



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

CASES OF PERSONS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA WHO GET LOST AND GO MISSING IN CANADA

May 2025



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



8. An architect with undiagnosed dementia becomes lost in an unfamiliar place

Personal information

Name: Kobi Adami.

Age: 68 years old.

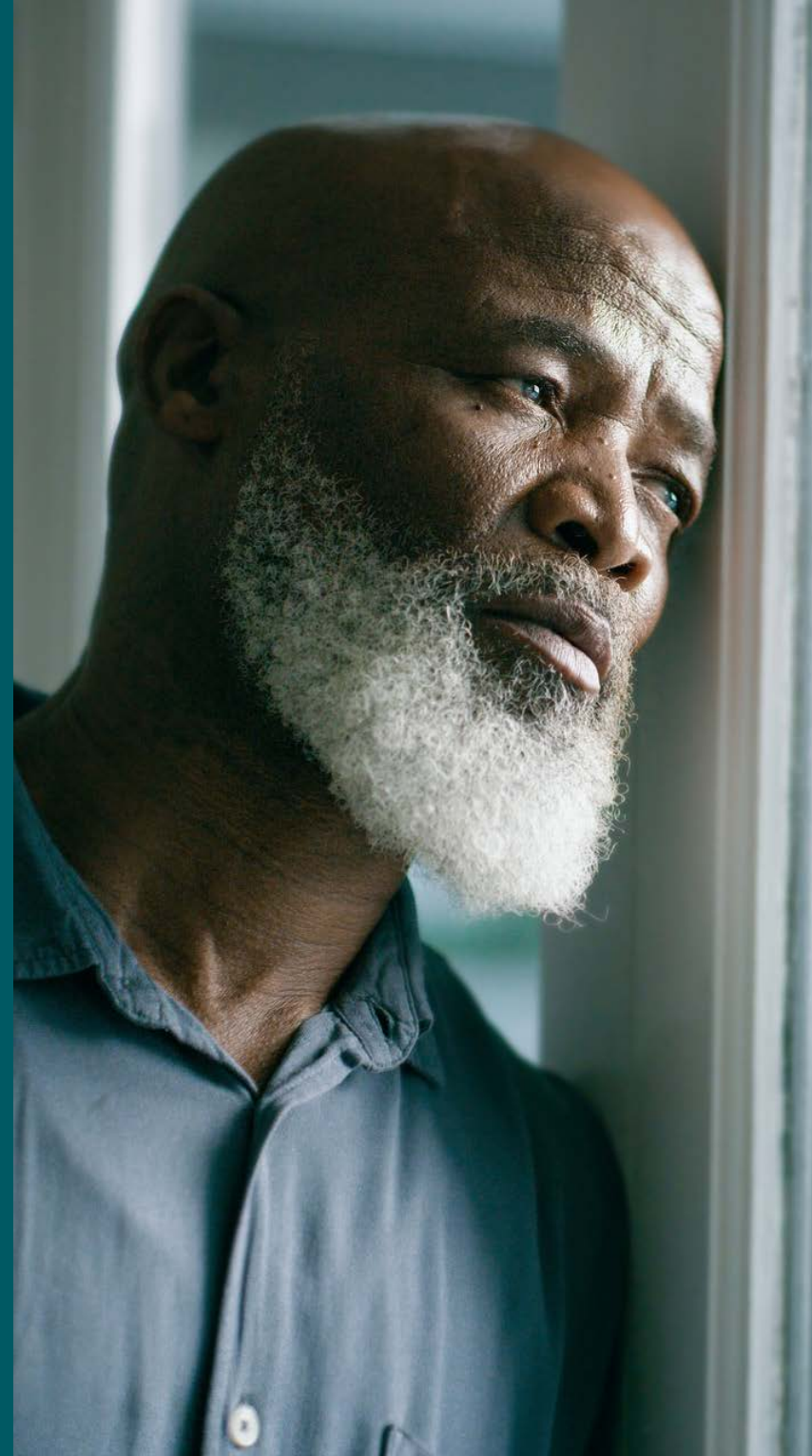
Gender: Man, pronouns are he/him.

Living situation: Lives in a condo in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Social support: Ada, his spouse of 45 years, and son Abe, who lives in France. His sister, Alesha and her husband who live in Moncton, New Brunswick.

Health: Heartburn and high cholesterol. Takes medications for these conditions.

Interests: Cooking, gardening, walking, and dancing.



