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Addressing Elopement in Senior Living

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View the entire course including any applicable handouts/resources. Complete a post-test assessment. You must score 80% or better on the post-test and complete the course evaluation to earn a certificate of completion for this activity. If required, Select Rehabilitation will report attendance to CE Broker.

ABOUT THE COURSE AUTHOR

Kari Brizendine, a Physical Therapist, is a graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University/Medical College of Virginia. An Education Specialist for Select Rehab, one of our nation's largest long-term care rehab providers, Kari has spent over 37 years working with the geriatric population in a multitude of clinical settings where she has been responsible for patient care, clinical programming, education and staff development. She is a Certified Wound Specialist through the American Board of Wound Management, a Certified Dementia Practitioner and Trainer through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners, a Certified Montessori Dementia care Professional and She is LSVT Big Certified. Her predominant interest has been in serving those with dementia, their caregivers, healthcare providers and families, with the message that each person with dementia continues to have a life that matters and that quality is possible if we all join that person using his or her personal interests, residual skills and memories in what she calls "My Way". She is the co-author of *My Past is Now My Future: A Practical Guide to Dementia Possible Care* and author of *Though You Do not Know My Name I Know You Love me Just the Same*.

POST-TEST

1. At the late stages of dementia, people tend to elope
 - a) with a purpose
 - b) by wandering
 - c) because they need to get to the bank
 - d) to feed their family

2. Critical walking or wandering is when a person
 - a) wanders away from supervised care
 - b) leaves a controlled environment
 - c) cannot be located
 - d) all the above
3. The possibility of elopement is a concern and needs to be addressed for
 - a) persons with dementia only
 - b) persons on the secure living area only
 - c) persons in the skilled setting only
 - d) all tenants
4. Cognitive mapping is defined as
 - a) the ability to retrace steps
 - b) the ability to draw a map to a requested place
 - c) the ability to recognize the areas displayed on a map
 - d) the ability to work a geography related table puzzle
5. Reasons for elopement include
 - a) getting angry with a peer or staff member
 - b) feeling too cold or too hot
 - c) seeing a staff member don their coat at shift change
 - d) all the above

The post-test and corresponding course evaluation can be accessed at:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Elopement_On_Demand

Or by using the following QR Code:



If all course requirements have been met, a certificate will be emailed from Select Rehabilitation to the email address reported in the course follow-up survey.

Any questions or issues related to this course should be directed to Dr. Kathleen Weissberg, National Director of Education for Select Rehabilitation at kweissberg@selectrehab.com

If accessibility of learning is required, please contact Kathleen Weissberg at kweissberg@selectrehab.com for appropriate accommodations.

Addressing Elopement in Senior Living

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Objectives

As a result of attending this webinar, the learner will meet the following objectives:


- differentiate characteristics anticipated at various stages or progression of dementia and other neurocognitive diagnoses
- describe care plans that are person-centered, meaningful, functional and reduce the triggers for elopement behaviors
- describe examples of communication, environmental changes and equipment modification that create success and increase independence, reduce desire to elope
- enumerate strategies to determine the interests of those they serve



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Your New Hire: Qualities that Make a Successful Dementia Caregiver


- Alert
- Sense of humor
- Flexible
- Creative
- Loves people
- Dependable
- Takes care of self as well as others
- Great communications skills both verbal and non-verbal
- Willing to learn new ways
- Able to take constructive feedback



3

Continues with Staff Orientation

- Discuss dementia care, new admission trends, general tenant needs
- Tour facility both indoors and out
- Tour surrounding neighborhood
- Policies/ Procedures
- Location and contents of elopement kit
- Location of alarm systems and how to operate
- Role play elopement situations
- Communication to emergency personnel
- Community outings
- Documentation of client's clothing each day



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Staff Orientation continued


- Charting behavior patterns, triggers
- Reporting changes
- Fire drill procedures
- Regular medication reviews
- Wandering committee
- Care and use of hearing aides and glasses
- Orientation to alarm systems, codes, and maintenance
- Define an "activity" in long term care
- Monthly password changes
- How to re-direct



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Tenant Orientation


- Group discussion about strategies to keep peers safe
- Instruction about operating doors, latching properly, not placing an object to keep door ajar
- Include seeking administrative staff approval before assisting a peer outdoors
- Include informing nursing/ administrative staff about personal schedule like Dr. appointments and outings into the community
- Fire drill procedures
- Ongoing teaching about differing diagnoses



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Family and Visitor Education

- Inform about use of security codes and procedures
- Make aware that some in the community may ask visitors for "a ride home"
- Educate about ways to avoid upset with loved ones
- Have specific ways staff can be subtly made aware family member or visitor is leaving
- Bring in items for calming, reminiscing, and avoiding boredom using person-centered strategy
- Point to directive signs near exits
- Fire drill procedures
- Support groups
- Teaching events



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Know Your Tenant

- Know preferred name
- Activity preferences
- Past work experience
- Hobbies
- Sleep habits
- Past routines
- Past community outings
- Toileting needs
- ADL preferences
- Diagnosis
- Functional mobility
- Behaviors
- Communication needs



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Ways to Know Your Tenant

- My Way or Preference Tool
- Standardized Staging Tool
- Ask them!



