



When a person living with dementia says "I want to go home"



A person with dementia may ask to go home. They might say this often, and they may already be at home. Much of the time, asking to go home is really like saying "I am scared" or "I am uncomfortable" or "I need something". It is most helpful to respond in a way that provides comfort and calming. Here are some examples of things you might do and say.

Reassure and comfort to validate their needs

- Watch your tone of voice when responding. Do not sound annoyed or impatient, even if you have had this conversation many times before.
- Show caring and concern about the fact that they are upset and tell them that you want to help.
- If they like hugs, this might be a good time for one.
- Offer comfort measures as you talk to them about their concerns and then work the conversation on to a different topic or activity once they feel heard and comforted.



Avoid reasoning and explanations



- Do not try to use reason and logic and argue about whether or not they are home or going home is possible.
- They will not be able to process that information and will feel that you are not listening or do not care about their needs and are stopping them from doing something that is important to them

Validate, redirect, and distract

- Let them know you hear them. Show empathy and understanding. You can say "Oh yes, That's a good idea" or "OK we will go soon" or you can ask them to tell you about their home, You try saying, "What's the first thing you're going to do when you get home?" These responses make them feel heard and supported.
- After connecting with them in this way, talk to them and subtly redirect their attention to take their mind off wanting to go home. Guide the conversation and activity to a neutral or distracting topic. Ask for their help with an activity, or point out something of interest.

