

The Handbook to Facilitating a Spirit of Gentleness

Facilitating a spirit of gentleness as a mentor is an important part of building companionship and community. It is also difficult in a services model that depends upon goals to dictate programs of compliance. A mentor helps to identify with all direct caregivers to understand their role and responsibilities in improving the quality of life for the individuals we serve, especially during times of difficult behaviors. Teaching and learning becomes important elements as we begin to assess ourselves as caregivers. This helps when building companionship and community.

As we facilitate this spirit of gentleness we need to identify our own tools of nurturing and improving the quality of life for the individuals we serve. This self-assessment of identifying our tools begins the initial process of a moral change as we identify with one self that the beginning needs to start with the change of one self.

As caregivers we need to identify quality of life activities and how we are going to identify and support each activity. This support of our interactions is to teach a feeling of belonging and to improve the self-worth of the individual we serve.

In review of each of the eight basic values, we need to emphasize the person's gifts and talents to help in the process of improving the quality of life. Caregivers need to be mentored on how to identify and use the individual's strengths and not to concentrate on weakness.

As we continue to teach and improve the quality of life, we must identify the support needed to facilitate one's own quality of life. As described in the book, *No Pity*, Shapiro defines independence to be measured not by "the tasks one could perform without assistance, but by the quality of one's life with help." Although the system continues to teach the people we work with to be independent, we must focus on interdependence because we are all connected.

A teaching moment is an integrated component to identify the tools which are needed. The place to teach, and the best time of day to facilitate the teaching process becomes an important part of the teaching process. We must identify that even our own presence facilitates the person's ability to grow as described by Rudolph Dreikurs who stated, "Until I can risk appearing imperfect in your eyes, without fear that it will cost me something, I can't really learn from you." This helps us to identify the important element of assessing ourselves compared to dictating new skills to the people we serve.

As we teach new experiences sometimes, there are difficult times that disrupt the teaching process. It is important as mentors to identify with caregivers these areas of difficulties and how the person reacts, but more importantly, how are we going to react and support this person during this time. The focus of restraining, rewarding or punishing to diminish certain target behaviors is a temporary fix to control the environment. Giving unconditional love during times of difficulties to nurture and identify the mutual process of walking together through the difficult times, to care and

support their feelings of being unsafe and disengage is an important role for the caregiver to fulfill.

As we assess the caregiver through dialogue, it is important to identify their personal priorities to improve the quality of life for the individual we serve. This dialogue becomes a teaching tool to help the caregiver to identify their role and responsibilities in improving the quality of life as we build companionship and community for the people we serve.