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Elopement Risk

- Wandering behaviors
- Onset
- Time of day/night
- Frequency
- Travel pattern
- Past behaviors
- Needs
- Triggers



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Elopement Risk

- Choose tools that meet the needs of your community
- Pick or develop an Elopement Risk Decision Tree
- Use a Wandering Behavior Data Collection Tool
- Fill out an Elopement Risk Assessment
- Keep forms consistent
- Re-visit and revise per your community policy



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"Behaviors"

- Sometimes we are the cause
- Often acting out is exasperation over difficulty communicating a need
- Need to investigate hallucinations and accusations
- Understand diagnosis
- People will mirror staff emotions and actions
- Speech and Occupational Therapy evaluations will help



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Pacing

- Observable constant walking
- Can be detrimental due to fatigue
- Can cause weight loss
- May be in secure or non-secure environment
- Creative strategies used for planned rest, path taken



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Reasons for Pacing

- Pain
- Too hot
- Too cold
- Wet or soiled brief
- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Upset
- Angry
- Bored
- Forgot how to sit down
- Unmet need
- Searching for preferred items
- Anxiety over finances, loved ones
- Need for fresh air
- Lost, looking for something
- Habit



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Wandering

- The lost ability to recognize familiar places and faces
- Can create an unsafe situation
- Searching for an innate need
- May or may not be dangerous
- Could be relaxing



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Reasons for Wandering

- Trying to accomplish former obligations
- Lost ability to use cognitive mapping- the ability to retrace steps
- Unable to recognize people
- Uncomfortable temperature
- Overstimulation
- Thirsty



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Elopement/ Wandering

- Purposeful/ Intentional-Leave with a stated or specific purpose
- Random/ Unintentional- leave by accident
- Potential for injury, death, lawsuits, harm to reputation
- 60% of people with dementia at least once
- 50% survival if not found within 24 hours
- Extreme weather will decrease chance of leaving a building, however, if they leave, an even less chance of survival
- Leave more during shift changes and when sundowning
- Consider clients who worked the third shift
- Can drown in a couple of inches of water
- May not realize they need to ask for help
- Still may accept ride from strangers



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Critical Walking/Wandering

When the person wanders away from supervised care, a controlled environment, or cannot be located.

NCCDP.org



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Random

- Followed a visitor out of building
- Followed a vendor, dietary cart
- Door propped open
- Left during fire drill
- Wandered during outing
- Shadowing
- Change in schedule or routine
- Late stage of dementia
- Change in medication
- Left alone or in a car
- Change in environment
- Visual- spatial difficulties
- Forgot how to turn around
- May not talk or cry out
- May leave road
- Overstimulation/ not enough stimulation



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Purposeful Reasons for Elopement

- Bored/ not enough stimulation/ activity planned is "silly"
- Angry/ confronting situation
- Need to "take care of errand, family member"
- New admission
- Visitor assisted
- Want to go home
- Uncomfortable/ overstimulation
- Doing their job
- Wish to go outdoors
- Unhappy with staffing change
- Saw coat and hat and decided it was time to leave
- Left alone in home or car



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Dementia Stages and Elopement

Reasons for Elopement will differ as the person progresses through the stages of dementia. This makes revision of elopement risk assessments and plans a necessary process throughout the continuum.



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Earlier(When someone still understands they have dementia)

- Took a walk and couldn't find their way back
- Angry with family, peer, staff
- Wish to go home
- Can't locate their room
- Moved to a different living situation



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Middle

- Want to "go home"
- Wish to see a loved one
- Searching for deceased loved one
- Have a job to do
- Have an appointment to keep
- See someone leave as in shift change
- Have an argument with a peer
- Perceive danger
- Need to get to the bank
- Traveling to work or to visit friend or relative



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Late


- Wander away
- Change direction due to obstacles in their path
- Seeking a warmer or colder environment
- Followed someone out
- Basic needs unmet



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Predicting Elopement

- My Way
- Identified wander risk
- Elopement risk form
- Diagnosis characteristics
- Stage of dementia
- Past history at home or another living situation



