



**Résidence
LE COTTAGE**

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English Translation

Dear Sir,

I am a nurse by training, and I was the director of a retirement home. Following a course of initiation in music therapy at the international centre of music therapy in Paris, I wanted to try such a programme at the 'Printania' retirement home in Chantilly, Oise, France, to break the monotony of the few activities that they had at the time (social games, manual activities).

At the beginning, all I did was to play to residents with an average age of 82, the 5 cassettes of the series "Evolutive Dynamic Impulsion". No preparation was done, and no explanation given: just simply a listening session for those who were interested.

I observed that disorientated and agitated patients (with Alzheimer's disease) became more relaxed and relieved.

The positive reaction of my residents was remarked on by all the caring staff, including the GP at Chantilly, Dr. Gatet.

A desire to repeat the experience was expressed both by residents and staff, who had noticed that afterwards an olympian calm reigned over even patients known for their agitated behaviour. It was then that I decided to have a listening session every Tuesday at 2pm, with a group of elderly disorientated or apathetic residents, there being no obligation to remain in the group.

Because there was no special room for it, the session took place in a closed-off hall in one of the two entrances of the residence. There were 8 people in the group.

Observations:

The calming effect is instant, the serenity and smile of a patient with advanced Alzheimer's is surprising, and also his capacity to listen. It is as if he had been taken unawares by well-being "dropping onto his head".

It was decided that we would listen to just one side of the first cassette so that the workshop would not be too long. The need to listen again to this side was expressed by 5 residents out of 8.

A second session took place, but I will not start again. The desire to move on the part of 2 residents perturbed the session. With hindsight, I would say that we would have needed a medical psychiatrist to understand what was happening.

During the other sessions, one side of the five cassettes brought, each time, a serenity, a well-being, a desire to communicate, which I regret not having filmed. What a pity!

In order to fill out this activity, I proposed to combine it with painting: on a light-box, the outline of a photographic-slide sized rectangle were drawn on tracing paper. A few drops of glue and encre de chine, in colours chosen by the resident (blue, red, yellow, black) and a paintbrush.

Listening to the cassette with complete freedom of expression.

Great surprise: a resident with very advanced Alzheimer's, spontaneously executed, without verbal expression, but with evident pleasure written on his face, a remarkable mixture of colours.

This resident, who no longer communicated at all, came to the hall at 2pm, waiting for the musical activity, every week, with no help from anyone.

How can we understand what this music brings him? How can his ill brain make him keep this appointment? Nothing but questions?

In February 1986, after a meeting with Dr. Amouyal, and the presentation of photos made from the slides, it was decided to make an auto-evaluation questionnaire to be filled in after each listening session. There was a marked improvement in apathetic, sad patients who no longer had the will to do anything. The smile reappears, the questioning look, the opening-up towards others is quite apparent: what is happening? And how do we interpret it?

Unfortunately, in September 1986, I left this establishment after it was sold, and the management changed. I am convinced that this type of music should be used for elderly people with senile dementia or advanced disorientation, for whom it is difficult to communicate during moments of aggressiveness, or times when the staff no longer know how to react with them. The same type of listening would bring comfort to people with serious cranial trauma, and of course to autistic children who are hypersensitive to touch and music. It is not easy to get the medical and paramedical world to admit that there are numerous leads to follow in this type of music, but the results obtained, without pretention, but with great sincerity, should allow professionals (of whom I am one), to observe, to listen, to think, to try and understand in joining together with the richness of medical research.

This music also brings considerable relief in the stress of care-workers which is often minimised or forgotten by institutional management.

I regret not having thought of filming the sessions, so that it would have been easy to see the immediate effects of listening to these " Dynamic Evolutive Impulse " cassettes.

This experiment which was abandoned at the time, has been taken up again at " Le Cottage Residence " in Argenteuil, in collaboration with the ergotherapist Mlle Gaëlle Hostis and the geriatric specialist Dr. Maryline Kalfa.

Please accept my best regards.

Yours sincerely,

N. LENEVEU - DIRECTOR

