

Validation

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<http://www.validation.org>

"The Empathy/Sympathy Distinction"

By Naomi Feil, M.S.W., A.C.S.W.

I tried all the Verbal Validation techniques, but none of them worked. Mattie Johnson packed her bags, pushed me out of her way and took off. Why didn't Validation work with her? What should I have said next?

Frustrated, Sally Walker, Certified Validation Worker, was at her wit's end. She and I role-played the episode. Technically, Sally had said all the right things. What she lacked was empathy. Sally never soaked in Mattie Johnson's fear. The 92-year-old TIME CONFUSED woman was terrified. Her eyes were focused on something far away, her lower lip shook, shoulders hunched, movements jerky, breathing rapid, nostrils quivering, voice trembling. Sally, without emotion, in a matter-of-fact tone, held Mattie's arm to keep the old woman from leaving, and asked: "How far is your house? Who do you have to see there?"

The old woman ignored her, pushing Sally's arm away. Sally tried again: "It seems to me that you are feeling anxious?"



"The Empathy/Sympathy Distinction"

By Naomi Feil, M.S.W., A.C.S.W. (continued from page 1)

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The frightened old woman did not hear Sally. More than ever, Mattie Johnson was determined to go home where she belonged. She could not stay in this strange place with strangers. Mattie Johnson needed to feel safe. She did not need words. She needed love.

Sally, like many caregivers, had been inculcated with Carl Rogers' reflective, client-centered, listening techniques. Since the 1940s, Carl Rogers has been helping his clients heal themselves by reflecting their feelings. His patients came to him for help. They could think logically and they wanted to get in touch with their emotions so that they could change undesirable behaviors, which made them unhappy.

Carl Rogers believed that his clients could help themselves. When he reflected their feelings, his clients achieved insight: when emotions and intellect click! They usually knew why they were unhappy and were able to change their behaviors. Counselors are steeped in phrases that help younger clients achieve cognitive awareness of their suppressed emotions:

"Let's sit down and talk about it." "It seems to me that you're worried about something." "Tell me about it." "How do you feel about it?" "I hear you."

Clients begin to think. They begin to talk about how they feel. They analyze. They figure out why they act the way they do. They change. They act differently and are happier.

Mattie Johnson, diagnosed with an Alzheimer's dementia, was not interested in analyzing her feelings or in a counselor-client relationship. At age 92, her logical thinking was impaired. She did not come to Sally for help. She could not talk about her feelings partly because she didn't want to, and partly because she had lost much of her speech. She did not know Sally. Here and now reality was blurry. She could barely see Sally. She did not want to be in this nursing home. Present reality was painful. Mattie had never learned to live alone, without her family, in a nursing home with nothing to do. Outside reality had faded, but Mattie Johnson's mind's eye was clear. She saw her mother. She needed to be with her. She pushed Sally, a stranger, aside. TIME CONFUSED old people cannot and do not want to "sit and talk about it." Panicked, alone, not knowing where they are, they want to be in a safe place with people they know. TIME CONFUSED old people will not listen to reason. They have their own reason.

"Outside reality had faded, but Mattie Johnson's mind's eye was clear. She saw her mother. She needed to be with her."

Naomi Feil

Sally was so focused on her own need to keep Mattie from leaving that she forgot to focus on Mattie. Sally told me: "I felt sorry for her. I really wanted to help her, to make her feel better." Sally cared about this old woman, but



Empathy/Sympathy Distinction continued

Feeling sorry for someone is pity, not empathy. The one who pities does not feel what the pitied person feels. Emotionally, the pitier remains removed. Empathy happens when one human being feels what another feels, without pity, without judging if the behavior is good or bad. Empathy is being one with another. With empathy, Validation almost always works.

"WHAT DO I SAY NEXT, Part Two" will give the reader specific ways of being that bring about empathy and healing for the TIME CONFUSED old person.

"Feeling sorry for someone is pity, not empathy.
The one who pities does not feel what the pitied person feels."

Naomi Feil

Notes and Testimonies: A Letter from Family Member, Clint Eull

Dear Naomi,

My name is Clint Eull. My father and I attended your workshop at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach on June 12th.

I am writing to tell you of our success using Validation Therapy with my 80-year-old mother ... she has been mainly in "Time Confusion" and "Repetitive Motion," with minimal verbalization.

We have seen, for the first time, "good days," when she is cooperative and lucid and the day is free of combative incidents. We are accomplishing this by bearing in mind that we are in her world, and are achieving marked improvements

in the quality of our lives by using your techniques. My father had been advised by experts to stop wasting his time when my mother did not recognize him. He was told that she would become a vegetable within a relatively short period of time.

Your work is greatly appreciated, because, thanks to your techniques, we are able to communicate once again and function as a family.

