

Do's and Don'ts When You Meet a Person with Vision Loss

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- When you meet a person with vision loss, identify yourself and let her know that you are talking to her. Otherwise, she might not know and might ignore you. Also, be sure to let her know when you are leaving.
- Speak clearly and directly to the person, not through a third party. The person with vision loss can speak for himself.
- Use natural conversational tone and speed. Unless the person has a hearing impairment, there's no need to raise your voice.
- Remember that the person with vision loss is the best one to tell you how you may be of help. Do not make assumptions.
- You can use words like "look" and "see." You can't avoid them because there just aren't any reasonable substitutes and they are part of our everyday vocabulary.



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- If a person with vision loss needs directions or assistance, such as crossing the street or getting around a building, you can ask if you can assist. Offer to let him take your arm, just above your elbow. Do not push or pull him. He can follow the motion of your body (much as in dancing).



Guiding a person indoors.



Guiding a person across a street.

- When explaining things, be explicit. Instead of saying “the bench is over there,” you should say “the bench is to your immediate right.”
- If a person is using a dog guide, remember the dog is working and should not be petted or distracted from his duty.
- And remember, when you do meet a person with vision loss, common sense and sensitivity to others are most important of all. Treat a person with vision loss with the same dignity and respect that you would anyone else.