriented very old people.

Validation offers a developmental theory for maloriented and disoriented people, a method of categorizing their behavior, and specific techniques that improve the relationship between caregiver and client, helps disoriented very old people regain dignity and improve the quality of their lives. Caregivers using Validation experiences less stress the more pleasure in their work.

The primary aim of this proposed research is to use a randomized experimental design to evaluate the effects of Validation Therapy on:

(a) patient mobility, medication status, verbal communications, and social behavior and;

(b) caretaker stress, job related performance, and social support.

Overview of Design

Six nursing homes serving a total of ____ patients will be randomly assigned to either experimental or wait-list/control conditions. Homes assigned to the experimental condition will receive training of staff and support of staff when implementing Validation over the course of 6 months. Homes assigned to the waitlist/control condition will participate in assessments the first year, but not receive training until the second year. Assessments will occur at baseline, 6, 12, and 24 months. Measures will include ---------.

Participants

We have recruited ___ nursing homes serving a total of ____ patients ages 75-100 with ____ staff members (see letters of support). The homes are located in ____ (3 countries). Staff participating are ____.

Wait-List (Control) Condition

Staff members in homes randomized to the wait-list control condition will receive the baseline, 6, and 12 month assessments during the first year. After the completion of the 12 month assessment, staff in the wait-list condition will receive training in Validation (see experimental condition below).

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Wait-List (Control) Condition
Staff members in homes randomized to the wait-list control condition will receive the baseline, 6, and 12 month assessments during the first year. After the completion of the 12 month assessment, staff in the wait-list condition will receive training in Validation (see experimental condition below). After 12 months of Validation training, the 24 month assessment will be completed to replicated results as shown in the experimental condition.

Validation (Experimental) Condition
Staff members in homes randomized to the Validation (experimental) condition will receive training in Validation. Homes are divided into "floors" or "departments" which has 25-30 residents/clients and a rotating staff of about 10-15 workers. The entire staff would be introduced to the intervention with a 2 day workshop, then form a group of workers to be more intensely involved with the project and will function as team leaders. The team leaders will be trained on an intense level most likely using the Worker Course format. The Worker Course is a structured curriculum, taught over a period of at least 6 months which includes 8 full days of classroom training interspersed with practical assignments. Supervision of practice is offered at four points throughout the course.

Measures
The assessments will include ____ classes of measures: (a) direct observation of patient behavior, (b) caretaker self-report of stress, job satisfaction, social support, and knowledge (intervention fidelity), and (c) chart review. [NEED TO FIND MEASURES USED IN OTHER RESEARCH].

Analysis
(to be written last once we get more stuff worked out)

Organizational Capabilities
The Validation Training Institutes (VTI) is a not-for-profit organization based in Cleveland, Ohio. It's goals are to disseminated information, train interested individuals and maintain the integrity of Validation. VTI has developed certification levels, training programs, testing procedures and a network of national of regional Validation organizations. Ms. deKlerk-Rubin, BFA, MBA, RN (Dutch trained) is a certified Validation Teacher and the European Manager of the Validation Training Institute. Mrs. Naomi Feil, MSW, ACSW, is the Executive Director of the Validation Training Institute and the developer of Validation. She first published her book Validation: The Feil Method in 1982 and followed in 1993 with her book, The Validation Breakthrough.

In Europe, there are 10 Authorized Validation Organizations (AVO). These organizations are contracted with VTI to provide information, training and certification. They offer quality training programs to interested individuals in the region. All curriculums are authorized by VTI in order to maintain quality standards.

Within the context of this study, all training in Validation will be done by certified Validation Teachers who follow standardized curriculums and pass international testing in both theoretical and practical skills. The management of the execution of the research will be done by VTI and the local AVO. The management of the execution of the research will be done by VTI and the local AVO. The management of the data will be done by....

VALIDATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Our Authorized Validation Organization (AVO) at Country Meadows in Hershey, Pennsylvania had awarded 8 Provisional Validation Certificates in February 2002. Four of the eight have now completed their co-teacher training and are Certified Validation Teachers: (CVT®)

Rita Altman, Marie Amoroso, Deb Kunkel and Sandy Strathmeyer have completed their three year Validation training. They will begin two Validation worker courses in June, 2003. Please contact Jana Stoddard, AVO coordinator, 1-800-322-3441, in Hershey for details.

Steve Klotzs and Robin Newman, Validation Group Practitioners (CGP®), will begin a Group Practitioner course in 2004.

Eleven Certified Validation Workers (CVW®) from Pennsylvania, Missouri, New Jersey, New York and Maryland receive their diplomas in December, 2002.

As of April, 2003, 47 Certified Workers, 13 Group Practitioners and 8 Validation teachers have received their Certificates from the AVO in Hershey, PA.

Two Certified Validation Teachers, John Colletti, CVT®, and Lori Hasty, CVT®, have completed the three-year Validation training and have graduated from our AVO in Richmond, Virginia. They will begin Validation Worker Courses in 2003. Please contact Validation Coordinator, Kathleen Watson, Virginia Geriatric Education Center, 804-828-9060 for more information.

Thanks to our AVO's in Hershey and Richmond for their persistence and devotion to Validation. Congratulations to the Validation Graduates! More very old people and their families will benefit from your hard work.

VALIDATION NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

- Eight countries were represented at the 10th European Validation Association (EVA) meeting in Berlingen, Switzerland on November 9 & 10th, 2002, hosted by Validation Co-ordinator, Carsten Niebergall. Thomas Schelzky, EVA President, presided at the Teacher's Meeting, held on November 6 & 7th. Participants agreed that "this was the most successful EVA meeting to date."

- EVA has published a web site: www.validation-eva.com.

- Austria has completed a Validation Research tool, and is looking for funds to begin the research study.

- Vicki de Klerk, European Validation Manager and Master Teacher (CVM®), has signed a contract to teach the course in Okayama, Tokyo and Kyoto. Hopefully, within three years, Japan will graduate Certified Validation Teachers who can help disoriented Japanese older people and give relief to their families.

- The Text, VF/VALIDATIONS: THE FEIL METHOD, has been published in Spanish, by Herder Publishing Company. Hopefully, our book will reach Spanish-speaking population throughout the world.

Note: Naomi Feil's workshop schedule is found on our website: www.vfvalidation.org

Please send your Letters to the Editor, or articles on Validation to: THE VALIDATION NEWSLETTER, 21987 Byron Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44122.