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13 expert tips to help with "I want to go home."

9

BY SUSAN MACAULAY ON DECEMBER 29, 2015

CARE PARTNERING, CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS, RESOURCES, TEEPA SNOW, TIPS, TOOLS & SKILLS



One of the greatest challenges dementia care partners face is "I want to go home."

People with dementia often "want to go home," even when they are in a place they may have lived for years.

It's frustrating for the person with dementia who is convinced he or she needs to be somewhere else. It's also frustrating for the care partner who doesn't have dementia because there seems to be no way to solve the problem.

We would gladly take people with dementia "home" if only we could. Sadly, we can't because the place they want to go exists only in the reality of their minds.

But we CAN:

1. find creative ways to deal with these situations when they arise
2. employ strategies that reduce the stress, anxiety and pain of the "going home" problem.

Here are 13 tips that will help defuse "I want to go home" ([see disclaimer](#)):

1. Don't argue
2. Try something different
3. Agree and validate
4. Say you're sorry
5. Build self-esteem
6. Offer incentives
7. Create collaboration
8. Give reasons to be "here"
9. Remember: we are the same
10. Remember: their filter is gone

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- 11. Remember: value and purpose
- 12. Think! How can you work together?
- 13. Role play and practice

In the video below, [dementia care pioneer Teepa Snow](#) teaches a care worker a better way of handling "I want to go home" (the demo starts at about 1:15 and finishes at about 7:00):



There are [more great tips here](#). And this is how I imagine it might feel for [a person living with dementia in a long-term care facility as they experience wanting to go home](#).



20 questions that help explain why people with dementia get agitated and physically aggressive

Note: I first published these "20 questions" in April 2015, since which the post has been shared thousands of times. Also, Dr. John Morley, director of the division of geriatric medicine at Saint Louis University, one of the United States foremost authorities on geriatrics, and former editor of the Journal of America Medical Directors Association called ... Continue reading

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101 potential causes of behaviour by people living with dementia that institutional care staff may find challenging

While researching my second JAMDA article, I came across a relatively recent paper by Dr. Jiska Cohen-Mansfield on the causes of discomfort in people who live with dementia in long-term care facilities. Cohen-Mansfield and her team developed a Sources of Discomfort Scale (SODS), as part of a larger study for the "Treatment Routes for Exploring ... Continue reading

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NORMAN DUNCAN on SEPTEMBER 10, 2017 9:30 PM

Everyone seems lost in the conversation. Is the patient rational to want to go home and is he or she cognizant, take them home and place them under the care of a critical care doctor. They may be salvageable as they fear in their mind that they will stay there till they die. I assume they are under palliative care which is the worst experience any patient can experience, no compassion.

REPLY >

Pingback: 7 teepa tips to help people with dementia do what they can to care

Pingback: Teepa Snow is on the go!

SYLVIA PURDON on DECEMBER 6, 2016 11:31 AM

My husband comments on the outside – Oh, look, it is just like it was back where we lived before. It is where we have been living for quite awhile.syl

REPLY >

AMAZINGSUSAN on DECEMBER 6, 2016 4:06 PM

Yes, and sometimes violently so, like this:

<http://myalzheimersstory.com/2016/09/26/example-of-how-arguing-escalates-conflict-with-people-who-live-with-dementia-and-how-to-fix-it/>

REPLY >

KIM SAITER on JULY 18, 2016 4:38 PM

Did you want to lay down? Sometimes she just wants to lay down) I can bring you to your apartment, (she pays rent so therefore it is home) Do you need the restroom.? (Sometimes she loses the potty) Where is home? (mom usually wants childhood home where daddy is waiting) Was there trees? (Get her talking about what is here and there and pretty soon she is talking about something else and not stressing about home.)

REPLY >

AMAZINGSUSAN on JULY 18, 2016 10:58 PM

Great suggestions Kim – thank you so much. I hope to prepare another blog post with additional helpful hints, and I will include these.

REPLY >

ANN TAYLOR on JULY 18, 2016 2:56 PM

this was good to know my mom has dementia and she talks about wanting to go home and another thing is she wants to go get mama it is hard trying to deal with that i don't know if i am handling it right or not could u help me

REPLY >

AMAZINGSUSAN on JULY 18, 2016 11:03 PM

Thanks Ann, I sent you an email

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