



COURSE 2

Module 2 – Introduction to Wandering

Family, Carers, and Community



Introduction to Wandering

(from the carers' perspective)

Topics in This Section



This section of module covers the following topics:

- Introduction to Wandering
- Reasons for Wandering
- How to recognize Wandering situations
- How to prevent Wandering
- What to expect will happen
- How to deal with Wandering situations
- How to handle a Wandering event
- Technologies in support of Wandering

Introduction to Wandering

- The memory loss for dementia patients can cause them to lose their way or wander around a certain location.
- Wanderers are patients with navigational difficulties.
- Wandering is one of the most complex, challenging, and potentially dangerous dementia-related behaviors, and can result in elopement, injury, and even death.



Introduction to Wandering



- Being lost may lead into other psychological deficits such as anxiety, suspicions, illusions and aggression, in addition to social isolation and a reduce quality of life.
- Such situation may present a source of stress and anxiety for relatives and caregivers.



Wandering is considered as a major cause contributing to heavy care burdens in nursing practices.

Reasons for Wandering

Some common reasons people wander are:

- Loss of memory,
- Excess energy or curiosity,
- Discomfort, pain, stress, anxiety,
- Being in a new environment,
- Trying to express emotions,
- Medication side effects.
- Sight of things that trigger memories,
- Inability to recognize familiar people, places, and objects,
- Fatigue.



How to Recognize Wandering Situations

- People with dementia who wander are found to have more **severe cognitive impairment, greater spatial deficits, and socially disruptive behavior.**

- Has not yet found a meaningful relation between wandering and gender, age, or time that it begins.



How to Recognize Wandering Situations

The following indicators can help you to recognize wandering situations:

- 1) The person becomes anxious or nervous in a crowd,
- 2) Becomes disoriented finding familiar places like the bedroom or dining room,
- 3) Forgets directions to familiar places,
- 4) Insistent on fulfilling former obligations and responsibilities,



How to Recognize Wandering Situations



- 5) Restless behavior with repetitive movements,
- 6) Returns home from regularly scheduled appointments or walks later than normal, and
- 7) Wants to find past family and friends.



How to Prevent Wandering

By following tips , you can boost your loved one's safety:

- Determine the motivation for the behavior,
- Meet physical and psychological needs,
- Secure your home,
- Add childproof door knob covers,
- Make sure the person carries or wears some sort of dementia identification,
- Alert your neighbors, and
- Increase physical activity.



What to Expect Will Happen

- As dementia progresses, people with the disease may have difficulty remembering how to get to a certain place or forget from where they just came.
- Evidences show that the persons doing the wandering intend to leave their residence and they apt to get lost.
- Other expected incidents including: earlier institutionalization, sleep disturbance, malnutrition, accidents, injury, and even in some cases, fatalities might occur.



How to Deal with Wandering Situations



There are some strategies that help better dealing with wandering situations:

- 1) Ensure that all basic needs are met,
- 2) Identify the most likely times of day that wandering may occur,

- 3) Avoid busy places that are confusing and can cause disorientation,
- 4) Reassure the person if s/he feels lost, abandoned or disoriented,



How to Deal with Wandering Situations



- 5) Relocate door locks,
- 6) Provide supervision,
- 7) Keep car keys out of sight,
- 8) Provide a safe place to walk,
- 9) Use assistive technologies.

How to Handle a Wandering Event

- If a person suffering from dementia goes missing or wandering, you need to be prepared for.
- The right preparation can prevent most wandering episodes, but no plan is foolproof. While you certainly hope that your loved one will never become lost, it is smart to at least prepare for the possibility and to put measures in place that will help ensure a quick and safe return, for example:



- 1) Fully charged his/her cell phone
- 2) Write down important Information

How to Handle a Wandering Event

- Remain calm,
- Make a thorough search of the house and familiar places,
- Use social media when applicable,
- Try to think of clues to where that person may have gone,
- Those who wander are often found within a half mile of home,
- If you could not find him, call police immediately,
- Fill out a missing person's report,



- Ensure someone is available to speak to Police when they arrive,
- Make sure law officers know that the missing person has dementia and is a vulnerable adult,

How to Handle a Wandering Event



Be prepared to answer questions from Police and search teams, such as:



- History of previous wandering,
- Missing person's state of mind,
- The last three addresses that the missing person lived at,
- Any registered wandering devices or bracelets,
- Known frequented places.

How to Handle a Wandering Event



When he/she returns home:

- Notify the police immediately,
- Do not scold or show any anxiety, and
- Provide reassurance and get back into their regular routines.



Technologies in Support of Wandering



Assistive technologies have been designed to support people with dementia and wandering to live independently and safely for longer, as well as reducing the burden on their carers.

Technologies in Support of Wandering



Assistive Technologies can help to :

- Locate missing necessary objects,
- Find one's way from A to B,
- Tell the time of day and the date,
- Alert the individual or caregiver to dangerous situations,
- Maintain contact with friends, neighbors and family,
- Take medications at the right time,
- Find people who become lost.



References

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Questions

1. Syptoms of wandering are:

- A) Memory loss, Fatigue, Express emotion
- B) Trigger memories, Stress, Inability to recognize objects
- C) Anxiety, Excess energy, Inability to recognize places
- D) All options are true (True)

2. Syptoms that can help you to diagnosis wandering are:

- A) Becomes anxious or nervous in a crowd, Becomes disoriented, Low energy
- B) looking for some one, Searching for the past, Tiredness
- C) Cognitive impairments, Forgets familiar places, Disorientation (True)

3. What to do in a wandering event:

- A) Keep calm, Call police, Ask neighbours
- B) Check inside the house, Check outside the house, Use social media
- C) Check familiar places, Call him If he has phone, Use tracking devices
- D) All options are true (True)