

Disclaimer: The tips provided are recommendations to help support responsive behaviour management. However, if behaviours persist, please consult with your care team for further guidance.

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Experiencing disorientation is very difficult for a person with dementia. As we saw in the video, a possible outcome of disorientation is intruding into areas that are not where the person with dementia belongs. Whether it be another person's room, a locked linen cupboard or even the nursing station, intrusiveness can be very disruptive to others. It can be especially difficult to redirect a person with dementia who has a belief that you cannot disprove.

Here are some things you can try to help redirect person with dementias to other areas:

Use redirection with a creative reason/rationale: Ask the person with dementia to come with you because you need to show them something in the hall, or because you need their help with something outside. Provide them with a purposeful task related to what they're currently doing. For example, you might say: "Oh wow you have done so much tidying! Come with me - let's go get a laundry basket so you can fold and put away the rest of your clothes," or "Let's go put everything you've collected into the trash".

Use distraction: Once you have successfully used redirection and the person with dementia has followed you, utilize distraction. This could include talking to them about an entirely different topic while you're walking, showing them something else of interest, leading them back to their room or another area, or engaging them in an entirely different activity to help pass their time (e.g., turning on the radio, bringing them to an activity, helping them to get seated in their room with a newspaper).

Orient with something personally meaningful: To avoid similar situations in the future, consider placing personalized and familiar items, symbols, pictures, and signs on the entrance to the door of their room. This might include a bright name tag with their name on it, a large bright arrow pointing to their door, a picture of items/topics they enjoy (e.g., flowers, their family dog, a family photo, a photo of themselves). Remember, the items/pictures should be unique to the person with dementia, and you must consider their ability to see and recognize the various items placed in their environment.

Avoid reality orientation: Do not try to convince the person with dementia that they are not in their own room. This will simply escalate conflict. Reality orientation will not result in increased cooperation and typically leads to more frustration.

Use body language: Approach with a calm, friendly demeanour (e.g., shoulders relaxed, arms open).

Use validation: Thank the person with dementia for completing the task they are currently engaged in (remember, in this scenario, the person with dementia thinks he is tidying his room, which is like a routine, long standing behaviour). Acknowledge what they are currently doing as a positive behaviour.

You might also try:

- Playing some music and dancing with them out of the room
- Inviting them out of the room to participate in an activity that they find personally meaningful (e.g., painting, ball toss, a concert)
- Telling them, “You’ll have time to tidy up your room later. Right now, it’s time for us to get ready for lunch,” and using the Gentle Persuasive Approach, gently guide them out of the room