



VALIDATION THERAPY

An Essential Tool in Caregiving with Individuals with
Dementia

What is Dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term for diseases and conditions characterized by a decline in memory, language, problem-solving, and other thinking skills that impact an individual's ability to perform everyday life. There are three types of Dementia: Vascular, Lewy Body and Alzheimer's. Alzheimer's is the most common and accounts for 60 to 80 percent of diagnoses.

Causes of Dementia

- Dementia is caused by damage to brain cells. This damage disrupts the ability of brain cells to communicate with each other. When brain cells can not communicate normally, thinking, behavior and feelings can be impacted.
- The hippocampus is a part of the brain that is the center of learning and memory. Usually the brain cells in the hippocampus are the first to be damaged. That's why memory loss is one of the first symptoms of Alzheimer's.



Validation Therapy

An empathetic , non-judgmental means of communicating with individuals with Alzheimer's disease & dementia

Communicating with the individual with Dementia in whatever reality he or she is in (no correcting or arguing is involved)

Validation Therapy

Validation therapy was developed by Naomi Feil during the 60's and 70's. This method is a holistic approach that focuses on empathy and provides Dementia patients a means of communicating.

Validation Therapy Theory

This theory indicates that dementia patients in this situation are driven by basic needs that are hard for them to identify because of their disease.

Validation Therapy

Validation is a way of classifying individuals with Dementia behaviors into four progressive stages:

- Malorientation
- Time Confusion
- Repetitive Motion
- Vegetation

MALORIENTATION

Malorientation involves the individual expressing past conflicts in disguised form and struggling with these conflicts.

TIME CONFUSION

Time confusion involves the individual no longer having a hold onto reality and beginning to revert inward.

Repetitive Motion

Repetitive motion involves the individual replacing words with movements and are used to work through unresolved conflicts.

Vegetation

Vegetation involves the individual shutting out the world completely and gives up trying to resolve conflicts.

Validation Therapy

The most important part of validation therapy is listening. Listening symbolizes that you are willing to enter the individual with Dementia's reality versus trying to force them into your own reality.

Benefits of Validation Therapy

Increased
communication

The individual
may become
more alert

Increased positive
affect

The individual
may cry or pace
less

Reduced
aggressive
behavior

Reduced anxiety
symptoms

Decreased need
for medical and
physical restraints

Validation Techniques

1. Center yourself first – deep breathing

2. Use nonthreatening factual words to build trust – ask questions about what, when, where, who, how?

3. Rephrase what the person is saying

4. Reminisce

5. Maintain eye contact

6. Use a clear, low, and loving tone of voice

7. Mirror emotions

8. Link behavior to unmet need

9. Identify using the client's preferred sense

10. Use music or props

Check Out These Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPstZUTqUFw>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESqfW_kyZq8
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrZXz10FcVM>

Resources

- Alzheimer's Association. (n.d.). *What Is Dementia?*. <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>
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- Senior Living U. (n.d.). *Use Validation to Help Residents Coping with Alzheimer's*. <https://www.seniorlivingu.com/use-validation-to-help-residents-coping-with-alzheimers/>
- Wegerer. J. (2019, March 11). *Empathy for Alzheimer's: The Validation Method*. [Alzheimers.net. https://www.alzheimers.net/2013-11-07/validation-method-for-alzheimers/](https://www.alzheimers.net/2013-11-07/validation-method-for-alzheimers/)