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Work done by Eilon Caspi Ph.D. and Chaya Koren PhD to promote Validation Method in Israel

Sometime during 2002 I was looking for a book in the library of the Bob Shapell School of Social Work, Tel Aviv University. Right next to it I saw another book with a bright yellow color on its cover. I was curious. I picked it up not realizing at that moment the serendipity I was experiencing. It was the 1st edition of the book *The Validation Breakthrough* (1993).

What follows is a description of some of the activities my friend and colleague Chaya Koren and I engaged in to raise awareness to the method and advocate for its development in Israel:

I read the book in one sitting. I was fascinated, inspired, and moved by it. It was obvious to me that the method could assist tremendously in bridging a major gap in approaches and services used in Israel with elders living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. I decided to translate it into Hebrew (non-professional selective **50-page translation**) so that we can develop a presentation and a basic introductory workshop about the method. I shared the book with Chaya who immediately after reading it become very interested in working with me on raising awareness and promoting the method in Israel.

Eilon wrote a letter to Itzchak Brick, director of ESHEL (The Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel), on May 13, 2002 introducing him to the method and encouraging him to consider adopting it as a training program for care staff in long-term care homes.

Chaya wrote to Dr. Brick on November 9, 2002 (one of many emails we sent him and numerous others): "My colleague and friend, Eilon Caspi, has recommended me to read the book "The Validation Breakthrough" (1993). I have read it in English in one sitting, was fascinated by the method and knew this could be the answer to questions I have been asked by volunteers working with residents with dementia at the nursing home I worked at as a social worker..."

We developed a comprehensive **84-page workshop** material in a **booklet** format based on my translation of material from the book, which served as the basis for development of our presentations and introductory sessions in Hebrew on the method in various settings.



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December 2002. Eilon delivered a **5-session workshop** to dozens of care staff (nurses and nurse aides) based on the principles of Validation Method at the nursing unit and special care unit for people with dementia where he worked as a social worker at Tzahalon Geriatric Center, Keshet Association, Jaffa, Israel.

Examples of **other sessions** we delivered include:

Title: Validation Therapy: Alzheimer's-specific Communication Method.

Caspi, E. (6.12.03). Social workers of the Department for Welfare of Elders, Municipality of Ramat Gan, Israel.

Caspi E. & Koren, C. (10.14.03.) Social workers of the Department for Care of the Elder Population, Municipality of Kfar-Saba, Israel.

Caspi, E. (2.12.03). Support group of family caregivers of elders with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's Association of Israel, Ramat-Gan Chapter, Israel.

Caspi, E. (3.9.11). Support group of family caregivers of elders with Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's Association of Israel. Petach Tikva Chapter of the Israeli Alzheimer's Association.

Chaya conducted several half-day workshops emphasizing the philosophy behind the method. Such workshops were held for healthcare workers at the parents' home "Beit Yuliana" in Herzelia and at the clinical center at the University of Haifa. Furthermore, she introduces the method to her undergraduate students specializing in social work with the older population.

We found old films at ESHEL on the Validation Method, rented them, and incorporated powerful illustrative segments into the above presentations and workshops.

We published an **article in Hebrew** about the method in a popular magazine for professionals working with elders:

Caspi, E. & Koren, C. (2003). Validation Therapy: Care and communication with patients with Alzheimer's disease. *Dorot*, 67, 32-35.



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We formed a group of leading practitioners and researchers who expressed an interest in the method and compiled a **contact list of close to 50 people**. We met with many of them to discuss the method and shared copies of the booklet we created with several of these individuals.

Examples of key people we met who assisted in this lengthy process include: Special thanks to Ms. Tamar Semel (who worked extensively on various fronts to promote the method in Israel including multiple meetings with key people in the field and delivery of workshops).

Selected examples of other people we met or communicated with to advocate for the method include: Professor Hava Golander, Professor Noga Ziv, Professor Shira Hantman, Professor Sara Carmel, Ms. Meira Ekshtein, Ms. Daphna Golan Shemesh, Ms. Debbie Laav, Ms. Ayelet Saar, Ms. Tali Kadmon Shtern, and Ms. Rina Arbel. Key people at ESHEL were helpful at different steps in the process. These include Dr. Ytzchak Brick, Mr. Dror Rotem, Ms. Shlomit Gal, Dr. Sara Alon, and Ms. Tali Tzuk. Ongoing meetings and correspondences with these individuals created a positive momentum and support needed to advocate for development of the method in Israel. We are grateful to others not included here who may have played a role in the process; it is hard to recall everyone as this was over a decade ago.

