

Singing on the Alzheimer's Unit

BY BARBARA A. DERRICK, PhD

Louisa is an Alzheimer's patient. Her yelling seemed endless, continuing night and day. The effort to quiet her failed until a suggestion by Edgar Cayce was put into effect. Now, Louisa has begun to sing. A project, *Suggestive Therapeutics*, has made the difference.



THE MATTIE C. HALL Health Care facility in Aiken, SC where Louisa lives looks like any other health care facility but inside there is a difference. Pre-sleep affirmations were used with Louisa and other Alzheimer's patients, taking advantage of the instructions Edgar Cayce gave in his readings pertaining to those with neurological disturbances.

Now, inside the Alzheimer's unit Louisa has stopped yelling and has begun to sing.

Ann does not sing, but has changed her behavior. She was reckless with her own safety, cursed at peers and staff and inappropriately sexually touched staff and peers. Now, she no longer toilets in corners and in the beds of other residents. She sleeps until awakened by staff and the verbal abuse of her female peers over a specific male has been modified.

Ann does not sing, but the staff sure does.

Three other patients, Lizzie, Henry, and Esther, bothersome in their behavior, mellowed.

Lizzie, who wandered away from meals and was a weight-loss risk, was a nuisance to peers and staff by sleeping on and toileting in peers' beds. Now, she toilets in a bedside commode or in the bathroom and has had only one episode of toileting inappropriately. Earlier this behavior occurred 3-4 times *a night*. She does not sing verbally, but she sings with contentment in her heart.

Henry, on the other hand, was combative, warded off staff assistance, refused meals, slept in peers' beds and required constant supervision. Everyone was grateful when a change occurred in his behavior. The hitting, shoving, and pushing staff is greatly diminished and he is now sleeping in his own bed 3-4 nights weekly and feeding himself 4-5 days weekly. "I notice a difference in him," his wife states. "He seems more cooperative when I try to help him."

In this case, Henry's wife is the one doing the singing.

Esther, whose high-pitched voice reverberated through the corridor, night and day, could not be helped with medication. Because medication was unsuccessful, prior to the study, there was no question that her improved behavior was due to the Alzheimer's project. Now, when she yells during the day, the staff plays the recorded message for her using headphones. She listens quietly and is sleeping 3-5 hours nightly.

When a daughter visited one day, she found her mother sitting peacefully in her wheelchair looking out the window and listening to the recorded message through headphones. She was accustomed to hearing her mother yell for the duration of her visits. She looked from her mother to the attendant, remarking incredulously, "She is so quiet, maybe I need one of these CDs!" Besides registering a weight *gain* she has now reverted to talking and singing instead of yelling.

To be sure, there is singing on the Alzheimer's unit.

These five patients, all with disruptive behavior, were selected as an experimental group. This group used a pre-sleep affirmation, recorded on a CD, as part of the *Suggestive Therapeutics Project* that Edgar Cayce suggested. Another group did not receive the regimen and were chosen as members of the control group, in part, because their families declined their family member's participation.

The original plan was to test the effectiveness of the program after 90 days but results didn't take that long.

Three days after the protocol began, the staff contacted Pat Bishop, RN, head

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of the Alzheimer's Unit. "What are we going to do? We need help. The CD player doesn't work. Louisa has been quiet since we began using the player but it doesn't work. How can we fix it?"

For 72 hours the staff and the other patients enjoyed a quiet ward. Nobody wanted to lose the serene environment that had happened almost immediately.

The CD player's transformer was faulty. Once it was replaced the program continued and Louisa was quiet again.

Ninety days later, medical documentation indicated the project was as successful with the experimental group as it had been with Louisa.

All members of the experimental group showed improvement. Medications were decreased, behavior was modified, weight increased, and cooperation with family and staff was obvious.

Unexpected dividends came from the in-service training that the entire staff of Mattie C. Hall was required to take. Everyone in the institution learned the details of the protocol. They knew how the program worked, why it worked, learned how to administer it, and discovered the importance of their own attitude toward the patients.

Staff members were sometimes overwhelmed with the responsibility of constant care of those who could not care for themselves. The constancy could be heavy and the days long. In an effort to alleviate some of the strain endured by the staff, another recorded message on CD was made for them so they could listen in the Break Room during the two 10-minute breaks each day.

