



It Takes Two

Wandering What You Need to Know



Who is at Risk?

Individuals with Autism, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), and Alzheimer's or related dementias.



What is Wandering?

- Leaving a safe area or caregiver.
- Also known as elopement or bolting.



Where: Common Locations

- Near water (pools, ponds, lakes).
- Near traffic, in wooded areas, or familiar places like schools or parks.



When Does Wandering Happen?

Wandering can occur at any age and can happen within seconds, often during transitions or chaotic situations.



Why Does Wandering Occur?

- **Communication Barriers:** Difficulty expressing needs, feelings, or ideas
- **Sensory Seeking:** Drawn to calming or stimulating environments (e.g., water)
- **Sensory Avoiding:** Escaping overwhelming or chaotic settings
- **Stress Response:** Fight, flight, or fright reactions may trigger wandering



It Takes Two

Create Your Wandering Emergency Plan



1. Identify/Assess: Identify potential triggers for wandering and ways to increase safety.



2. Make a Plan: Develop a safety plan to use in case of an emergency.



3. Implement: Follow the plan as practiced.



4. Fine Tune/Adjust/Modify: Continue to monitor the individual for changes and keep information up to date.



Explore Tools and Resources to Keep Your Loved Ones Safe

A portion of this project was supported by Grant No. 115PBJA-22-GK-03582-MAPX, awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Smart Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.