Our meetings with our Professor Ariela Lowenstein (Founder, Gerontology Program, Haifa University) who connected us with Professor Rivkah (Beccy) Bergman (founder of the nursing profession in Israel; recipient of the 1999 Israel Prize for special contribution to society and the State) were instrumental to our efforts to encourage ESHEL to sponsor bringing Naomi Feil to Israel to give a workshop on the method. In mid 2002, we met with Beccy at her retirement community and this is what she wrote to Dr. Ytzchak Brick in her email after the meeting:

"We spent about 3 hours together, and I was very impressed with them. We also saw 2 very good videos, and they left me the book in English, and summaries in Hebrew. I think this is very interesting material, and deserves consideration."

Our efforts met some resistance by leading figures in the aging field who at the time may have not appreciate the value of the method and did not support it. Eventually, our ongoing efforts were bearing fruits, the gates opened, and Dr. Brick decided to sponsor bringing Naomi Feil to Israel!

Naomi gave the **1st workshop** on Validation Method on **May 20, 2004**. The 1-day workshop with several dozens of leading professionals working with elders with dementia was held at The Glickman Center for Education and Training of ESHEL. Earlier that year, I moved from Israel to Boston for my doctoral studies in Gerontology...so I missed it but heard that it was well received.



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Eilon and Chaya wrote a 7-page **proposal to Tuvia Mendelson, director of Publishing Division, ESHEL to translate the book *The Validation Breakthrough into Hebrew (July 12, 2011)***. The proposal included, among others, the rationale for and goals of translating the book, background on the method, the extent it is used worldwide, description of the method, and key principles and humanistic values underlying it. It also included synthesis of research studies that were available at the time with key findings. It also included list of references and list of resources on the method. Tuvia was very supportive of the need for the method but ESHEL's review committee did not approve purchasing the rights to translate the book at this point (citing budgetary constraints).

2012 – Assisting the Association for the Planning and Development of Services for the Aged in Israel (ESHEL) in **translating the film *Introduction to Validation (2011)*** to Hebrew. An agency was hired to do the translation and Eilon volunteered to assist Alon Antebi (ESHEL) in the process in an effort to represent the method and the content as accurately as possible (including extensive communications with Naomi and Vicki to seek their input and clarifications towards this end).

Link to the film at ESHEL's library:

<http://www.eshelnet.org.il/node/24889>

April 18, 2011. Vicki starts to plan her visit to Israel and writes to Eilon saying, *"Perhaps we could even start a Validation training center in Israel. This would be my dream."*

Vicki de Klerk-Rubin gave a workshop on the method to professionals caring for elders with dementia on **April 18 2012** at The Glickman Center for Education and Training of ESHEL. The program consisted half-day of presentation and half day discussion how to integrate the Validation Method in Israel.

In 2017, Vicki began a **Validation Teacher Course** in ESHEL.

ESHEL is expected to become an **Authorized Validation Organization** (i.e. an official training center in Validation Method) in the **Fall of 2017**.

Three books on Validation Method were published in Hebrew (two in 2015 and one in 2016).

Information about these books can be found at ESHEL's library:

http://www.eshelnet.org.il/books?search_api_views_fulltext=תיקור&field_catalog_fields=All&field_language=All&field_catalog_target=All&field_book_type=All



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While I never had the opportunity to meet Naomi and Vicki in person or to attend their workshops, it has been very rewarding for me to learn from this humane and powerful method over the years and to raise awareness to it in hopes that it will some day be fully integrated into community-based and long-term care service delivery programs in Israel.

Looking forward to continue learning and supporting the Validation Method,

Warm regards,

Eilon Caspi B.S.W. M.A. Ph.D.

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I had the great pleasure of meeting both Naomi during the workshop she held at ESHEL in Israel and Vicki at one of her visits to Israel during the attempts to deliver the method. I join in with Eilon's hopes and wish for the best of success implementing the method within the Israeli society.

Chaya Koren, PhD.

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