



Assisting a person who is blind or partially sighted

A guide for health care professionals



Be respectful of other people's abilities and ask before doing things for them.

Ask direct questions

Not sure how much a person can see? Ask him or her. Individuals who are partially sighted are as unique as their individual eye conditions and see in varying degrees ranging from the ability to detect light to the ability to read with good corrective lenses. Having a white cane does not mean that a person has no vision. Canes can be used for a range of reasons, including identification, support and the detection of objects and obstacles.

Use a normal tone of voice

There is no need to raise your voice. Address the person by name if there is more than one person present and always identify yourself.

Offer your arm

When walking with a person who is blind or partially sighted, offer to let him/her take your arm. Pulling the person by the hand is awkward and confusing.

Describe what you are doing

Provide detailed information when doing assessments, exams, procedures or administering medication. Be sure to let the person know when you are leaving.

Speak naturally

Be comfortable using words such as see, look or read. People who are blind or partially sighted use these words in their vocabulary as much as you do.

Respect independence

Whether you are providing care in a home environment or clinical setting, don't assume people with vision loss are not able to live independently or manage with minimal assistance. Be respectful of their abilities and ask before doing things for them.

During a home visit

- Do not move items. If you must move something, return it to its original location.
- Keep doors fully closed or fully open so they don't create a hazard.
- Ask before adjusting blinds or curtains or turning on/off lights.
- Help distinguish medications by size, shape, colour, weight or smell. Putting pills in different size bottles or blister packs can help.
- If you notice a person is bumping into things, has trouble reading or cannot identify common household items, ask about their vision. If he or she is having problems seeing clearly and gives consent, make a referral to Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada.

Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada passionately provides community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life. Our specialists work with people of all ages in their own homes and communities, providing the one-on-one rehabilitation support they need to build their independence and lead full, active lives.

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For more information, visit:
visionlossrehab.ca
or call 1-844-887-8572

**VISION LOSS
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CANADA