Safety Planning for Persons Living with Dementia and for Care Partners

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May 15, 2020
Outline

• Overview of safety concerns
• Tips for maintaining independence
• Resources for the person with dementia
• Tips to reduce the risk of a missing incident
• Plan ahead for a missing incident
• Resources for the care partner
• Future webinars
Safety Concerns

• Going out in an unfamiliar area
• Navigating an area with similar looking buildings or those without identifying features
• Going out later in the day; when tired; when in a hurry
• Not having a “plan” in place
• Concerns related to impacts of dementia*
• Feeling more “isolated” due to the Covid-19 restrictions**
Question 1

What is a safety idea that are you currently using? e.g. carrying a notebook; filling out an “ID Form”

Please write your response in the chat box.
Poem

Wandering along the beach by Kate Swaffer ©2014

Before a diagnosis of dementia, if I went walking,
Even if it was ‘wandering’ through a shopping centred for pleasure,
It was still referred to as walking
Wandering along the beach with the sand between my toes
Was still considered walking

When I go walking, even if I get lost, I am not a wanderer... I am a person
Sometimes people like to go for walks, even people with dementia
Sometimes people get lost, even people without dementia
Sometimes people walk because they are looking for something, even people with dementia
Sometimes people go walking because they are bored, even people with dementia
Sometimes people go walking because they might be trying to “escape”
Or “manage” the boredom of living in an aged care facility
They might be feeling like they are in prison...
Locked up even when they are not criminals...
Sometimes people walk for exercise, even people with dementia.
Before aged care, people were involved in habitual walking almost all the time...

Walking to the kitchen to get a cup of tea,
Walking to the bathroom,
Walking to the shed,
Walking to the clothesline,
Walking to the shops...
Wandering along the beach…cont’d

Living in aged care does not mean people with dementia wish to stop walking
Oddly, before a diagnosis dementia, doctors tell us to get or keep fit,
And that walking is one of the best exercises for us...
Even more oddly, when we have dementia, this must stop
As then walking is referred to as wandering,
A challenging behaviour that needs managing
Poem

Wandering along the beach…cont’d

People with dementia are still “real” people
Living their lives just as they did before acquiring the label of dementia
People with dementia are not wanderers, poor feeders, aggressives, or demented sufferers
People with dementia still wish to live well
But get very little support from others for well-being or for improving our quality of life
Including to go walking
Walking is good for us and fun...
It is not a challenging behaviour.

by Kate Swaffer ©2014
Tips for the Person Living with Dementia

- Have ID and important information with you at all times
- Carry memory aids
- Stick to a routine and maintain consistency
Tips for the Person Living with Dementia..2

- Use visual reminders
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Use technology (e.g. cell phone with GPS; apps)
- Be open to receiving support
  - e.g. a walking “buddy” or contact person
Resources for the Person Living with Dementia
A. Finding Your Way

http://findingyourwayontario.ca/resources/

Staying active and staying safe with memory loss

Even though I have memory loss, that doesn’t stop me from staying active and doing the things I enjoy. Of course, some days are better than others. Knowing how to keep myself safe is key.

The other day I was walking my dog and forgot how to get home. It happened without warning. It was pretty scary, especially because it had never happened to me before.

So now I plan ahead. It gives me peace of mind.

What happened to me may not happen to you, but it’s always better to be safe than sorry.

Being prepared is the smart thing to do. Create a safety plan.
B. Finding Your Way

C. Research Institute for Aging
By Us For Us© Guides

https://the-ria.ca/resources/by-us-for-us-guides/
Walking safely with dementia

Dementia Australia

Tips to Reduce the Risk of a Missing* Incident

- Carry out daily activities (daily plan)¹
- Look for patterns (same time of day?)
- Reassure the person (use validation)
- Ensure all basic needs are met
- Avoid busy places that are confusing and can cause disorientation**

¹ This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC
Tips to Reduce the Risk of a Missing* Incident..2

- Place locks out of the line of sight
- Use devices that signal when a door or window is opened
- Provide supervision***
- Keep the environment consistent
- Keep car keys out of sight
- Modify outdoor space (if possible)
Plan Ahead

• Keep a list of people to call on for help (police, neighbours)
• Ask neighbours, friends and family to call if they see the person alone (if this would not be usual)
• Keep a recent, close-up photo and updated medical information on hand to give to police (ID Form)
• Know your neighbourhood
ID Form

Plan Ahead..2

• Is the individual right or left-handed?
• Keep a list of places where the person may go (on ID Form)
• Consider enrolling the person living with dementia in a “wandering response service” (e.g. MedicAlert® Safely Home³)
Plan Ahead...3

- Label clothing
- Tags on shoes
- Cotton swab (for scent)
- Consider technology (future topic)
- Take a photo of the individual each morning*
- “Carer Emergency Card” for Care Partner⁴
• Carer Emergency Card Template
• Cool-Aid program (for care partners and person living with dementia*)
  – *Combine with Finding Your Way ID Form
Online Resources


• C. https://the-ria.ca/resources/by-us-for-us-guides (Safety When Out and About Guide)


• 1 https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/daily-care-plan (Daily plan example)

• 2 http://findingyourwayontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ASO-FYW-Identification-Form-V1-vc.pdf (Finding Your Way ID Kit)

• 3 https://www.medicalert.ca/safely-home (Medic Alert® Safely Home program)

• * Slide deck will be available with this recording. If you have questions about other resources, please e-mail soster@alzheimerlondon.ca
Extra Resources/References


https://kateswaffer.com/2014/11/29/wandering-along-the-beach/ (Kate Swaffer’s poem about walking/wandering)


https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering

http://findingyourwayontario.ca/


https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/wandering_(1)
Anytime Resources

- [https://alzheimerlondon.ca/covid-19/](https://alzheimerlondon.ca/covid-19/) Updated regularly
- [https://www.dementiacarers.ca/](https://www.dementiacarers.ca/) (Online resources/support for family care partners)
Question 2

Which of these safety tips/ideas will be the most helpful to you?

Please write your response in the chat box.
Future Webinars

May 22\textsuperscript{nd} @11am - \textbf{What to do if a person living with dementia goes missing}
Learn what to do if a person living with dementia unexpectedly goes missing. Access valuable resources to help you be prepared and to respond in the moment.

May 29\textsuperscript{th} @11am - \textbf{Wandering and getting lost: a review of at home strategies you can use to manage the risks} – featuring guest presenter Noelannah Neubauer, Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Waterloo.
Noelannah completed her PhD in Rehabilitation Science at the University of Alberta August 2019, where she focused on developing a framework and guidelines to manage the risks associated with critical dementia-related wandering. She is the co-founder of the International Consortium on Dementia and Wayfinding.
Contact Us

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