Very truly yours,

Clint Eull, III 4009 Pacific Coast Highway
#415 Torrance, California 90505



Naomi Feil : upcoming schedule

Feb 4 thru Feb 25 - Workshops in Europe

March 5 Albuquerque, New Mexico
Cindy Brown 505-881-0120

March 9, 10 & 11 Jessica Fogg 410-884-0773

March 14, 15 & 16
Memphis, TN Memphis Jewish Home
36 Blazeberry Rd.
Steve Roizen 901-758-0036

March 20
Northwest Territories Canada XOEOTO
Inuvik Regional Health & Social Services Board
Bag Service #2, Inuvik
Judy Ladouceur 867-777-2955/867-777-4036

March 29
Falls Church, VA
Trisha Jarrell 703-578-7245

April 6 & 7
San Angelo, Midland Alz. Assoc., Grter. West TX
Chap. P.O. Box 3389
Gail Harmon 915-570-9191
Midland, TX 79702

April 9
Cleveland, OH Tri-C
Denise Burton 216-987-2351

April 13
Helena, MT
Montana Health Care Assoc.
36 S. Last Chance Gulch, Ste. A 59601
Rose Hughes 406-443-2876

April 15
Ravenna, OH

Robinson Memorial Hosp. 330-297-0811
6847 N. Chestnut St. /P.O. Box 1204
William Foster 330-297-0811

April 17 thru May 4 Workshops in Australia

May 14
Manchester, MO 63021
American Systems, Inc.
1895 Dougherty Terrace Dr.
Mary Ann Hess: Voice Mail 913-661-1731) #446

May 19
Manchester, NH 03104
Assured Care @ LLC /700 Chestnut St.
Nab Langlois 603-624-6959

May 21
Seattle, WA Linda McGrath (possible) 425-
455-1440

June 6 - 25 Workshops in Europe

August 14
Norfolk, VA /Darlene Castellano 757-460-1607

Aug. 30 & 31
Springfield, IL/ Mary J. Savage 217-523-9201
X25

Sept. 6 - 29 Workshops in Europe

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VTI: 21987 Byron Road
Cleveland, Ohio 44122



VTI News : International Standardization process now underway

The first U.S. Authorized Validation Organization will be opening up at the George M. Leader Institute of Learning in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Validation founder, Naomi Feil, will join her daughter, Vicki de Klerk in teaching the Validation Worker Certification Curriculum on the following dates:

August 2,3, 1999: Naomi

October 7,8, 1999: Vicki de Klerk

December 16,17, 1999: Vicki de Klerk

February 17, 18, 2000: Vicki de Klerk

April 17, 18, 2000: Vicki de Klerk

If you are interested in attending contact Barb Frey, coordinator, at 717-532-2474. VTI is in the process of standardizing certification in the United States with the European classifications:

1. Validation practitioner (worker)
2. Group Validation practitioner
3. Validation Teacher.

Further information on the current status of CVTs while the standardization process is in flux will be forthcoming. Also, Naomi plans on having additional training opportunities in the U.S. for those interested in meeting Validation Teacher requirements.

Health Professions Press is publishing the VALIDATION TEACHING MANUAL. Special Teaching Outlines are provided for In-Service Directors, Home Health teachers, nursing home consultants, Alzheimer chapters that work with family members, physicians and nurses who teach gerontology, Occupational and Physical Therapists, Protective Service Workers, lawyers who work with legal guardians and clergy. Contact

Mary Magnus, Health Professions Press, 410-337-9585.

THE VALIDATION BREAKTHROUGH is listed by the Library of Speech-Language Pathology, Volume 31, Issue 11, as a teaching tool to help speech pathologists communicate with disoriented elderly. We are receiving more letters

Vicki de Klerk,
Validation Master level
teacher can be reached
at:
Wohlleben Gasse 7
#9
1040 Vienna, Austria

from family members who are reducing their burnout through successfully implementing Validation. Validation Workshop participants report that Validation also benefits mentally handicapped and mentally ill elderly with whom they work.

The European Validation Association (EVA) is preparing, together with VTI, a VALIDATION HANDBOOK that will be used by all Validation centers. EVA will also meet in Austria in 1999, Holland in 2000, and in Sweden in 2001. Nine European nations are members of EVA.

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Editorial Reflections : Dale Beaulieu, C.V.T., M.S.



Tasks have a way of setting the agenda in nursing homes. Order is to be maintained. Validation principles do not easily align themselves with such structures. However, meals, baths, and scheduled tasks must make room for the task of resolution. Indeed, when the emotional work surfaces, *it is the task at hand*. And often, such resolution comes in a disorderly or unseemly manner, with tears and cries and emotional outbursts. The business of the heart is not sterile and tidy, nor neatly scheduled.

It is work to create space that will accommodate outbursts that interfere with the order of the day. As I started as a CVT, space was some-

thing I had to fight for. I had to guard our physical space by moving out a huge conference table so that elders could sit in an open circle. This metaphor of safe space has informed and shaped how I see Validation groups. I believe we who practice Validation should be vigilant in guarding the *emotional space* of confused elders, where trained listeners can enter with empathy to assist in the resolution process. Validation principles anticipate that value is present in each individual, no matter how disoriented. Confused elders feel this respect in their inmost selves and rise to meet it in their response to us.

Be sure to send questions and comments to Naomi Feil at her email address: naomifeil@aol.com

