



GET SAFE'S ELOPEMENT PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Dementia



Elopement at a glance

Elopement is when a person wanders from a safe environment, and does not have the skills or cognitive abilities to return **safely**. It's a form of communication often indicating they want, need, or don't want something.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, **six in ten** people living with **dementia** will elope **at least once**.

Being **prepared** can reduce the **frequency**, improve **survival rates**, and help everyone be ready to **respond to an emergency**.

Personal Risk Factors

Certain factors can increase the risk that a person will elope. Knowing these factors can help you be proactive in keeping them safe.

- A diagnosis of dementia
- Moderate to severe diagnosis
- History of elopement
- High level of physical mobility and activity
- Recent medication change
- Busy social life or work life that regularly took them outside the home prior to diagnosis



Environmental Risk Factors

- Recent move to a new home and wanting to "go home"
- Visiting an unfamiliar area
- Change in routine
- Lack of engaging activities
- Little or no supervision
- No physical barrier to keep them in a safe location
- No functioning alarms or sensors

Sundowning

What is it?

Sundowning is a state of confusion occurring in the **late afternoon and spanning into the night**. Symptoms include increased confusion, anxiety, aggression, ignoring directions, pacing or wandering.

Up to 2/3 of people with dementia will experience sundowning symptoms.

Why it happens

Sundowning can be triggered by:

- Fatigue from trying to keep up with an unfamiliar or confusing environment
- Low-lighting and shadows that are misinterpreted and cause agitation
- Disruption of the body's internal clock
- Difficulty separating reality from dreams
- Presence of an infection such as urinary tract infection



How to prevent sundowning

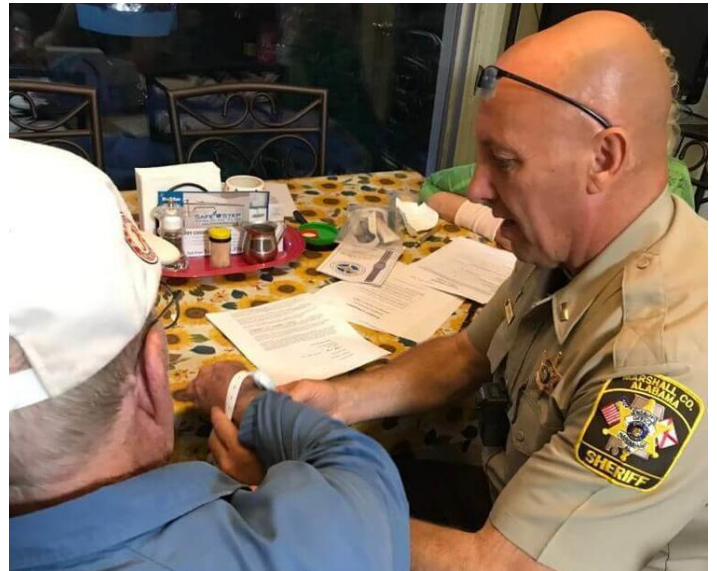
- Limit daytime napping
- Limit caffeine and sugar to morning hours
- Maintain a predictable routine for bedtime, waking, meals, and activities
- Plan activities and exposure to light during the day to encourage nighttime sleepiness
- In an unfamiliar setting, bring familiar items — such as photographs — to create a more relaxed, familiar setting
- In the evening, try to reduce background noise and stimulating activities like TV
- Play familiar gentle music in the evening or relaxing sounds of nature

Locative Technology

Elopement is a time sensitive incident.

Most people walk at about 3 miles per hour. This means that within only **10 minutes** someone could be **half a mile** away of their starting point. Within **20 minutes**, they can be **one mile** away.

Dementia can turn off the signals that tell them they should stop walking, like feeling hungry or needing to use the restroom.



Find what works for you

Locative equipment comes in different forms, the most common being wristbands and keychains. Devices can also be attached to belt buckles, bags, undershirts, water-proof pouches, and lanyards.

Other preventative options include, motion sensors on front and back doors, surveillance cameras, or gated fencing around the property to alert you if they attempt to wander away.

