

Anatomy of an Elopement

Do You Know Where Your Residents Are?

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Session Duration: 80-90 Minutes

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Speaker



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PRACTICAL INSIGHTS INTO ELOPEMENT PREVENTION & RESIDENT CARE

Session Learning Objectives

01

Risk Identification

Identify the scope and impact of the problem and residents who are at risk for elopements.

02

Mitigation Protocols & Technology, What is available to us?

Design a protocol for mitigating elopements through technology and rapid staff response.

03

Measurable Impact & Safety, Real Problems require real measurable solutions.

Demonstrate how elopement mitigation will lead to less headaches, safer communities and lower insurance rates.

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Scope of the Problem

PREVALENCE

12-18%

Recognizing Early Changes
Mild cognitive changes currently touch 12% to 18% of older adults living across senior care communities.

INCIDENCE RATE

60%

Wandering
An estimated 60% of individuals with dementia are prone to wandering.

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CRITICAL RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR SENIOR CARE COMMUNITIES

Impact of Elopement

Resident Safety Immediate danger to physical well-being, health, and personal security.	Staff Morale Heightened stress, anxiety, emotional strain, and caregiver burnout.	Operational Disruption Urgent search efforts divert vital staff resources from daily resident care.	Reputational Damage Erosion of family confidence, negative publicity, and community distrust.
Legal / Litigation Cost Severe financial exposure from liability claims and attorney fees.	Insurance Rate Increases Escalating premium costs and potential loss of policy coverage.	Regulatory Scrutiny State citations, heavy fines, mandatory correction plans, or admission holds.	Proactive Mitigation Priority Structured protocols and technology safeguard residents while reducing organizational liability.

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Elopement Claims & Risk Management

Key focus areas and financial impact during safety and claim reviews

\$250K+

Average Claim Impact
Average elopement liability claims frequently exceed \$250,000 in combined payouts and legal defense costs following a major incident.

Common Operational Gaps Uncovered in Reviews

Policy vs. Practice Gaps: Reviews frequently uncover gaps between written community procedures and daily team execution during shift huddles.

Documentation & EHR Gaps: Common omissions include failing to log observed restlessness or early exit-seeking tendencies in resident care notes prior to an incident.

Proactive Safety & Risk Prevention
Communities can protect residents and reduce risk by adopting modern safety technology and supporting staff with realistic SOPs and continuous, practical training.

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LEGAL & REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

Senior Living Operator Responsibilities

01. DUTY OF CARE & FORESEEABILITY

Responsibility begins immediately upon knowing a resident has a dementia or MCI diagnosis. Regulators and courts look at whether risks could have been anticipated, even if exit-seeking behaviors were not previously documented.

02. DOCUMENTATION & CARE PLANS

Clear, thorough records are essential. Communities should proactively build personalized resident assessments and maintain care plans to assure quality support and meet regulatory standards.

03. RIGHTS VS. SAFETY BALANCE

Leaders must navigate the delicate balance between resident independence, personal dignity, and safety—tailoring strategies for Independent Living (IL) versus Assisted Living/Memory Care (AL/MC) settings.

04. POST-INCIDENT PROTOCOL

Establish clear, supportive response protocols detailing essential early steps, survey readiness, and a structured process for building effective Plans of Correction (POC).

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Our Shared Commitment to Care

Communities thrive when they foster personal freedom while surrounding residents with attentive safety nets.

PRINCIPLE 01

Independence & Dignity

Honoring personal freedom while keeping safety top of mind.

PRINCIPLE 02

Gentle Observance

Noticing small daily changes early to offer timely, compassionate support.

PRINCIPLE 03

Safe Wandering Support

Addressing exit-seeking behaviors warmly and proactively.

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JANE (AGE 81)
Assisted Living / Memory Care
Diagnosis: Dementia
Facility: West Meadows Senior Living

INCIDENT SUMMARY

Jane recently moved into Memory Care. Unfamiliar with surroundings, she demonstrated exit-seeking behaviors that were never documented in her chart or care meetings.

The Breach:
Exited main entrance by tailgating behind a visitor during a busy shift change. Missing for 2 hours.