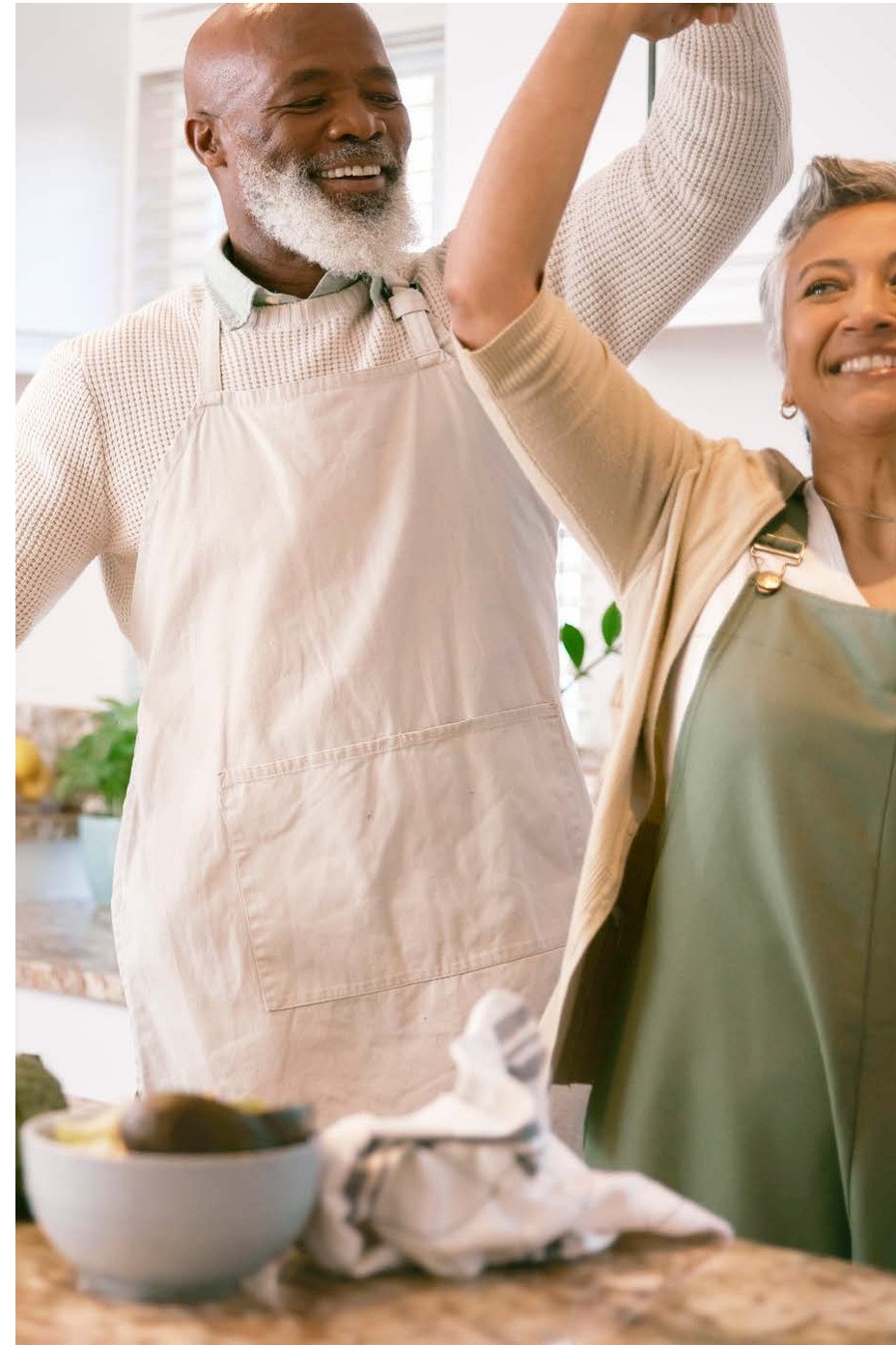
Background

Kobi's life and family

Kobi immigrated to Canada from Ghana with his parents and sister, Alesha, about 60 years ago. He is very close to his sister and her husband James, who is also his childhood friend and attended the same university for architecture that he did. Kobi is active in his community, enjoys evening walks, gardening, volunteering, and attends dance classes with his wife, Ada.

Kobi's memory changes

Kobi had no issues with his memory until six months ago. He handles his family's finances but has been forgetting to pay bills, only remembering when he receives overdue notifications. He thinks these lapses are minor and does not want to bother his wife or sister with them.



The day of the incident

– Getting lost

1. Kobi goes on a trip to visit his sister

Kobi and his spouse visit Alesha and her husband in Moncton, New Brunswick, to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on a pleasant evening in May. It is Kobi's first visit since Alesha and James moved six months ago.