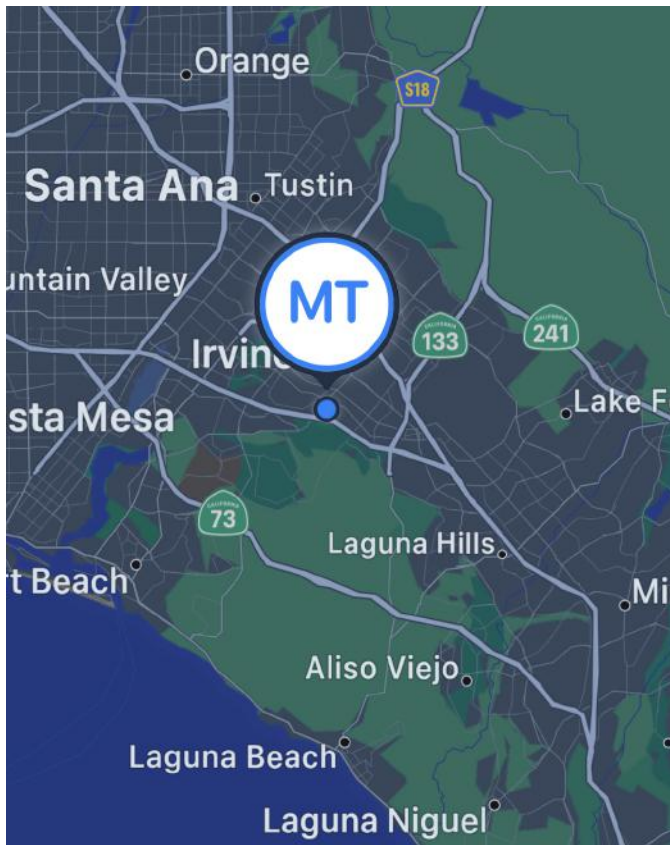
Reach out to your local police or sheriff department and ask if they have relationships with any location device options - they can respond faster if they're familiar with the devices.

Locative Technology

There is no one right answer when it comes to tracking technology - everyone has different needs and preferences.

Some people will tolerate a bracelet, others won't. Some will need a waterproof device, others won't. Some can be unprotected while the device is charging, others can't.

The best thing you can do is evaluate what might work and try it!



Ask Yourself...

- Is it part of a multi-level approach to safety?
- Is geofencing possible?
- Is it easily removable?
- Will it bother them?
- What's the battery life?
- How often does it need a charge?
- Is it water-resistant?
- Can it transmit under water?
- Do I need to be close by to pick up the tracking signal?
- What is the signal range?
- Does it rely on cell service?
- Is there good coverage near me?
- Is it specifically made for your needs?
- Does it connect with emergency services?
- Can you ask the manufacturer questions?
- What does it cost? Subscription fees?



Find my Phone is a feature on both Apple and Android devices. The "find my phone" feature utilizes GPS technology to locate lost devices. This feature can be helpful if your loved one has a phone with them at the time of elopement.



Apple Airtag is a discreet device that can be hooked to your loved ones purse, backpack, or belt loop. To utilize this feature, enable location services in the settings.



Project Lifesaver offers wearable locative equipment that can drastically reduce search time. 95% of Project Lifesaver participants who go missing are located in less than 30 minutes.



AngelSense offers a kit that includes a GPS device, magnetic key, wearing sleeve, and an improved speaker phone. It can be easily attached to clothes, inside pockets, and bags.

MedicAlert offers custom engraving on all medical ID products. The engraving should include any critical medical information to improve communication with first responders.



Vivint, a home security and smart home technology company, offers a system that helps special needs families keep their children safe. Vivint Gives Back tailors smart home systems to meet each family's unique needs at a price they can afford.



AliMed, offers elopement prevention devices, including door guards and door/window alarms. AliMed's door guard is a magnetically-activated alarm that can be attached to a door jam with a hook-and-loop.

If They Elope...

1

Call 9-1-1 immediately!

Be truthful about how long they've been missing.

Request a Crisis Intervention (CIT) trained officer.

2

Give a current photo.

Give situational information that might help.

Give personality information that might help.

3

Continue searching your home and property.

Cooperate with law enforcement, as requested.

Keep someone at their last known location in case they come back.

4

Activate and monitor locative device.

Review your and other neighborhood security camera footage.

Ask neighbors for information and help.

5

Use social media, like Nextdoor, to get help from the community.

Ask for an Amber Alert or Silver Alert.

Continue the search.

Personal Information



Give this information to police if they elope.

Full Name: _____

Nickname: _____

Address: _____

DOB: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____

Race: _____ Sex: _____

Hair Color: _____ Eye Color: _____

Identifying marks, scars, tattoos: _____

Verbal? Yes ☐ No ☐ Hearing impaired? Yes ☐ No ☐

Preferred language: _____

Medical Conditions: _____

Medications: _____

Medical ID: _____ Location Device: _____

Vehicle Make: _____ Vehicle Model: _____ Vehicle Year: _____

Fear of Police? Yes ☐ No ☐ Comments: _____

Favorite places to go: _____

Favorite music, topics, or interests: _____

Favorite soothing techniques: _____

Additional information: _____

Place a current
photo HERE.

