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## **Fact Sheet 3**

## **Walking around safely and Guiding Skills**

As for most of us, it can be easier to get around in familiar environments and this is often true for people with vision loss and blindness. Complex and crowded environments may pose greater challenges. Pre COVID, travellers who are blind were able to travel internationally by plane, with the use of their aids and devices.

People may have varying degrees of difficulties walking around because of their reduced vision. They may need to listen to the beeping sound at a pedestrian controlled crosswalk to cross an intersection, instead of relying on the Walk, Don’t Walk display and may also rely on the raised pedestrian dots placed on the pavement at intersections on roadways.

Those who have greater challenges may use a long white cane, dog guide or another person to guide them, particularly in an unfamiliar or crowded environment. Some people also choose to wear a badge to identify themselves as having vision loss.

A person with night blindness may not need assistance in a familiar environment during the day but may need help at night and in dim lighting conditions.

People with balance or memory problems may need assistance to travel short distances, say from their room to a shared dining room to ensure the safety of themselves and others walking near them.

**You can help by learning some Guiding Skills**

Guiding a person can be a way to help by allowing the person with vision impairment to grip your arm immediately above your elbow when walking. There is a simple system for Guiding and if the person with vision impairment knows this Guiding system, they can pass on these skills directly to you.

Here is a short video showing some of the basic Guiding skills:

<https://www.visability.com.au/video-stories/its-a-wrap-our-sighted-guide-video/>

Guiding skills can be used in shopping centres, at health and other specialist appointments, in social settings, for bush walking and crossing roads. Safe Guiding can assist with falls prevention and offers the added opportunity to interact and socialise with the person you are Guiding.

**PTO**

When Guiding it can be helpful to use descriptive language to relate the person to their immediate environment and to enrich their social experience. Use specific language when approaching hazards such as a low, overhanging tree branch or uneven footpath.

Contact Beyond Blindness on 08 8367 6088 to ask about our free and fun educational Guiding Program which gets you practising Guiding skills and helping others to move around safely.

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