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Title: Validation therapy with disoriented very old persons: Impact of group interventions on activities of daily living, on aspects of behaviour, cognition and general well-being.

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Abstract: Validation therapy (VT) is a humanistic approach that aims at preventing withdrawal and restoring a sense of self-worth and dignity in very old and disoriented persons suffering from a dementia. This study was designed to measure the impact of VT on the following variables: activities of daily living (ADL), behaviour, cognition, and the general well-being of demented elderly persons. Twenty-eight participants were assigned to one of four groups: The two experimental groups received VT for the six-month research period; the two control groups were introduced to non-specific activities and only received VT for the second half of the study. During the semi-weekly sessions, the experimental subjects were encouraged to express themselves, communicate with others, and play well-known roles. Group leaders worked to create a relationship of trust, empathetic psychosocial environment of acceptance, and to acknowledge the participants' emotional expressions. There was a trend of maintained or improved levels of ADL functioning, but the hypothesis that ADL would improve significantly within the experimental groups was not statistically confirmed. Interactive behaviours within sessions increased. Although it was not possible to generalize to behaviours outside the group sessions based on questionnaire data, the administration of less psychotropic medication pointed to a more stable condition with fewer behaviour problems for the participants. Specific cognitive functions such as concentration and language showed improvement. Qualitative descriptions indicated that VT had benefitted the participants, although in the experimental groups,

these improvements were not maintained throughout the study period. The hypothesis of improvement in general well-being was not confirmed by interview data. Analyses of the data suggest that the absence of more significant results was caused by the following factors: small sample size; attrition due to accidents, illnesses and death; the impact on this clientele of uncontrollable environmental factors such as staff changes, displacements in living situations, climatic changes and exposure to acoustic distractions; and the insensitivity of evaluation instruments to adequately measure the variables. In spite of the above-mentioned factors, significant results were obtained on some of the experimental variables, thus warranting further investigations into the efficacy of VT with disoriented elderly persons suffering from dementia. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA, all rights reserved)

Subjects: *Activities of Daily Living; *Cognition; *Dementia; *Psychotherapeutic Techniques; *Well Being

PsycINFO Classification: Health & Mental Health Treatment & Prevention (3300)
Social Psychology (3000)

Population: Human

Age Group: Adulthood (18 yrs & older)
Aged (65 yrs & older)
Very Old (85 yrs & older)

Methodology: Empirical Study

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