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*LETTER TO CHANTAL DESMOULINS*

English Translation

I would like first of all to express my deep acknowledgment for the high quality of leadership that you provided to our team in the implementation of the Catharsis workshops. I felt and understood that we would find a part of the solution to our goal of providing well-being to our residents, who endure much suffering.

My 40 year journey as a care-giver and end-of-life hospice worker (CNA, Teacher, Degree in general and applied psychology from the French Institute for Human Culture (management), (I am also a lawyer, but I don't think that that applies directly to this discussion)), certainly contributed to my willingness to try this care-giving experiment in verbal and non-verbal expression of the Catharsis method with some of our suffering residents. I also believed in the ability of our psychologist to lead these workshops and to join in convincing the psychiatric aides.

The Catharsis method offers the possibility for deep work while preventing the coach from being transformed into a therapist. It protects from that danger. And it is also a security for the people who benefit from this accompaniment.

It is a tool that is simultaneously flexible and rigorous in the sense that it offers every person the possibility to express his/her experience in their own way: emotions, experiences (through verbal or non-verbal expression); and it inevitably leads to some kind of expression.

The method and tool also allow other professionals to participate, for this work extends into the ward and private spaces of the patient's life. In order to work, it requires open communication between the leaders of the therapeutic activity and their colleagues. Our psychologist extends his work through weekly meetings with the other caregivers.

The psychiatric aides, working before and after this privileged time, inevitably achieve a level of interpersonal work that is certainly enriching for them as well. It is without a doubt a positive for them and for their professional development.

And so it's a kind of "boomerang effect" that is set in play. The caregivers' attitude toward the patient cannot be impersonal and cannot be impersonalized. And at the same time, all the little acts of daily life are no longer impersonal. And so, the lost slipper, serving the soup, feeding, etc.... everything becomes meaningful.

Thus, we slowly build the project of individual life for these residents.

It is for all of these reasons that I support the development of this activity for the benefit of other professionals.

The residents who take advantage of this therapy find a kind of calm and serenity because they are really taken into consideration; they have suddenly become interesting to the caregivers and they sense that change in attitude. They are no longer relegated to the status of a gear in the caregiver's "work to bring home the bacon" machine.

Every resident becomes again Human. And the caregiver also becomes more humane.

Some of them are able to integrate themselves in the community, in this place of life. For some taboos have become obsolete. The smile of communication reappears.

It must also be said that the dedication and concern for good communication with the team that you demonstrated, the effort you made to keep in touch with us all (regarding various adjustments of the tool and the approach, checking up on the coaches' well-being and the effects on the patients), regardless of where you yourself actually were (in France or abroad), characterizes you, and made a significant difference in the development and evolution of our teams. The teaching of this method, of the spirit that inspires it, and the apprenticeship in the use of the tool highlight the need for precision, structure, and the necessary exactness in its use. This teaching adjusts itself to the caregivers and their daily life. This is not an impossibility, but professionalism.

The results are what really matter; for those, I redirect you to our final report.

We will participate in the 3rd National Conference on Aging in Paris on December 4th, 2008. Anna, Lise, and Isabelle will present the application of the Catharsis Technique and their experiences in these workshops. As I already wrote, we are offering participation in the workshops to the other psychiatric aides, after training, for the reasons already mentioned.

With warmest regards,

Grenoble, October 8th, 2008

CHRISTIANE LAVANANT, DIRECTOR.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line that ends in a small arrowhead pointing to the right.