

## - Top Ten Tips - Working with Individuals Who Have Vision Loss in Times of COVID

As routines continue to evolve due to the COVID pandemic, these ten tips will help as you prepare for and when working with individuals who have vision loss. Help is always available! Together we are finding our way!

**1. Introductions Please :** )!! It's so important to introduce yourself. Always use the individual's name when speaking to them and use yours so that the person knows that conversation is being directed to them and also so that they know who you are! If the individual is deaf blind, be sure to gently obtain the individual's attention by lightly touching them, using their name sign and also using an object or a name sign to introduce yourself. Make sure to introduce individuals to all staff, peers and other persons with whom they will be coming into contact. Use of introductions helps everyone initially to get reacquainted. When used regularly and consistently, people feel comfortable every day.

**2. Walk with Me :** )!! Ensure always that you are using a proper Human Guide Technique when walking with an individual with vision loss. Make sure to encourage use of the full repertoire of Orientation and Mobility Techniques including Trailing, Voice Guide, Protective Techniques and Cane Use. Refer to an individual's Orientation and Mobility Plan for details and/or consult with a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS).

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/orientation--mobility.html>

Please note: These Web links are being offered only as informational resources.  
It is not our intention to endorse or recommend the sites.

# Top Ten Tips (continued)

**3. Tour Guide :** )!! Reorientation to familiar environments may be increasingly needed, especially if furniture changes, or routes, room use and more have been altered due to new safety needs because of the COVID pandemic. The same is true for any new environment as well. Make sure to take the time to orient individuals with vision loss to the spaces that they will be spending time in and to routes that they will be traveling.

**4. Keeping It Clean :** )!! We can all do our part to help stop the spread of COVID including attention to keeping the materials we use every day clean and sanitized. This includes all surfaces and equipment that we touch including aids and appliance for vision loss and during use of Orientation & Mobility techniques.

Resources: Health & Safety:

<https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/downloadable-resources--videos.html>

**5. Masks, Glasses, Hearing Devices :** ) Wearing of a mask alone can be taxing. Wearing of a mask together with eye glasses, sunglasses, or hearing aids or devices certainly adds to the challenge. Here are some tips to help:

- Provide mask breaks so people can go outside and take the mask off.
- Desensitization for wearing masks... 5 minutes at a time and then on a little longer. Increasing by minute increments helps to desensitize people for wearing masks
- Wearing Glasses and/or a Hearing Device along with a mask?
  - Wrap the mask ear loops around the temples of the eye glasses.
  - Use a mask type that ties behind the head not the type that hangs on the ears.
  - Use a mask strap that connects the ear loops and sits behind the head.
  - Listen to a social story for wearing masks:  
<https://www.mass.gov/lists/covid-19-testing-resources#social-stories:-pptx-with-audio->

Please note: These Web links are being offered only as informational resources.  
It is not our intention to endorse or recommend the sites.

# Top Ten Tips (continued)

## 5. Masks, Glasses, Hearing Devices (continued)

- Glasses Fogging Up?
  - Wash glasses with gentle unscented hand soap before wearing. It can help to reduce fogging up.
  - Also fold a tissue over the top edge of the mask and this also reduces fogging up.
  - Caution: Be very careful with what you use to clean glasses because it can damage the lenses!

**6. Let's Getting Moving** : )!!! During the past year, many of us have been moving less...with results including increasing waist lines and a loss of strength and stamina. Work to incorporate increasing levels of movement and physical activity into everyone's daily routines to help to gain strength and improve fitness.

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/movement-safety-and-fun.html>

Exercise & Yoga: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/leisure-and-learning-at-home.html>

**7. Materials for Vision Loss at Your Door** : )!! American Printing House for the Blind (APH), and Braille and Talking Book Library offer materials delivered right to homes or programs!

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/aph-federal-quota-account.html>

<https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/news-and-information-access.html>

**8. Inspiring Ideas** : )!! Feel as though you are running out of ideas for activities? – Use ours!! The Leisure and Learning Resources will get you back on track.

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/leisure-and-learning-at-home.html>

Please note: These Web links are being offered only as informational resources.  
It is not our intention to endorse or recommend the sites.

## Top Ten Tips (continued)

9. **Eye to Eye** : )!! We all know that consistent vision care is important – even now during COVID. Be sure to check in with your eye care provider regarding any formerly cancelled and/or hopefully upcoming appointments. Eye Care is always very important.

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/eye-care1.html>

10. **Help Is on the Way** : )!! Questions? Concerns? Not sure where to turn with your vision loss questions? Let a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS) help you! Through our MCB/DDS Partnership Project, COMS are available across the Commonwealth. Only a referral is needed – let us help you!

Resources: <https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/orientation--mobilitylow-vision-services.html>

Developed by: Maureen Coyle, M.A., COMS  
Patty Duffy  
Gene Hoy  
Karina Thompson, M.Ed., OTR/L, COMS  
Georgia Wattendorf-Guiney, M.Ed., COMS  
Lisa DiBonaventura, M.A., COMS

Edited by: Kathleen Kenney, M.Ed., COMS

Please also see MCB/DDS Partnership “Focus” resources:

This resource was developed by members of our Support Group for Caregivers of Individuals with Vision Loss. For more information and/or to join:

<https://www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/vision-loss-support-groups.html>

Please note: These Web links are being offered only as informational resources.  
It is not our intention to endorse or recommend the sites.