

Glossary of Validation terms:

Anchored touch: specific types of touching, usually on the face, that stimulate memories of specific people or relationships. Example: mother, father, children, partner (husband or wife), sister/friend.

Calibration: adjustment of one's body, posture, facial expression, breathing and energy to match that of the client.

Centering: clearing one's mind of thoughts and feelings; finding a strong and open attitude.

Confabulation: making up stories or experiences to cover up memory lapses. Example: an old woman is overwhelmed and bitter that she is getting so old and is losing so much. She says that her daughter is stealing her money.

Coping methods: ways of dealing with difficulties. Everyone, both old and young has to learn to handle difficulties. Some of these are: avoiding/denial, forgetting/repressing, facing or confronting, blaming others, laughing or making light of the trouble, worrying, having anxiety.

Early onset Alzheimer's: a disease process that breaks down nerve connections in the brain. The disease usually begins with severe memory loss and is quickly followed by the loss of speech.

Eidetic image: a highly detailed visual image that is maintained in long-term memory.

Empathy: the ability to feel what another person is feeling.

Kinesthetic: according to Neurolinguistic Programming, one of the systems in which we take in sensory information from the environment. This includes touch, smell, taste and energy.

Late onset Alzheimer's: a diagnosis given to very old people who have symptoms of dementia, but no diagnosable disease process to explain it.

Life tasks: according to Erik Erikson, each stage of life has a developmental purpose or task. We develop personal skills as we age, that will help us handle the issues that come up. Example: in adolescence our life task is to develop our own identity.

Matching: adjusting our body, voice tone, facial expression, breathing and energy to be more like that of the other person. It is not exact mirroring; it is finding resonance with the other person.

Mirroring: copying the movements, posture, voice tone or emotional state of the other person – with empathy.

Needs: things that a person must have. See Abraham Maslow. In Validation we talk about basic human needs: the need to belong, to love and be loved, to express emotion and be heard, to be useful, to be safe and secure, to be respected and recognized, to have balance, to die in peace.

Pacing: like matching and mirroring, you follow the rhythm of the other person, moving and talking with the same speed.

Polarity: a Validation technique where you ask the extreme boundaries of an issue. Example: the client says, 'I have to go home now.' You ask, 'Do you always have to go home?'

Preferred Sense: a concept from Neurolinguistic Programming that describes how people receive sensory information from the environment. People are primarily visual, auditory or kinesthetic. This has been used as a technique in Validation. We try to use either visual, auditory or kinesthetic words that match the preferred sense of the client.

Resolution: Naomi Feil's final life stage. The task of this stage is to die in peace. Very old people try to work through problems, emotions or psychological difficulties before they die.

Sensory Stimulation: a variety of methods used that stimulate the five senses: touch, sight, taste, hearing, and smell. An example of sensory stimulation is aroma therapy.

Symbol: in Validation, a symbol is described as an object or a person in present time – that really exists, that represents something or someone else from the past. A nurse can be a symbol for a sister, a wedding ring can be a symbol for a husband or the concept of love.

Unfinished issues: are like unfinished life tasks – what very old people are trying to resolve before they die. Unfinished issues can be anything from the past that remain as a psychological burden. Examples are: a traumatic war experience, the loss of a child, having been raped, the loss of a job, and so forth.

Validation: There are three aspects: it is a developmental theory for late life; it is a method for communicating with very old disoriented people; it calls for an attitude of respect for very old people in the final life struggle.