2. Kobi catches up with friends at the party

Excited to explore Moncton and catch up with friends from university at the cocktail party, Kobi has a great time reminiscing with his friends.

3. Kobi feels overwhelmed and wants to find a quiet space

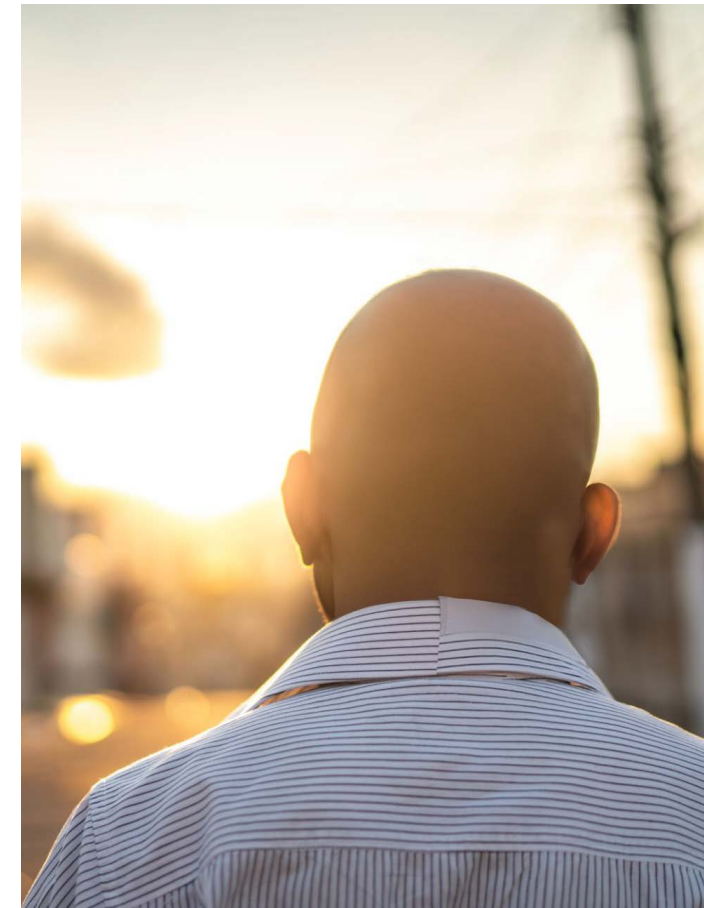
Around 8:00 pm, a few hours into the party, Kobi starts feeling uncomfortable with the loud music and crowd. He decides to go on a walk in the twilight evening to get some fresh air, finding the quiet neighbourhood relaxing.

4. Kobi becomes lost in a new neighbourhood

Kobi does not realize how far he has walked until an hour later. He tries to retrace his steps but cannot remember the house number or street name. The identical townhouses in the neighbourhood add to his disorientation.

5. Kobi realizes he forgot his phone

Kobi starts to panic and feels anxious, realizing he left his phone at his sister's place and has no way to contact his family.



The day of the incident

– Being found

1. Kobi's wife Ada becomes worried about his whereabouts

An hour has passed since Ada last saw Kobi. It is unusual for him to leave without telling anyone. Ada calls Kobi's cell phone and realizes it is on the sofa. Unable to find him, Ada and Alesha call 911 and provide the operator with more information on Kobi's disappearance and what happened.

2. Police arrive and begin a search

Two police officers arrive at Alesha and James' home. Given that it has been over 1 hour since anyone has seen Kobi, they call for more police officers to help with the search. They search the property and start a neighbourhood search. As it is now dark, more officers are called in to help, and a search plan is developed based on possible directions Kobi may have walked.



3. Police find Kobi

An officer searching in their cruiser in a nearby neighbourhood notices a man matching Kobi's description. He appears confused and lost. The officer approaches him, and Kobi explains that he got lost after leaving his sister's party. The officer sees he is uninjured and does not require medical attention. Kobi feels embarrassed and does not want his sister or wife to know he got lost.

4. Kobi is reunited with his family

The officer radios their colleagues and updates them on Kobi's location. They drive Kobi back to Alesha and James' home.



After the incident

Kobi seeks medical help

Kobi confides in James, Alesha, and Ada about his memory lapses, asking them not to discuss the incident further. They are worried about Kobi's safety and that he might go missing again since nobody noticed he had left the party. They express their concerns for his safety and encourage him to speak with his doctor. Kobi agrees. Kobi's family is relieved he is safe.



