

THE DEMENTIA FAMILY EVENT *Survival* GUIDE

How to Navigate Weddings,
Holidays, Travel & Gatherings
Without Chaos, Embarrassment,
or Burnout

Includes a
BONUS
Printable!

www.dementiananny.com



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Every individual living with dementia has unique medical, emotional, behavioral, and supervision needs. Families should use their own judgment and consult with qualified healthcare professionals regarding specific care decisions, safety concerns, medical conditions, or emergency situations.

While every effort has been made to provide helpful and accurate information, Dementia Nanny™ makes no guarantees regarding outcomes, safety, or suitability for any particular individual or situation.

By using this guide, you acknowledge that caregiving decisions should always be based on your loved one's individual needs, medical history, and professional recommendations where appropriate.

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A Note From Dementia Nanny™

To the family member trying to hold everything together...
This guide is for you.

The daughter quietly watching the exits during a wedding.
The husband trying to prevent overstimulation during a family reunion.
The son wondering if bringing Mom to Thanksgiving is still the right decision.
The caregiver already emotionally exhausted before the event even starts.
Dementia changes more than memory.

It changes how families experience important moments together.
What used to feel simple—traveling, attending church, going to graduations, visiting relatives, celebrating birthdays—can suddenly feel stressful, unpredictable, and emotionally overwhelming.

And the hardest part?
Many families feel like they're navigating it alone.

This guide was created to help you prepare ahead of time, reduce stress, and protect your loved one's dignity while still making room for meaningful moments together.
Because your loved one deserves compassion.

And you deserve support too.

Dementia Nanny™

The Emotional Reality of Public Gatherings



Most people only see the event itself.

They don't see:

- the planning beforehand
- the emotional anxiety
- the bathroom calculations
- the fear of wandering
- the repeated reminders
- the exhaustion afterward

Caregivers often attend family events physically...
while emotionally remaining on high alert the entire time.

Watching.

Monitoring.

Anticipating.

Preparing for what could go wrong.

You may even find yourself wondering:

"Will people stare?"

"What if they get confused?"

"What if they try to leave?"

"What if they have an accident?"

"What if I can't handle this by myself?"

These thoughts are far more common than families realize.

Many caregivers quietly stop attending events altogether because the emotional weight becomes too heavy.

If that's been your experience, you are not failing.

You are caregiving under difficult emotional circumstances that most people do not fully understand.

The good news is this:

Preparation changes everything.

FAMILY REFLECTION MOMENT:

"What situations currently create the most stress or anxiety for your family during outings or events?"

Before You Say Yes to the Invitation



Not every event is the right fit—and that's okay.
Sometimes love looks like attending.

Sometimes love looks like protecting your loved one from unnecessary stress.

Before committing to an event, ask yourself:

- Will the environment be loud, crowded, or overstimulating?
- How long is the event expected to last?
- Is there a quiet area available if they need a break?
- Are bathrooms easily accessible?
- Will there be a lot of unfamiliar people approaching them?
- Does confusion typically increase later in the day?
- Is travel involved?
- Will they be able to rest comfortably afterward?
- Will I realistically be able to enjoy this event while caregiving?

You do not have to force participation to prove love.

Sometimes shorter visits, quieter appearances, or modified plans create far better experiences for everyone involved.

FAMILY REFLECTION MOMENT:

"What upcoming event or gathering are you currently trying to navigate?"

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal orange lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

7 Signs Your Loved One May Be Becoming Overstimulated



One of the biggest mistakes families make is waiting until a situation becomes a crisis before responding.

Dementia clients often show early warning signs before becoming overwhelmed.

Watch for:

1. Increased confusion or repetitive questioning

Repeating the same concern or question over and over can signal emotional overload.

2. Irritability or frustration

Small frustrations may suddenly feel very big.

3. Withdrawal or unusual silence

Sometimes overstimulation causes people to emotionally shut down.

4. Restlessness or pacing

This can be an early sign of discomfort or disorientation.

A person may try to "go home" even while already surrounded by family.

Busy environments can quickly become overwhelming.

Confusion often worsens when exhaustion sets in.

Recognizing these signs early can help prevent escalation later.

"What early warning signs have you personally noticed in your loved one?"

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal red lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

What to Pack Before Leaving Home



Experienced caregivers know:

Preparation reduces panic.

Create a dedicated “event bag” before leaving home.

Consider including:

- medications
- water and familiar snacks
- backup clothing
- incontinence supplies
- wipes and hygiene items
- emergency contacts
- medical information
- comfort items
- mobility aids

- phone chargers
- ID bracelet or identification card
- favorite blanket or sensory object
- headphones or calming music

Small comforts can make unfamiliar environments feel safer.

FAMILY REFLECTION MOMENT:

What comfort items help your loved one feel most safe, calm, or familiar?

[illegible]

The Wandering Risk Families Underestimate

Weddings.
Airports.
Holiday parties.
Graduations.
Hotels.
Funerals.
Family reunions.

These environments can become disorienting very quickly for someone living with dementia.

Crowds, unfamiliar spaces, loud noise, and constant movement increase the risk of wandering—even for individuals who normally do well at home.

Important reminders:

- Never assume “someone else is watching.”
- Assign one primary supervision person.
- Avoid seating near exits or parking lot access.
- Take a current photo before arriving.
- Use discreet identification jewelry if appropriate.
- Build in regular quiet breaks.

Many wandering situations happen during moments families least expect



Bathroom, Mobility & Seating Planning

These details may seem small.
They are not.

Simple environmental challenges can quickly increase confusion, stress, embarrassment, or fall risk.

