



FINDING Your Way

*For people with dementia,
every step counts.*

What to do when reuniting after a missing incident

The person with dementia will often be anxious and confused when found. Following the strategies below may help calm the person and encourage them to return home.

Be prepared

- ✓ If there is bad weather at the time of the person going missing, prepare a change of clothing including underwear, socks, coats and shoes to bring with you (as appropriate to weather condition).

Approach calmly

- ✓ Approach the person in a casual manner. Make sure they see you coming.
- ✓ If the person does not wish to return home immediately, walk a short distance with them while speaking in a calm, normal tone of voice.

Provide reassurance

- ✓ Reassure the person about where they are and why.
- ✓ Let the person know you have been worried about them and are happy to see them return home.
- ✓ Talk to them about familiar things that may trigger a response to return home. An invitation to have a cup of tea (or coffee) or feed the dog may be enough to prompt the person to go home with you.



For local Alzheimer Society contact information, call 2-1-1
Visit: FindingYourWayOntario.ca

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- ✓ The person may be determined to reach a particular destination. If possible, consider taking them there right away or at a later date.

Keep your perspective

- ✓ The experience of someone going missing can be very stressful. Remember that the behaviour is part of dementia. No one is to blame.
- ✓ Once the person is safely home, it is common to want to make sure it doesn't happen again. Focus attention on prevention.
- ✓ Restraints should never be used as they can have serious effects (such as a higher risk for falls and skin breakdown) and have not been shown to reduce missing incidents.

Ask for help

- ✓ For information and support, contact your local Alzheimer Society resource centre. Visit <http://www.alzheimerontario.ca> for information about what Alzheimer Society of Ontario offers and to find your local Society.
- ✓ After an emergency situation, some caregivers choose to assess the person with dementia's living situation. Your local Alzheimer Society can help with these decisions.

Adapted from materials developed by Alzheimer Society British Columbia.