Date the back of photo
and replace often.

Emergency Contacts



Be sure to put down your information plus neighbors, local family and friends, doctors, teachers, and anyone else who could help in the search.

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____
Address: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____
Address: _____

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Address: _____

Name: _____ Relationship: _____
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Name: _____ Relationship: _____
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Address: _____

Elopement Log



Log information about their elopements to help find them quicker next time.

Elopement		Recovery	
Date:	Time:	Date:	Time:
Departure Location:		Location Found:	
On foot <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		Distance Traveled:	
Triggering Event:		Injuries:	
Additional Information:			

Elopement		Recovery	
Date:	Time:	Date:	Time:
Departure Location:		Location Found:	
On foot <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		Distance Traveled:	
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Elopement		Recovery	
Date:	Time:	Date:	Time:
Departure Location:		Location Found:	
On foot <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		Distance Traveled:	
Triggering Event:		Injuries:	
Additional Information:			

[illegible]

[illegible]

Clothing Log



Date: _____

Log what your clients are wearing including color, design, hat, jewelry, etc.

[illegible]

STOP Prompt

Cut these out or (print your own) and attach to doors and windows for a visual cue not to leave.



STOP Prompt

Cut these out or (print your own) and attach to doors to help orient.





Being Your Best Self

Caring for yourself allows you to be a great caregiver. If you are run down, burned out, and exhausted, you can't provide the level of care they need.

Plants need water, cars need gas, phones need a charge, and you need self care to keep yourself going. Maybe you need a person to talk to, maybe you could use a few hours off, or maybe you need a regular activity to get your mind off the stresses of caregiving. Whatever works for you, incorporate it into your routine.

You can only give as much as you have. So it's in everybody's best interest to make sure you aren't running on empty.

Don't feel guilty for taking the time to relax and unwind. You'll get back to caregiving feeling refreshed and ready to handle business.



Stress Management Ideas



Social

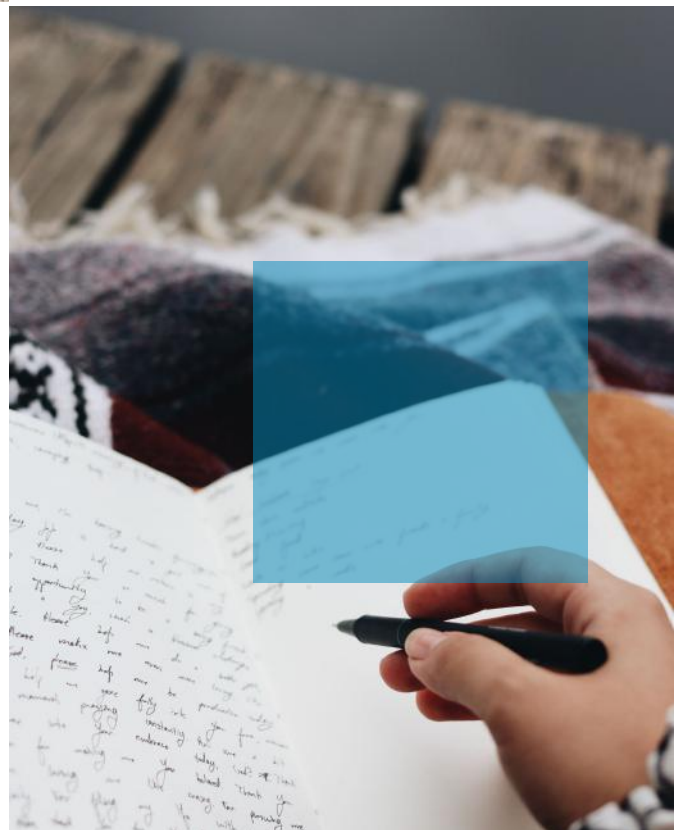
- Call someone to chat
- Zoom call with friends or family
- Grab a bite with a friend
- Join a support group in your area
- Join a supportive online community

Physical

- Practice breathing exercises
- Take a morning or evening walk
- Work out at home or at the gym
- Go on a hike or beach walk

Activities

- Journal about your stress
- Write a list of what you're grateful for
- Work on a craft or hobby project
- Watch something that cheers you up
- Put on your favorite songs
- Take a nap
- Spend time with animals
- Listen to a podcast or audiobook
- Buy yourself a treat
- Find a fun activity on Groupon





Download more
resources here!



GET SAFE™

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