Section 1: Awareness and Prevention

**Strategies to Aid in the Prevention of Individual Wandering or Running Away**

As the parent or caregiver of a child with a disability or the caregiver of an adult with dementia or a disability, it is common for the threat of wandering or running to be a persistent source of distress for you.

The Scent Kit is intended to reduce the distress you experience and provide confidence that your loved one will be found quickly, in the event they wander or run from a safe environment.

Education and tips for prevention are listed below. Additional information can be found online from local and national organizations that serve individuals and families of individuals with a disability or dementia.

1. Collect and store the individual’s unique scent with the Scent Preservation Kit.
2. Store the Scent Kit in the place recommended by your local emergency response agency (e.g., police, sheriff, fire, EMS) or in / atop the refrigerator.
3. Complete the information on page 3 of this Plan.
4. After identifying triggers and actions or items that soothe or distract the individual in # 15 and # 16 on page 3, identify ways to avoid triggers when possible, remove the individual from the trigger when possible, or provide a preferred item or activity that is distracting or comforting to the individual.
5. Tell everyone who provides care or supervision for the individual about the Scent Kit, where it is stored, and to give it to the responding agency if the individual goes missing. Talk to them about the triggers, how to avoid them, and things that comfort or distract them when triggers are present.

**Additional Prevention Strategies if the Person Has Autism**

1. Remain aware that they may wander from a comfortable and familiar setting such as home or school, or from stores and other public places.
2. Have appropriate barriers in place to prevent running away when it is necessary for them to comply or remain in an undesirable situation, as they may run FROM a demand or situation they want to avoid.
3. To prevent running due to sensory overload: 1) avoid sensory overload, 2) try to remove the individual from the stimulus, or 3) provide the individual with something that is comforting.
4. Take note when the individual shows special interest in someone or something and remain acutely aware of their whereabouts when they cannot be with or near the person or thing, as they may run TO something or someone they care about or want.
5. To the extent possible, reduce the number of exit routes and place yourself between the individual and the exit, as they often have a significant lack of impulse control so they might run very quickly and without warning.
6. Impose barriers when they are near unsafe environments or settings, as they often lack significant safety awareness. Be especially mindful when near bodies of water and traffic, as many are drawn to water and incur traffic injuries.

**Additional Prevention Strategies if the Person Has Dementia**

1. Install door and window locks and alarms.
2. Hide door and vehicle keys in places that are out of sight and out of reach.
3. Keep them in the presence of a competent adult.
4. Dress the individual in easily identifiable clothes such as bright colors or busy patterns.
5. Make neighbors aware of the individual’s risk for wandering and ask them to notify you if they see them outside the home, unsupervised. Be sure to give them your contact information. You want neighbors who are ‘Just Nosey Enough’.
6. Make sure basic needs are met so they don’t wander to find food, a bathroom, or fresh air.
7. If confused and leaves to ‘find’ home or return to a former routine, role, or responsibility such as a workplace or weekly grocery shopping, give them a believable reason that they can’t go today (e.g., it is closed) and distract them with a preferred activity or snack.
8. If frightened or feeling threatened by someone perceived to be a stranger, offer a comforting item or activity (e.g., food, music, art, etc.) to prevent them from leaving. If possible, help them leave whatever or whomever is frightening or threatening and distract them.
9. Agitation is more prevalent when bored or restless and can lead to searching for someone or something. Physical exercise and mental stimulation can help prevent wandering caused by agitation. Distraction can also be used.

Section 2: Preparedness and Response

**Personal Information to Assist First Responders if Individual Goes Missing**

Complete the information below after completing the Scent Preservation Kit.

1. Keep updated photos available and on-hand. Keep on cell phone, upload to the flash drive or print a photo and store with the Scent Kit.
2. Name or safety words the person will respond to Click or tap here to enter text.
3. Height Weight Hair Color/Style/Length Eye Color Race Body Piercings/Scars/Tattoos
4. Friends Names/Contact Info
5. Major Life Changes
6. Parent/Caregiver/Guardian
7. Tribal Affiliation (if applicable) Click or tap here to enter text.
8. Medical, mental, emotional, behavioral issues (e.g., suicidal, hallucinations, physical limitations or strengths, relevant trauma, etc.)Click or tap here to enter text.
9. Risks associated with medications or allergies (e.g., extreme temps, food, plants, etc.)­ Click or tap here to enter text.
10. Technological devices and passwords (i.e., phone, laptop, iPad, etc.) Click or tap here to enter text.
11. Social Media Handles (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) Click or tap here to enter text.
12. Mode of Transportation (Car, Walking, Bike, etc.) Click or tap here to enter text.
13. Make/Model/Year/Color of VehicleClick or tap here to enter text.
14. If the person has wandered in the past, provide a list of locations where they were found (i.e., past place of employment, church, favorite restaurant.)Click or tap here to enter text.
15. Identify people, activities, sounds, places, situations, etc. that trigger emotions and behaviors such as fear, anger, agitation, confusion, etc. that may lead to wandering or running behavior. Do this by writing down details about what happened prior to the onset of the emotion and demonstration of the behavior. Click or tap here to enter text.
16. Identify preferred items and activities that can be used to distract and comfort an individual when they are experiencing emotions and behaviors that may lead to wandering or running behavior. Click or tap here to enter text.**­­**

**Action Steps if Individual is Missing**

1. Call 911 and tell person that you have a Scent Preservation Kit.
2. Give Scent Preservation Kit to the first responder when they arrive.
3. Fill out the **Missing Person Profile** below and give it to the first responder when they arrive.
4. Description of what the person was wearing and recent photo (See information from # 1 on page 3.)
5. Specific location and time you last saw the person (place last seen)
6. Environmental Risks near the last place you saw the person (water, traffic, trains, woods, etc.)
7. Something or someone the person might be trying to RUN TO or RUN FROM.
8. Tell the first responder if the missing person was triggered by something prior to going missing (immediately before or hours before). (See information from # 15 on page 3.)
9. Offer a comfort item to the responders if it will help soothe the person when found. (See information from # 16 on page 3.)