

“I want to go home.”



**Jewish Family Service
of Greater Dallas**

An open door to all in need



One of the most common requests made by people with dementia is to go home. Unfortunately, it doesn't help to remind the person that they are already home, but there are some helpful steps you can take to address their feelings.

CHECK FOR DISTRESS

Observe facial expression, body language, emotional state

- If no: Understand that because of memory loss, the environment feels unfamiliar. Show the person through body language and familiarity that they are in the “right” place.
- If yes: Rule out any underlying causes of distress—pain, hunger, thirst, boredom, need for the restroom.

AVOID CONTRADICTIONS

Help the person feel safe and familiar

- Remember that people with dementia ask to “go home” when they are unsure or uncomfortable.
- Stay away from explaining to your client that they are home, or that they are in their new home. Similarly, don't try to explain why home isn't an option.

CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT

Engage the senses in a positive way, focus less on explanations

- Smell: Aromatherapy – Jasmine, lavender, lemon are the most common.
 - Sound: Play the person's favorite music.
 - Sight: Look at familiar things that are enjoyable to the person- pictures, imagery, outdoors.
 - Touch: Show support through physical touch—hand holding, placing hand on shoulder.
- Try introducing interesting textures: folding laundry, holding papers, a pet.

IDENTIFY PATTERNS

Start a log to notice trends and triggers

- Does your client say this around the same time every day? Try doing an enjoyable, structured activity at that time of day before they begin to verbalize this request.
- Track effective topics of conversation and interventions and have them ready when you need them.

STAY CONFIDENT

When one intervention is ineffective, try not to be discouraged. Simply try a new intervention.

SEEK ADVICE

Get additional support by reaching out to our Holocaust Care Services in our Older Adults Department

- Yaffa Podbilewicz-Schuller: (469) 445-0616 or Ypodbilewicz@jfsdallas.org
- Debi Weiner: (469) 206-1660 or dweiner@jfsdallas.org

