



Assessing Wandering Behavior

Who is at Risk and How Do we Intervene?

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Objectives

- Wandering – Definition and Background
- Causes/ Risk Factors
- Effects of Wandering
- Best Practices
- Care Planning
- Problem solving

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What is Wandering?

A behavior of people with dementia who move about in ways that may appear aimless, but which are often purposeful.

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Prevalence:

- Early to Middle Stages of Dementia.
- Estimated 11-24 % of institutionalized individuals with dementia wander.
- In the U.S. approximately 34,000 Dementia patients wander out of there homes.

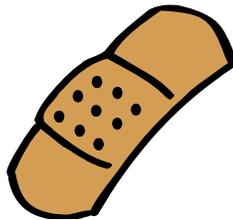
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Facts:

- 45% of wanderers will be found dead if not found in the first 24hrs
- 83% have wandered before
- 95% are found within 1.5 miles
- One long-term care facility resident will wander away and die each week in the USA

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Imagine....



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Causes of Wandering General

- Changes in memory and recall
- Decreased visual spatial capability
- Increased disorientation
- Decreased ability to communicate
- Difficulties with abstract thinking and judgement
- Difficulty relating to environment
- Decreased social interaction
- Increased pacing and motor activity

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Physical Causes of Wandering

- Hunger
- Thirst
- Constipation
- Inactivity
- Urge to go to the bathroom
- Fatigue
- Pain
- Discomfort

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Causes of Wandering Environmental

Specific to Facility

- Inadequate Lighting
- Excess Noise Level
- Crowded Spaces
- Shift Changes
- Inadequate Temperature Regulation

In General

- New to Facility
- Change in Personal Routine
- Changes in Surroundings
- Activities Focused on Exits

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Other Causes of Wandering

- Emotional State of Person With Dementia
 - Anxiety
 - Bored or Depressed
 - Sedating Meds
 - Little Meaningful Connections

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Causes of Wandering at Night

- Previous Occupations
- Sleeping During the Day
- Continence Issues
- Inappropriate Lighting

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**Effects of Wandering on
The Person with Dementia**

- Fulfilling a Need
- Exercise
- Sensory stimulation
- Purposeful activity
- Searching for something or someone

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Effects of Wandering on Family

Safety Issue; family assumes they will not wander from a facility.

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Effects of Wandering on Facility

- Supervisory issue
- Environmental issue
- Need to alter care planning
- May have to look at their activity and exercise program
- May need additional training
- May need to add/alter wander Path

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Goals for Those who Wander

- Promote Function
- Promote Dignity
- Prevent Injury
- Identify Protocol

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Evaluating for Elopement Risk

- History of wandering
- History of cognitive changes/ medical conditions
- Pre-morbid lifestyle
- Change in routine and or condition
- Regular re-assessment

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Assessment of Wandering Behavior

- What is the person demonstrating?
- Is there an associated behavior?
- Time of day, path taken, and duration.
- People present?
- Environment?

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Assessment

- Environmental
- Rule out causes of restlessness
- Rule out medication issues
- Rule out untreated depression
- Assess communication capability
- Hearing problems
- Gait issues
- Continance issues
- Nutritional status
- Pain

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Developing a Plan of Care

- Assessment
 - Information from family
 - Key questions to ask
- Care plan process

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Best Practice Approach

- Environmental Modifications
- Technology and Safety
- Physical Interventions
- Psychosocial Interventions
- All Staff Education

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Now What?

- Assessment
- Developing a Plan of Care
- Problem-solving

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Recap and Final Thoughts

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