CASE STUDY & PANEL DISCUSSION

Resident Profile: Traditional Exit-Seeking Incident

DISCUSSION QUESTION 01 – PROCESS BREAKDOWN

Where exactly did shift huddles and EHR charting break down?

Analyze communication gaps between shifts regarding her undocumented exit-seeking history prior to the unescorted departure.

DISCUSSION QUESTION 02 – REGULATORY MANDATES

What are the immediate reporting requirements (30-minute rule)?

Evaluate mandatory state reporting timelines, critical protocols for missing residents, and immediate liability exposure.

DISCUSSION QUESTION 03 – SYSTEM PREVENTION

How would Accushield Resident Exit Management Red-tier alerts instantly prevent this?

Examine how automated kiosk entry controls and immediate Red-tier alerts block tailgating and notify staff in real-time.

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Robert, (Age 85)

Assisted Living (AL) Resident

Key Factor: Unflagged Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) / Active Daily Walker

INCIDENT NARRATIVE

Robert is a sliding scale diabetic; his insulin pump is monitored by care staff. Robert successfully exited the building at 3pm via a side exit in Assisted Living. He is allowed to enter and exit as he wishes in the unsecured neighborhood, and was picked up by his son and dropped back off at 9pm with a milkshake in hand.

CASE STUDY & PANEL DISCUSSION

Elopement? & Risk Mitigation in AL

DISCUSSION QUESTION 01 – FORESEEABILITY

Was this an elopement? Was it foreseeable?

Evaluate whether his unflagged MCI status and known daily walking habits should have raised warnings.

DISCUSSION QUESTION 02 – SYSTEM SAFEGUARDS

How could systems or technologies help prevent this?

Examine how wearable-free AI door sensors and automated alerts could intercept propped door departures.

DISCUSSION QUESTION 03 – TIMELINE & RESPONSIBILITIES

What happened vs. what should have happened?

Analyze the 6-hour gap, vendor door protocols, and missing resident response procedures.

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ACCUSHIELD

Regulatory & Compliance Care Guidelines

Supporting Caregiver Oversight, Reassessment Triggers, and Resident Safety Protocols

1. Essential Oversight & Care

Continuous Care & Evaluation: Attentive oversight and ongoing wellness evaluations for all residents.

Reassessment Triggers: Supportive re-evaluation upon any notable physical or cognitive change.

2. Resident Safety Protocols

Well-Trained Staff Standards: Comprehensive safety practices and ongoing team training.

Safety Resources & Profiles: Non-restrictive safety options and active resident photos on file.

CRITICAL SAFETY PROTOCOL

The 30-Minute Rule

Immediate, time-sensitive response steps when a resident is unaccounted for.

Notify local law enforcement within 30 minutes of discovering a missing resident, prioritizing safety and regulatory duties.

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HISTORICAL APPROACH • LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT TECHNOLOGY

Today's Elopement Management

01

BATTERY DEPLETION (WEARABLES)

Devices regularly lose charge, creating unexpected gaps in safety coverage and peace of mind.

02

WEARER DISCOMFORT & STIGMA

Residents frequently remove wearables due to physical discomfort, confusion, or self-consciousness.

03

DOOR ALARM and CCTV LIMITATIONS

Traditional door alarms trigger indiscriminately for staff, visitors, and residents, lacking context or identity tracking. Cameras are for response, investigation and to curb behaviors not prevent them.

04

NUISANCE ALARMS & FATIGUE

Constant false alerts cause severe alarm fatigue, straining care team responsiveness and focus.

THE HUMAN-FIRST CARE MANDATE: Technology should thoughtfully support care teams as a helpful enhancement—never as a replacement for compassionate personal care.

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The Search for Solutions



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Resident Exit
Management

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LOOKING AHEAD • NEXT-GENERATION TECHNOLOGY FOR
RESIDENT SAFETY & DIGNITY

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The Future

01

REAL TIME ALERTING

Early detection of an elopement or allowed sign out occurring to staff to converge and redirect resident.

02

NON-INTRUSIVE PRIVACY-FIRST SENSING

Dignified resident protection without physical restraints or wearable tags.

03

INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM

Instant automated alerts synchronized across kiosks, EHR, and mobile care teams.