Before arriving:

- Locate the nearest restroom immediately
- Avoid long walking distances when possible
- Plan extra time for transitions
- Bring mobility equipment if needed
- Choose seating with easy access to exits
- Avoid slippery surfaces or poor lighting
- Keep pathways uncluttered

One rushed moment can change the entire emotional tone of the event.
Slow and steady almost always works better.



How to Prepare Family Members Ahead of Time



Most relatives mean well.

They simply may not understand dementia behaviors or how to respond appropriately. A simple conversation before the event can make a huge difference.

Helpful reminders for family:

- Avoid correcting memory mistakes
- Speak calmly and slowly
- Introduce themselves gently
- Avoid overwhelming questions
- Don't argue about confusion
- Be patient with repetition
- Focus on comfort instead of accuracy.

Instead of saying: "You already asked me that."

Try: "That's okay. We're here together."

The goal is emotional safety—not perfect conversation.

Travel Changes Everything

Travel days can be especially difficult for dementia clients. Even small disruptions to routine can increase confusion and anxiety.

Common travel stressors include:

- airports and crowds
 - unfamiliar hotel rooms
 - schedule disruptions
 - transportation fatigue
 - overstimulation
 - poor sleep
 - unfamiliar bathrooms and surroundings
- Whenever possible:
- keep routines consistent
 - travel earlier in the day
 - allow extra time
 - avoid overpacking the schedule
 - build in quiet recovery time

Familiarity helps create calm.



A Simple Comfort Routine

Routine creates emotional stability.

Even during exciting events, familiar patterns can help reduce distress.

Example comfort routine:

- light meal before leaving home
- bathroom visit before travel
- familiar music during transportation
- quiet arrival before crowds increase
- scheduled breaks every 30–60 minutes
- familiar snacks available
- comfort item nearby
- calm departure before exhaustion begins

The goal is not perfection.

The goal is reducing overwhelm before it escalates.

A Real-Life Scenario Many Families Understand

Imagine trying to enjoy your daughter's wedding while simultaneously:

- monitoring exits
- preventing wandering
- managing medications
- helping with bathroom trips
- calming confusion
- answering repeated questions
- watching for overstimulation
- worrying about falls
- smiling through emotional exhaustion

That is the hidden reality many dementia caregivers silently carry.

You are not "too sensitive."

You are managing an enormous emotional responsibility.

And sometimes, support is necessary.

When It May Be Time to Hire a Dementia Companion

There is no shame in needing help.

In fact, many families discover that having professional support allows them to finally participate in important moments again instead of spending the entire event caregiving.



Professional companionship support may help when:

- wandering risks are increasing
- travel feels overwhelming
- supervision needs are becoming more constant
- family members are emotionally exhausted
- large crowds create confusion
- bathroom or mobility assistance is needed
- you want to actually enjoy the event too

Support does not replace family love. It supports it.

Emergency Backup Planning Checklist

Before attending any event, make sure you have:

- ☐ emergency contacts available
- ☐ medication list accessible
- ☐ transportation backup plan
- ☐ fully charged phone
- ☐ quiet retreat location identified
- ☐ extra clothing packed
- ☐ hydration and snacks available
- ☐ mobility support if needed
- ☐ secondary caregiver support if necessary
- ☐ clear exit strategy if overstimulation occurs

The best time to create a backup plan is before you need one.

Questions to Discuss With Family Before the Event

One of the greatest tools families can use when preparing for a gathering, holiday, wedding, funeral, or travel day is communication.

Many stressful situations happen not because families don't care but because no one discussed a plan ahead of time.

Having calm, honest conversations before the event can help reduce confusion, prevent overwhelm, improve safety, and create a more supportive experience for everyone involved.

Remember:

You are not planning for perfection.

You are planning for preparedness.

Use the questions below as a starting point for family discussion and event preparation.

Family Planning Questions

Event Readiness

- Is this event emotionally and physically appropriate for our loved one right now?
- What time of day does our loved one typically function best?
- How long should we realistically plan to stay?
- What signs would tell us it's time to leave early?

Supervision & Safety

- Who will be the primary support person during the event?
- Is anyone available to rotate caregiving responsibilities if needed?
- What is our plan if wandering becomes a concern?
- Have we identified exits, quiet spaces, and bathrooms ahead of time?

Emotional & Behavioral Support

- What situations tend to create anxiety or overstimulation for our loved one?
- What helps calm or comfort them when they become overwhelmed?
- Are there certain family members, sounds, topics, or environments that may create distress?
- How can we help preserve dignity if confusion occurs publicly?

Travel & Mobility

- Will transportation or walking distances create challenges?
- Are mobility aids, medications, or comfort items packed and accessible?
- If overnight travel is involved, how will we maintain familiar routines?

Communication With Family Members

- Have relatives been prepared for possible dementia-related behaviors?
- Does everyone understand how to respond calmly and respectfully?
- Have we discussed avoiding arguments, corrections, or overwhelming questions?

Emergency & Backup Planning

- What is our exit strategy if the event becomes overwhelming?
- Who should be contacted in case of emergency?
- Do we need additional companionship or support during the event?
- Are we trying to "push through" something that may require more help than we currently have?

[illegible]

but because the family planned with compassion, flexibility, and support in mind

Final Thoughts

Family moments still matter.

Connection still matters.

Joy still matters.

Presence still matters.

Dementia may change how gatherings look...

but it does not erase the importance of feeling included, supported, and loved. And caregivers deserve support too.



Need Additional Support?

Dementia Nanny™ provides compassionate companionship support for:

- Weddings & Family Gatherings
- Holiday Events
- Graduations & Celebrations
- Funeral & Memorial Support
- Travel & Transportation Companionship
- In-Home Sitting & Respite Support
- Event Supervision & Wandering Prevention Support

Schedule a Compatibility Care Consultation

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