

# VALIDATION COMMUNICATION

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# Facilitator



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# Learning Objectives

By attending this session, participants will:

- ▶ Differentiate between Reality Orientation and Validation
- ▶ Identify the key principles of Validation
- ▶ Practice a validating conversation

# Communication

- Good communication is the key to success
- Validation is an important tool to enhance your communication

# Validation

- Developed by Naomi Feil
- “To validate is to acknowledge and affirm someone; to show support that their feelings/opinions are respected”

# Validation

- To validate a person with dementia is to acknowledge their reality regardless if it corresponds to our here and now
- This is NOT a therapeutic lie or fib

# Validation vs Reality Orientation

- ▶ Understand the person's reality
  - ▶ Emotional
  - ▶ Subjective
  - ▶ Respect the person's sense of reality
  - ▶ “You miss your home”
- ▶ Reorient the person to present reality
  - ▶ Factual
  - ▶ Objective
  - ▶ Confront errors in the person's sense of reality
  - ▶ “This is your home!”

Validation

Reality Orientation

# Validating Conversation

»» Creating Successful  
Communication



# Preparing Yourself

- Centre
  - Close your eyes. Breathe. Stretch.
- Observe
  - Helps determine their state of mind
- Approach
  - Do not intrude unless invited
- Listen
  - 7 second rule

# Tips for Connecting

- Do not preplan a list of questions
  - Follow their lead
- Do not ask “why?”
- Do not give memory quiz
- Do not use “feel”
  - **What do you think about NOT How do you feel**

# Verbal Techniques

- Open questions
- Rephrasing/repeat using the same or similar words
- Emphasize the most meaningful words that they emphasize
- Use nearly the same intensity and emotion

# Open Questions

- WHO
  - Who have you been thinking about?
  - Who did you think of as family?
  - Who were people you worked with?
  - Who is important in your life?

# Open Questions

- WHAT
  - What is on your mind?
  - What things make you happy?
  - What things make you sad?
  - What helped you cope?

# Open Questions

- **WHERE**
  - Where did you grow up?
  - Where would you like to be now?
  - Where did you work?
  - Where did you go for fun?

# Open Questions

- **WHEN**
  - When did you start working?
  - When did you stop?
  - When are you happiest?
  - When did you do that?

# Open Questions

- HOW
  - How did that happen?
  - How did you deal with that?
  - How did you learn to do that?
  - How hard was it to do that?



# Open Questions

- When you ask a question, look at their face, eyes, mouth, body language
- Follow their lead
- Avoid sounding like you are digging or probing too much
- Don't go in with a notebook
  - This is a conversation

# Rephrasing

- Rephrase what they just said and speak it with the same emotion
- “I miss my son”
  - You miss him.

# Let's Try!

- Choose a partner
  - Person with dementia
  - Person using validation
- Have a conversation
  
- Remember – we start with:
  - Centre
  - Observe
  - Approach
  - Listen
  
- Use Open Questions, Rephrasing, Empathy

# How was that?

- What came to mind?
- How did that feel?
- What did you notice?

- ▶ Not every use of Validation is a Validating Conversation
  - A Validating Conversation takes time to prepare yourself and prepare the environment
- ▶ Validation may also be used in shorter interactions with the person with dementia
- ▶ The same principles apply

# When Will We Use Validation?

- ▶ What examples can you share when validation will be used?
  - “Where’s my husband?”
  - “I want to go home!”
  - “They don’t feed me around here.”

- ▶ It's not about creating a lie
- ▶ Connect with the person's reality
  
- ▶ “You miss your husband.”
- ▶ “This doesn't feel like home.”
- ▶ “You must be hungry.”

# Final Tips

- Validation is about helping the person with dementia to communicate their unmet needs/losses to an empathetic listener
- It's about making a connection and relieving the emotional distress



# Questions?



# Resources

- ▶ Validation Training Institute
  - <https://vfvalidation.org>
- ▶ Volunteers of America
  - <https://www.voa.org/the-validation-method>
- ▶ Dementiability Enterprises
  - [www.dementiability.com](http://www.dementiability.com)

# My Contact Information

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