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Staff Training


- Orientation- Tour of grounds, tour of neighborhood, location of elopement kit, Policies and Protocols
- Role play elopement situations
- Document what individual is wearing each day, mood and unusual behaviors
- Communication with elders
- Functional maintenance plans
- Places to look
- Count tenants during the emergency



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Places to look

- Under beds
- Stairwells
- In locked rooms
- In emergency vehicles
- In employee's cars
- Near bodies of water
- Familiar places to individual like home, bank
- Bus stops
- Canvas neighborhood
- In courtyards
- Under bushes



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Elopement Kit


- Flashlights
- Chalk
- Map of building
- Map of neighborhood
- Walkie talkies
- Emergency numbers
- Bandages
- Current photos of residents
- Preferred names
- Elopement risk assessments
- Clothing item with scent of those at risk
- First aid items
- Foil Blanket
- Shoe patterns
- Food and water
- Item with scent of person
- Whistle
- Flyers
- Documentation of person-specific tracking systems



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Sample Role Play Scenarios

- You are on break and you see Sadie wandering away from the building
- Two of you witness this same situation
- You and your administrator find Joe at the front door of the building yelling for someone to "Let me out"
- Emily is new to the secure unit. She stands at the door and cries.



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Specific Policies

- Keep car locked and keys secure
- Noise studies
- Environmental studies
- Alarm systems
- Code changes
- Directions for visitors
- Medication changes
- Room Changes
- Rehab consults
- Functional maintenance plan location and updates
- Policies for actual elopement including follow up



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Sample Functional Maintenance Plan

- Mrs. Johnson will respond to you if you call her " Nurse Johnson".
- When Nurse Johnson paces, place her personal nursing cap on her head and lead her to her "medical charts" for planned rest periods.
- Nurse Johnson acts out when she is cold. Be sure she is wearing her sweater even in the summer.
- A calming activity is sitting outdoors on the bench in the sun for 15-minute periods. Be sure she wears sunscreen on her face. Tell her she has a 15 minute work break.
- Nurse Johnson has an assigned seat in the dining area. Do not alter. She will try to leave the memory care unit if she perceives an individual is not following her "nursing directives" during a meal. Please contact OT to assist with any seating changes.



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Functional Maintenance Plans

- Update continuously
- Re-evaluate and modify if
 - Environmental change
 - Medication change
 - Change in level of dementia or medical status
 - After hospitalization or injury
- Team accountability and input
- No retribution if corrected by peers
- Every person at risk of elopement has one



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Creative Strategies


- Activities 24- hour availability
- A "bus stop" near the reception area
- A train station
- Interactive wall murals
- Activity boxes
- Person-centered activities
- Men's club
- Activity stations
- Outdoor walking areas that loop or figure of 8
- Creative signs
- Room location décor
- Keep routine consistent/ ways to provide calendar or reminder of activity
- A party
- Pre-determined dining partners
- Frequent noise studies
- Wedding veil
- Type of music
- Way finding signs and symbols
- Placement of chairs, benches
- Fencing around community
- Loose handle over doorknobs



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Creative Strategies Continued


- Familiar items in room, on door to room at eye level for individual
- Sensory boxes
- Quiet time/ reduce overstimulation
- Remove mirrors (individual specific)
- White noise
- Familiar sounds like crickets, music, traffic
- Rocking chairs
- Refreshments
- Exercise
- Sleep hygiene
- Small jobs
- Digital phot frames
- Seating arrangements
- Meal size
- Timing of seating
- Room assignments
- Identify misophonia (hate the sound of chewing)



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Community Outings


- Small groups
- Trained volunteer support
- Same identifier, for example color of t-shirt with dementia clients
- Simplify outings
- Calm relaxing venues
- Assignments of staff to resident
- Functional Maintenance plans and photos




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Plan of Action During Elopement

- Policy in place and updated
- Specific staff assignments- before the event and during
- POA notification
- Mark areas that have been searched
- Plan for other tenants



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Plan of Action Post Recovery

- Policy in place and updated
- Documentation
- Reports
- Revision of current policies
- Environmental changes
- Staff training


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Resources

- www.alz.org
- www.nccdp.org
- Adekoya A, Guse L. Wandering Behaviour in Long-Term Care Homes: Family Perspectives. *Perspectives: The Journal of the Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association*. 2021;42(2):16-27. Accessed March 4, 2024. <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ccm&AN=160387948&site=eds-live>
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- Haslam-Larmer L, Shum L, Chu CH, et al. Real-time location systems technology in the care of older adults with cognitive impairment living in residential care: A scoping review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 2022;13:1-13. doi:10.3389/fpsyt.2022.1038008
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Thank You

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