Resources

Having a conversation with a loved one about changes in one's memory can be uncomfortable. Here is a helpful resource: mybrainguide.org/talking-to-a-loved-one-about-memory-loss/.

Understanding why a loved one might lose the way and become lost can lead to better supports that keep them safe. More information can be found here: alzheimer.ca/en/help-support/im-caring-person-living-dementia/understanding-symptoms/disorientation-losing-ones-way.

Like Kobi, some persons living with dementia become lost and go missing in response to a reaction to their environment. Some environments can become overwhelming and individuals may leave these environments when they get overstimulated. When they do, they may become disoriented. farrlawfirm.com/dementia/sensory-overload-how-people-with-dementia-are-impacted-by-noise/.





Resources

Toolkit to manage the risk of getting lost and going missing for people living with dementia.

This toolkit contains strategies to help with the common concerns of people living with dementia and their care partners regarding the risks of becoming lost.

Emergency card

People living with dementia can carry an “In Case of Emergency” card. It has important information to help them if they go missing. This card was made by the **Calgary Missing Older adult Resource Network**, see page 16.

The Herbert Protocol

Important details about the person at risk can be gathered in The Herbert Protocol. This information can help first responders when someone is missing. Keep this information at home on your fridge and give it to care partners. Click this link to access the ‘**Resource Guide for Older Adults at Risk of Going Missing**’; fill out the form on pages 15-20.

Safety and leisure activities

Balancing leisure time with safety can be challenging. **The Canadian Guideline for Safe Wandering** provides strategies to promote safe wandering and manage the risk of getting lost when doing leisure activities.

Driving with dementia

It can be challenging to drive a car when the driver has a hard time remembering, navigating, and attending to the environment. This **Driving and Dementia Roadmap** includes safety considerations related to driving with dementia.

In Case of Emergency	
Full Name	_____
Date of Birth	_____ Blood type _____
Address	_____
Cell	_____ Work _____ Home _____
Current Meds	_____
Conditions	_____
Physician	_____ Phone _____
Allergy/additional info	_____
In Case of Emergency	
Emergency Contact #1	_____
Relationship	_____ Work Phone _____
Cell Phone	_____ Work Phone _____
Emergency Contact #1	_____
Relationship	_____ Work Phone _____
Cell Phone	_____ Work Phone _____
Additional Info	_____
_____ Last updated _____	

Locator devices

Locator devices help people living with dementia share their location with family in case they are lost. They may also help the police find people should they go missing. The **Alzheimer Society of Canada** shares more information about the purposes of locator devices. The **University of Waterloo Aging and Innovation Research Program** outlines features of locator devices, including cost and battery life.

What to do if you find a missing person

A missing incident is an emergency. Call police and ask the operator or service how you can help. **A video from Dementia Network Calgary** outlines a missing incident involving a person living with dementia and how to help.

Links

- **Toolkit** to manage the risk of getting lost and going missing for people living with dementia, made by the University of Waterloo. <https://uwaterloo.ca/managing-risks-of-disappearance-in-persons-living-with-dementia/toolkit-0>
- **“In Case of Emergency” card** made by Calgary Missing Older Adult Resource Network. See page 14. <https://missingseniors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Resource-guide-for-people-at-risk-of-going-missing.pdf>
- **The Herbert Protocol** described by Calgary Missing Older Adult Resource Network. See pages 15-20. <https://missingseniors.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Resource-guide-for-people-at-risk-of-going-missing.pdf>
- **The Canadian Guideline for Safe Wandering.** https://canadiansafewandering.ca/#more_information
- **The Driving and Dementia Roadmap.** <https://www.drivinganddementia.ca/>
- **Locator device overview**, as described by the Alzheimer Society of Canada. <https://alzheimer.ca/en/help-support/im-caring-person-living-dementia/ensuring-safety-security/tracking-devices>
- **Locator device features**, as described by the University of Waterloo Aging and Innovation Research Program. <https://uwaterloo.ca/aging-innovation-research-program/locator-devices>
- **What to do if you find a missing person.** Dementia Network Calgary’s video dementianetworkcalgary.ca/



For more information

Please contact:

Lili Liu, PhD, OT Reg (Ont.)

Professor, School of Public Health Sciences
Dean, Faculty of Health
University of Waterloo

519-888-4567 ext. 42126

lili.liu@uwaterloo.ca

Christine Daum, PhD, OT Reg (AB)

Research Assistant Professor,
University of Waterloo
cdaum@uwaterloo.ca



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada