

THE V/F VALIDATION® TRAINING INSTITUTE, INC.

WINTER NEWSLETTER 1995

Naomi Feil, Editor

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A Non-profit Agency Devoted to Wise Aging

CLINICAL COLUMN

"The Cat Ignored, Becomes a Tiger" Carl Jung

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VALIDATION, RE-DIRECTION AND DIVERSION With Those in Resolution

In the context of Validation theory, to validate involves respecting that a very old person is resolving important life issues. The old-old are people with a past. In very old age, it is self-healing for human beings to express emotions that they have possibly bottled up for over eight decades. Bottled-up emotions can become toxic. In the final struggle to wrap up loose ends, very old people who have successfully controlled strong emotions for a lifetime, now need to bring these emotions to the light of day. Progressive deterioration leads to emotional incontinence. The physical condition and the psychological need interlock. The old person needs someone to affirm the truth of the emotions, someone who will listen with empathy and someone who will validate this human being who needs to make peace with the past.

The validating caregiver listens with respect, knowing that once the emotions are expressed and validated, they lose their strength. Validation theory encompasses 16 verbal and non-verbal techniques for listening with empathy.

In the context of behavior management theory, "re-direction" and "diversion" have evolved from Pavlovian operant conditioning learning theories that are the foundations of Behavior Modification. Behavior Modification theory proposes that the caregiver can change or modify the behavior of the very old person by ignoring or punishing the "negative" behaviors and re-

directing or diverting the person towards more "positive" behaviors. The caregiver, it is assumed, knows what is positive and negative behavior, steering the old person accordingly. A basic assumption is that the very old are: (1) motivated to conform to the goals of the younger caregivers; (2) have sufficient cognition, and self-awareness to change their "negative" acting out behaviors towards more "positive" behaviors; (3) have the motivation and the capacity to control their emotions. Therefore, those who use Behavior Modification techniques believe that they can manage behaviors of very old people.

Diversion and re-direction are also often used because caregivers become anxious when old people, whose controls have become incontinent, act out their anger, fear, grief, or love. Caregivers are afraid that, if the feelings are heard and acknowledged, the emotions will escalate. The old person may become physically ill.

In over 30 years of working with very old "Alzheimer-type" populations, I have found that although dependent upon the caregiver, they are not like children who want to learn and to please authority. The very old know what is important. With intuitive wisdom, they want to heal themselves. Once the emotions have been fully expressed to someone who is able to listen without discomfort, the emotions de-escalate. The emotions dissipate. The self-healing process works. Only when emotions are invalidated and ignored, do they gain strength and begin to give physical pain. When no one listens, the emotions grow inside. The yelling, the panic, the sexual acting out behaviors increase. "The cat ignored, becomes a tiger." Too often, they very old person must be tranquilized to "calm them down." The person withdraws inward. Another old human being, slumped, lifeless, is stacked in a row in a nursing home. *continued on page 2*

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Let me give you an example. A 90 year old woman in Resolution, who must make peace with her mother who died 40 years ago, will not be re-directed to the bingo table. If the old woman walks to the bingo table, the diversion is temporary. An old-old person in Resolution will not give up the struggle to vindicate herself from a tyrannical mother. The old woman will shout her rage to her peers. Using her mind's eye, the old woman will restore her mother. The managing caregiver will become her mother. At the bingo table, the 90 year old woman shouts: "Don't push me! Don't tell me what to do. I hate you!"

If an empathetic caregiver validates the old woman's need to restore her mother, facilitating the communication with the past, using the Validation techniques, then the old woman will *modify her own behaviors, managing herself*. The validating caregiver might ask: "You see your mother? She won't look at you? She never listens to you? What do you want to tell her?" The old woman shouts her hurt at her mother to someone who hears. Finally, at age 90, the old woman, spitting out her rage, struggles to free herself from a dominating mother. When her struggle is acknowledged, the old woman feels tangible relief, and then she can attend to present time.

Very old human beings, in this final struggle, first must re-enter the past before moving to a present-day location. They need to uncover buried emotions to make peace with parents, sibling, husbands, wives, and children. Their activity, their attention will be fixed on the past as they prepare for their final move. They will continue to pack.

They are not children. They will not be re-directed.



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM RE-SCHEDULED TO NOVEMBER

by Scott Averill, J.D., CVT®

The International Validation Symposium has been **re-scheduled** for **November 15 - 17, 1995**. It will be held at the Airport Doubletree Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. This will be an event that, for the first time, brings together people from all over the world who practice and/or have an interest in Validation. The

Symposium will be an opportunity for us to come together as a united body, to learn from each other, to hear the newest Validation concepts and to dialogue with our founder, Naomi Feil.

The three-day event will include a full-day workshop led by Naomi, small breakout sessions, an evening theater, and a banquet. The Symposium will provide an opportunity for a lively interchange of ideas -- a gathering place where people committed to Validation can share personal stories, songs, and anecdotes of Validating encounters. The Symposium will provide opportunities for those attending to share skills, techniques, and styles of providing Validation.

For more information and to reserve your place, call or write:

Scott Averill
Osage Nursing & Rehabilitation Center
1017 Main Street
Osage City, Kansas 66523
Phone: (913) 528-3138
FAX: (913) 528-4895

Questions to consider (please bring more of your own):

1. What are various techniques of center-ing? How? Finding the time? Finding a space?
2. What are the problems in creating a Validation team?
3. What happens when the emotions of an older person spark strong memories in the worker?
4. How do group leaders create a "we" feeling in the Validation group?
5. What are the most effective methods of teaching Validation to families and volunteers?

Feel free; tell your story. Share the secrets and gifts unique to your craft.



A WELCOME CONTRIBUTION FROM DALE BEAULIEU, CVT®

Dale Beaulieu has been a Certified Validation Therapist since July 1994. In addition to conducting Validation groups in Lawrence, Kansas, Dale is a writer and is completing his Master's Journalism program at the University of Kansas. He is married to Lorna Larson-Beaulieu, a school social worker, and has a daughter,

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Rebecca, age 7, who is a favorite guest at Dale's Validation group, the "Songbirds".

In his article, "We Are One," Dale illustrates the way in which the Validation Group meets the very old person's basic human needs: Love, Identity, Intimacy. For confidentiality, Dale has changed the names of his group members. In the "Songbirds" group, we meet Erma, who helped other group members express their deep fears and losses, validating their emotions.



WE ARE ONE

by Dale Beaulieu, CVT[®]

The sight; a common one in most nursing homes. A woman alone. Agonizingly alone. Tucked away in a wheelchair, in a corridor, in a home. Rocking in rhythm, moaning something inaudible.

I was working as a reporter, covering a workshop on Validation for the local paper. I saw one such woman. Naomi Feil approached her. Two heads leaned closely together. Very close. Intimately. Soft whispers were exchanged. Naomi's hands caressed the woman's cheeks in a circular motion. Suddenly, two voices awoke, breaking into song. "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". A lifting, a reaching. Two figures merged in dance. One swaying form remained. One.

At the time, I thought this moment of connection was magical. Beyond magic. Life being generated before my eyes. In the next two years, as I studied to become a Certified Validation Therapist, I learned of the discipline and unique craft behind the seemingly effortless encounter I had witnessed.

I started my first Validation group at Colonial Manor in Lawrence, Kansas, after training with Scott Averill and his staff in Lansing, Kansas. Naomi's books and videos were filled with information, more than I could absorb. What captured me amidst the trials and frustrations of beginning were the gifts of those in the group. In the meetings, they shared the treasures of themselves: their wisdom and laughter, their joy and courage, their sorrows and hopes. Here, I will share the stories of two of my "Songbirds" and describe how group encounters meet universal needs.

The Prayer Lady

I was at Colonial Manor more than a month before I was aware of this resident. Erma was a black woman, with silver hair curled tightly against her ebony skin. She was quiet, rarely leaving her room. Erma had a contracted left arm, and it was an effort for her to speak. I had some initial conversations with her and found her to be Time-Confused.

I soon found that Erma was a fantastic group member. She was a comforting presence. I would sit her beside troubled members, and she would grip their hands with a tender strength. Erma rooted us. Although she had never married and had no children, the black women in the group addressed her respectfully as "Mother".

Erma was a woman of deep faith. When group discussion got around to issues of suffering and loss, great losses, she would simply profess her faith. When there was no solution, when the group struggled to respond to a hurting member, Erma would pray. She radiated quiet energy. Often she would close her eyes and nod her head as she listened to the sharing. Erma thanked me after each group. The sight of her straining and stretching her contracted arm to comfort a neighbor is a sight I will never forget.

I found out from her social history that Erma was active in church groups. Erma worked as a cook at the University campus and was a member of a church choir. The "Songbirds" group brought Erma back to an intimacy she had known as a member of these groups.

I have found that when I bring my full, listening presence to groups, they respond. They listen as I listen. Their tone matches mine. They meet each act of compassion of mine with one of their own. Warmth in my hand pours itself out into the circle. Warmth returns.

The need of the Validation worker and the need of the group is one need. In the circle, only that which is genuine will prevail. Pretense and posturing evaporate. There is no time for such foolishness. For a brief hour -- a still point in time -- barriers and categories disintegrate. Trust has reduced us to our simplest, most knowable forms. We hurt. We laugh. We love. We are.

We are one.



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"BREAKING THROUGH DEMENTIA" Naomi on Audiotape

A 94-minute audiotape, called *Breaking Through Dementia*, has been produced by Scott Averill, J.D., CVT[®]. Scott recorded two workshops led by Naomi Feil in April 1993. With over 12 hours of tape, Scott began the process of condensing this tremendous amount of information. His goal was to capture the "spirit" and "essence" of a Naomi workshop in one cassette tape. With the help of fellow CVT[®], Dale Beaulieu, in Lawrence, Kansas, and his team of CVT[®]'s in Lansing, Kansas: Jennifer Carpenter, Lowell Dodson, and Velma Bass, Scott released the tape this past December.

This tape sells for \$13.95 (plus \$1.50 shipping and handling) and is available from:

Validation Resources

Box 368

Overbrook, Kansas 66524

Orders can be faxed to 913-528-4895. Quantity discounts are available upon request.



1995 VALIDATION WORKSHOPS

Locations for Validation Workshops include:
Ohio, Maine, Utah, Texas, Mississippi, Finland, Holland, Belgium, Austria, France, Switzerland, Washington State, British Columbia, Maryland, Connecticut, Alberta, Michigan, Louisiana, Idaho, Hawaii, California, Ontario, Colorado, Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Kansas, Oregon, Australia, Nevada, Germany, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Florida.

MESSAGE FROM OUR FISCAL OFFICER

Please! Support Validation!

Your \$35.00 two year Validation Training Association Membership supports this Newsletter and helps us disseminate information on Validation Research and Practice.

Due to increasing mailing costs, we can no longer send you The Newsletter unless we receive your \$20.00 annual membership fee or \$35.00 two year membership fee. With stronger financial backing, we hope to publish more issues of the Newsletter per year.

Please make your tax deductible checks payable to:

THE VALIDATION TRAINING INSTITUTE

Attn.: Rosetta Paolino

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We welcome your contributions to The Newsletter.

Typeset by Renée Paolino

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