

Question: How do you treat a blind person?

Answer: LIKE A PERSON!

Definition of Legally Blind:

20/200 acuity in the better eye with the best correction and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less.

Definition of visual impairment:

Vision is either

1. LOST (field loss, blind spot(s), cataracts)
2. BLURRED (cataracts, double/strabismus), poor contrast or resolution OR
3. HAMPERED (nystagmus, fluctuations, multiple floaters, photophobia, color blindness, poor night vision)

Each person who is blind or visually impaired is an individual, with feelings, interests, strengths, needs and goals as varied as those of any other person.

When you meet a person who happens to be blind:

- identify yourself.
- if there are others present, address each person by name so there's no mistaking to whom you are talking.
- remember that an unseen smile can be supplemented by a warm handshake and a friendly tone of voice.
- talk directly to the person and not through a companion, even if the person is deaf and blind.
- tell the person when you leave so that he/she isn't left talking to an empty space.

When you are talking with a person who is blind:

- don't worry about using words like "see", "look", "watch" and "blind" - most people who are blind are not offended by these words and use them in their own speech.
- use a normal tone of voice - most people who are blind have perfectly normal hearing, so there is no need to raise your voice. On the other hand, don't assume that because the person is blind he/she automatically has extraordinary senses of touch or hearing.
- look directly at the person, if your gaze wanders, your voice follows.

When you are offering assistance to a person who is blind:

- if you think a person needs help, offer assistance, but allow the person to decide whether the help is needed and in what way it will be most appreciated.
- if you escort a person, offer your arm and let him/her hold your arm at the most comfortable location for them, usually just above the elbow for a person equal in height to you.
- placing the person's hand on the back of the chair will allow them to be seated independently.
- avoid touching or moving the person or the person's belongings without warning and/or necessity. Respect each individual's personal space, belongings and independence.
- if you must leave the person alone momentarily, leave him/her within contact with a wall, chair or some other stationary object.
- keep directions as brief and clear as possible, using left and right according to the way he/she is facing.
- remember to be verbal pointing and hand gestures are meaningless to a person unable to see them.

Helpful tips:

- when dining out, read the menu and prices, and ask the person if they'd like to know the positions of various foods on their plate. If more help is needed, the person will ask.
- leave doors either fully opened or closed, as a door or drawer left partially opened can be dangerous and/or confusing, even for a person with partial sight.
- include the person who is blind or visually impaired in every decision to rearrange furniture, whether for safety, convenience or aesthetic reasons do not touch, pet, feed or otherwise distract a guide dog without the master's permission, as the person's safety depends upon the attention of the dog.

WHAT'S YOUR EYE-Q?

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. Most of what people learn is through our vision.
2. Most legally blind people see black or darkness.
3. The loss of vision in one eye can classify someone as legally blind.
4. Blind people hear better than sighted people.
5. All visually impaired people need large print and brighter light.
6. Sitting close to a television screen can hurt your eyes.
7. Too much oxygen at birth can cause blindness.
8. Vision in both eyes is needed for depth perception.
9. A guide dog decides for the blind person when it is safe to cross the street.
10. Laser surgery can cure some visual impairment.

Approximately 80-90% of what fully sighted children learn is through vision.	True
Even totally blind people do not see darkness. They see nothing, which is different from darkness.	False
In order for someone to be legally blind, the visual acuity in the better eye with best correction must be no better than 20/200, or they must have no more than 20 degrees of their visual field intact. Therefore, as long as the other eye has more than 20 degrees of visual acuity better than 20/200, they are not considered legally blind.	False
Many blind people learn to use their hearing better because they don't have the visual distractions and need to rely more on their hearing. This improved use of hearing doesn't occur automatically.	False
Some visually impaired and even legally blind people read regular print - especially those who are myopic (nearsighted) and those with small visual fields (pinhole or tunnel vision). Bright light can hurt some people with visual impairments, such as albinism, aneroid or cataracts. These conditions often make people sensitive to bright light. This sensitivity is called "photophobia".	False
Although some research indicates that the radiation from old television sets could be harmful, many visually impaired people need to get close to things to see them clearly. Sitting too far away can cause eyestrain and frustration, which can cause more harm than sitting close.	True
This condition is known as retrolental fibroplasia	True
Both eyes must function together to produce a three-dimensional image.	True
The visually impaired person listens to the traffic and tells the dog when to go and which way to turn.	False
Some cases of myopia and astigmatism (uneven surface of the eye) can be surgically corrected with laser keratotomy.	True

Answers: