

What is...

Wandering?

Wandering (also called eloping, bolting, running) occurs when a person, who requires some level of supervision to be safe, leaves a supervised, safe space and is exposed to potential dangers.

Contrary to the name, wandering (which implies a slow, unfocused movement) can happen quickly and with specific goals. There are three main types of wandering: goal-directed, bolting/fleeing and other.

Who Wanders?

While most frequently seen in individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and Alzheimer's, wandering behavior can occur with numerous other diagnoses, including Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, anxiety and ADHD.

Why is Wandering so Dangerous?

Wanderers can be subjected to traffic, open water (drowning), falling from high places, weather (hypothermia, heat stroke, dehydration) or unintended encounters with potentially predatory strangers.

What Can You Do?

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, you can help prevent wandering tragedies by remembering three simple steps:

STOP

STOP to see if help is needed.

SEEK

SEEK assistance from police.

STAY

STAY with the child until police arrive.

Where Can You Learn More?

Learn more about wandering and local community resources for wandering prevention online at:

www.connectingforkids.org/wandering

Goal-Directed Wandering

Wandering with the purpose of getting somewhere or obtaining something (water, train tracks, park, an item of obsession, etc.).

Bolting/Fleeing

Quickly departing with the intent to escape something (anxiety, undesirable situation, stress, demand, or sensory input).

Other

Individual wanders due to confusion, disorientation, boredom or simply becomes lost.

90%

Wandering deaths result from accidental drowning.

- National Autism Association



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