The results were as dramatic as the patients' results. The truth of Edgar Cayce's contention, that the thoughts and emotions of caregivers influence patients, was proved almost immediately.

Staff members began to consider themselves healers and not just persons who received a paycheck for doing an unpleasant job. Their hearts turned to those patients who were hurting and who were not in the effective experimental program.

Marjorie was one of those whose heart reached out in new ways. She watched Alberta's despair when her face often flooded with tears. Alberta was isolated in her own little world. She had no family, no visitors. No one but Marjorie seemed to care. But Marjorie cared. Marjorie would gather Alberta in her arms and hum a lull-

laby. Alberta would cease her crying and nestle into Marjorie's shoulder. Healing was taking place and Alberta's healing was coming from Marjorie's frame of mind, just as Edgar Cayce said.

Marjorie wasn't the only staff member who cared. Good staff care showed with the 44 residents of the Elysian Hall dementia unit. During the 90-day study no falls occurred in the dementia unit, bed sores were eradicated, and only 3 patients lost more than 3 pounds, in contrast to an earlier 6 patients who were registering a substantial weight loss.

While Louisa, Ann, Lizzie, Henry, and Esther were improved, the control group had not even held their own. Psychotropic drugs had to be increased, weight was diminishing, and disruptive behavior was on the increase. Now, these families who would not allow their participation in the first study wanted their family members in the program. This provided rationale for the second phase of the study.

The control group now became the new experimental group. Their therapy was to be the same as for the first experimental group.

A pillow speaker provided patients with the recorded message as they prepared for sleep. This hypnagogic state, the twilight reverie between alertness and sleep, is the most effective time for implanting thoughts of healing and health.

Because patients awakened during the night to go to the bathroom, the CD player was set on "repeat" so that the message would run continuously during the night. Now the message was heard four or five times a night instead of once.

The second phase would determine whether the first experimental group had reached a plateau or would continue to improve. Would the former control group, who had deteriorated without the use of the protocol, begin to improve if they were given the protocol? Would there be a change in the staff if they were allowed to take the staff CD home and use it during their pre-sleep time?

Results were gratifying. The original

experimental group continued to improve. The former control group, who had not received the protocol for the first three months, began to show improvement in behavior, cooperation and weight gain. The original experimental group who had now experienced 180 days with the protocol progressed faster than the former control group who had only 90 days' experience with the protocol. So, continued use of the protocol resulted in better health.

A spectacular effect of the *Suggestive Therapy* CD on the staff was the impact on absenteeism. Sick call-ins from the staff of 200 caregivers averaged 32.5% before the program to 3.0% afterwards. Absenteeism of staff dropped from 9 to 3.

There is singing on the Alzheimer's unit at Mattie C. Hall Health Care Center for staff, patients, and their families, thanks to Edgar Cayce's therapy.

The Alzheimer's project was successful. Mattie C. Hall Health Care Center was just considering moving into the next step given by Edgar Cayce in the progression of readings that could restore brain cells, when the facility was sold. The new administration and ownership are going to require months, even years to settle in. However, the American Holistic Health Association has heard of our work with Alzheimer's and is printing a lecture given at A.R.E. in July on their Web site.

In the meantime, however, A.R.E. and/or ABC Holistic Wellness Foundation are interested in hearing from any health care center who would like to replicate this study with an eye to more aggressive steps in the march toward eradicating Alzheimer's.

To Learn More

You can purchase a copy of *Report of Suggestive Therapy* on CD, which is a description of the project and its outcome; or to learn how to use the program, you can purchase *Suggestive Therapy for the Relief of Alzheimer's Disease* on CD (the content is the identical message administered to the patients at Mattie C. Hall Health Care Center). To order a copy, please call 757-457-7231.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BARBARA DERRICK is a psychotherapist who uses the Edgar Cayce readings in her practice. Her interest in Alzheimer's was sparked when a client, diagnosed with the disease, used the regimen suggested by Cayce and experienced a reversal. Dr. Derrick has since been working on a grant to replicate her original work with a larger group.