



Florida REACH Project

Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health

Prescription for Wandering

Specific Behavior:

Overall Goal of this Prescription:

Please remember that dealing with challenging behaviors can be stressful. The brief relaxation strategies will help you deal with stress when dealing with this challenge. In particular, we recommend using the signal breath technique immediately before you use the strategies suggested in this behavioral prescription.

Strategies for preventing a challenging behavior from occurring (try picking one thing and sticking with it for a few weeks):

1. Secure your living area. *These suggestions will help guarantee his/her safety as well as your peace of mind.*

- Have someone place hook and eye latches either very high or very low on your outside screen door. Ask the sales person at your local home improvement store if they have these latches with a spring-loaded catch. This type of latch will make the hook and eye latch more difficult for your loved one to open.
- Hang sleigh or jingle bells on all doors to alert you. These bells are often so delicate that they respond to the slightest vibration.
- Ask your local hardware or home improvement store about pins designed to lock your sliding glass door.
- Purchase a mobility monitor that will sound when your loved one moves beyond a certain distance.
- Place a "Stop" sign on doors that lead outside.
- Tell neighbors and police to alert you if your family member is found unsupervised.

2. Schedule specific times during your daily routine to allow the person to spend time outside under supervision. *He/She may become more agitated if they are not allowed to wander, so it is better to control the wandering instead of discouraging it.*

- Add another 30 minute walk to your daily exercise routine.
- Engage the person in activities related to his/her previous routines and interests. (such as gardening, visiting museums, mall walking).
- Go for a ride in the car.
- Ask a friend or neighbor to take the person for a walk a few days a week.



3. Use different forms of identification. *These suggestions will help aid in identification in case your loved one gets lost.*

- Enroll in the Safe Return Program sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association.
- Dress your loved one in brightly colored clothing to assure he/she can be spotted from a distance.
- Place sew-on or iron-on labels with your loved one's name, address and phone number in clothing.

Other strategies:

Strategies for guiding how you respond during or after a behavior occurs:

- 1. Don't panic or rush out on your own when you can't find your loved one. Call the police.** *If your loved one returns and you aren't home, he/she may go out again.*
- 2. Have a list of important emergency numbers as well as a recent photograph handy in case of a wandering incident.**
- 3. Try to distract your loved one when he/she tells you that he/she needs to go work on something outside.** *Asking him/her to help you with a task might help in distracting him.*

General Information:

You are a dedicated caregiver and you are doing a great job. We understand that this can be very upsetting to you and are committed to helping you with this challenge. We believe these strategies will help and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks.

Please remember that you can reach out to the social workers on your medical team if you have any questions or concerns.