04

EXIT MANAGEMENT PLAN

An Exit Management Plan established and proactively maintained for all residents.

PIONEERING WEARABLE-FREE AI & PROACTIVE CARE INTELLIGENCE: Next-generation resident safety technology designed to empower care teams with real-time actionable insight.

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Alerting! Breakdown of Resident Risk

No two residents are the same. We have assessments for care plans. Are we including exit management plans in that assessment?

100 residents



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RED • Wearing or needing a WanderGuard

Established wander risks. Escorted kiosk sign-out required.

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YELLOW • Potential wander risks

No band yet. The wearable conversation and resident buy-in remain a challenge. Goal: silent management notice for an unrecorded exit.

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GREEN • Free movement

Free to come and go, no kiosk sign-out required.

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CASE STUDY REVISIT • APPLIED RISK MITIGATION

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Resident Exit Management

Now let's revisit Robert and Jane

JANE (AGE 81)
RED TIER • Established Wander Risk

Memory Care resident with undocumented exit-seeking tendencies prior to an unescorted departure.

Next-Gen Safeguards:

- AI door cameras instantly identify tailgating at main exits.
- Immediate Red-Tier alert notifies staff in real time.
- Mandatory escorted kiosk sign-out prevents unauthorized exit.

ROBERT (AGE 85)
YELLOW TIER • Potential Wander Risk

Assisted Living resident with unflagged MCI, regular daily walks, and no wearable band.

Next-Gen Safeguards:

- Wearable-free door sensing detects unrecorded departures.
- Silent management notice alerts leadership without disruptive alarms.
- Preserves personal dignity and independence in Assisted Living.

PROACTIVE & DIGNIFIED CARE INTELLIGENCE: Tailoring technology solutions to individual resident risk profiles across AL and Memory Care.

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How do we do it? The door does the Watching



Line crossing & Eliminating False Alarms

A virtual line sits at the threshold. Crossing it, not lingering near it, is what triggers evaluation, so the resident sitting by the window all afternoon never sets anything off.

Facial recognition

The camera answers "who." Staff, visitors, vendors, and residents not on the risk list pass through with nothing happening at all.

Hardware and Technology

The device lives in the building not on the resident. Video is processed on site, decisions are made on site, and the system holds up when the network does not.

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Resident Exit Management

Wearable-free protection delivering dignified, intelligent exit safety

Accushield
Resident Exit Management

Wearable-Free and Cost Effective Door Cameras

Delivers dignified exit management that utilizes smart AI door cameras entirely without the need for resident wearables.

Seamless Kiosk and EHR Integration

Syncs directly with Accushield sign-in/out kiosks to serve as the master system of record for the entire community. Collect and store consent.

Authorized Disarm Feature

Automatically disarms exit alerts during officially recorded kiosk departures to substantially reduce false alarms.

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Proactive & Dignified Care Detection

Modern safety shifts from disruptive alarms to proactive support by understanding daily living patterns

Smart Cameras

Quietly support resident safety without physical contact or intrusive devices in rooms, maintaining dignity while providing continuous visual presence.

Early Movement Awareness

Gently flags pacing or exit-seeking habits before an unassisted exit occurs, giving caregivers timely notifications for intervention.

OPERATIONAL VALUE

Value to Memory Care (MC)

- ✓ Elopement Prevention & Immediate Risk Mitigation

OPERATIONAL VALUE

Value to Assisted Living (AL)

- ✓ Elopement Risk Management
- ✓ Medication Management Compliance
- ✓ Evacuation & Emergency Management

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ACTIONABLE TAKEAWAYS

Practical Strategies to Protect Residents and Prevent Elopements

STEP 01

Conduct Immediate Audit

Take a close look at shift handoffs, EHR charts and charting habits, and exit door routines to spot and fix everyday safety gaps before they become issues.
Create Exit Management plans for residents.

STEP 02

Update and Record Staff Training

Help your team recognize early signs of cognitive changes and stay confident with prompt 30-minute reporting steps for missing residents.

STEP 03

Adopt Modern Technology

Use simple or wearable-free exit safety tools that protect residents while preserving their independence and personal dignity.

INTERACTIVE Q&A Open discussion led by Ryan Mills

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