

V is for Validation

Venting all of us do it, whether we are an active caregiver or not, venting is something natural to everyone. Therapists will tell you that venting is a form of processing or of taking stock of what is truly happening and how it makes us feel. Venting also is a way of letting others in. However, it is in how they react to us that allows the venting to properly work or efficiently fail.

Usually the reason why venting fails is because the listener is not truly focusing on what is being said. Instead, they are searching for an answer, thinking of a reply or the magic thing that will make you feel better. When in reality all you need is for them to quietly listen and validate how you are feeling.

Because venting is a natural process, it is normal that those we care for also seek to vent and be validated. If someone with memory loss begs to go home, is this complaining or venting? Perhaps if we took the time to validate their feelings they too would feel better. A successful validation process happens when you use the following techniques:

Centering - means to put aside your own feelings, shut off all of the noise inside and surrounding you, and just listen.

Observing – focus solely on the person, while watching their body language and verbal cues. Are they fidgeting or calm, lips tight or smiling, hands tensed or flaccid etc...?

Empathizing – changing your body/emotions to reflect theirs. Once you make a match, you can slowly morph your demeanor and lead them into a more calm relaxed state.

Verbal/Nonverbal Techniques – using a clear, warm tone ask open-ended questions, rephrase answers, ask extreme or opposite questions, reminisce, mirror their body language, maintain deep eye contact and provide reassuring touch.

Ending Positively – usually the conversation will come to a natural end how there may be a time where you need to directly disengage. Whatever happens it is at this time that you should take time to validate the person; how they were feeling and that you were glad to be there for them. It also is a great opportunity to tell them honestly how you feel about them in a positive manner, thereby boosting their self-worth.

By using these techniques, we can help those we care for feel validated and valued. In doing so, you will find it will naturally lead to your own personal validation too.

Transforming the **CULTURE** *of Care.*

Azura Memory Care offers a unique model of memory care services and programs for those suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's. The company believes in the importance of transforming the culture of care through transformational programming and educational outreach. Azura Memory Care offers 13 locations in Wisconsin including Beloit, Clinton, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Janesville, Kenosha North, Kenosha South, Manitowoc, Monroe, Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Stoughton and Wausau. Visit www.azuramemory.com for additional information