

# COMMUNITY VERSION

RISK OF GETTING LOST



## Low Risk

- Initial signs present or diagnosis of dementia
- No history of getting lost
- Lives with family and is supervised 24/7
- No interest in going outside home without having someone accompany them



## Medium Risk

- Limited supervision at home
- History of exercising as a means of alleviating stress
- Regularly engages in outdoor/community activities
- Becomes frequently overwhelmed or anxious
- At a stage where identify themselves in their earlier years. Talks of going to work or wanting to go home
- Regularly states intent to leave home



## High Risk

- Regularly goes for walks alone
- Lives at home alone
- In the later stages of dementia, they may frequently walk away from care partner when out in the community
- Pattern of preparing to go outside (i.e., putting coat and shoes on, grabs bag/purse)



## Unplanned Absence

- Lost within the community
- Is missing, has eloped, has lost one's way exterior to care

STRATEGIES



- Education and awareness
- Developing a plan of preventative strategies
- Talk to physician ASAP
- Watch for signals seen in medium and high risk
- Register under a vulnerable persons registry if available\*
- Identification strategies (e.g., ID tags/ bracelets/kit)\*



- Distraction/redirection strategies
- Exercise with a partner or use a locating technology
- Add list of where used to live/work
- Increased supervision (i.e., day programs, locating devices or buddy system for those that live alone)



- Locating technologies
- Alarms/surveillance
- Locks and barriers
- Buddy system
- Seek community supports (i.e. home care)
- Relocation



- **Call 911 immediately**
- Search and rescue methods
- Community involvement

Can transition to lesser or greater levels of risk at any moment

Need to apply education and proactive strategies as soon as possible so can still encourage **safe** wandering

*NOTE: Strategies with a star (\*) next to it could be applied to any risk level*

# LIST OF AVAILABLE STRATEGIES

## Low Risk

Keep a list of people to call on for help

- Education and awareness
  - o Finding Your Way Program (<http://findingyourwayontario.ca>)
  - o Alzheimer Society (<http://alzheimer.ca/en/on>)
- Register participant with the Vulnerable Person Registry (if available) or with an identification program
  - o MedicAlert (<https://www.medicalert.ca>)

## Medium Risk

- Distraction/redirection strategies:
  - o Providing meaningful activities (i.e. chores, tasks, etc.) or play music that they grew up to
  - o Install signs to assist in way-finding
- Have person with dementia exercise with a partner or use a locating technology (<https://tech.findingyourwayontario.ca>)
- Keep a list at home of the places the person with dementia used to live and work
- Increase supervision (i.e., day programs, locating devices or a buddy system for those with dementia that live alone)

## High Risk

- Keep car keys out of sight
- Avoid busy places that are confusing and can cause disorientation
- Increase supervision (i.e., day programs, tracking devices or being connected to a care worker for those that live alone)
- Install locks or alarm systems on the exit door or window to know when it is opened *Disclaimer: locks should ONLY be implemented when the care partner is at home for safety reasons such as fire risk, etc.*
- Consider locating technologies such as Commercial GPS (<https://tech.findingyourwayontario.ca>) or GPS devices available on your phone (e.g. Find My Friend App or Google maps)
- Install door murals (painted camouflaged exit doors), place mirrors or curtains in front of the exit door
- Ensure someone has descriptors readily accessible of the person with dementia (i.e. photo, locations they like to go to, etc.)
- Place identification information on items of clothing, or objects they regularly use (i.e., walker, wallet)
- Discuss long term care options

## Unplanned Absence

- Call 911 immediately DO NOT wait 24-48 hours to alert the police. The police want to know right away about the missing person even if you find them soon after. The longer you wait to call the greater the risk they are at for being found seriously injured or deceased
- Notify the community to keep a look out for the missing person