

VHA BLIND REHABILITATION SERVICE

ASSISTING VETERANS WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MEET A VETERAN WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

1. ANNOUNCE YOURSELF

Announce yourself by name and title and alert the individual when you are leaving the room/area.

2. ASK IF THE PERSON NEEDS HELP

Always ask the individual if they would like assistance and how you can assist. Do NOT touch anyone or their mobility device without permission.

3. SPEAK TO THE INDIVIDUAL

Speak directly to the individual, not only to their sighted companion. Explain what you are doing.

4. SETTING UP THE ENVIRONMENT

Do not move objects or personal belongings without informing the individual. Do not make changes to the Veteran's environment without informing them. Be clear if you are placing items near the Veteran.

5. CONSIDER ADAPTATIONS

Consider lighting needs of the Veteran- some may prefer bright vs. dim lighting.

6. COMMUNICATION

Provide the Veteran with their preferred format for materials (e.g. enlarged print, electronic, audio). Use verbal instructions when needed. Explain procedures and tell the Veteran if you are going to touch them.

7. SHOW RESPECT

~~Respect the person's ability~~ to do things independently. Do not assume that their other senses are impaired (e.g. hearing).

The mission of Blind Rehabilitation Service (BRS) is to assist eligible Veterans and active duty Service members with a visual impairment in developing the skills needed for personal independence and successful reintegration into the community and family environment.

For more information on VA BRS: www.rehab.va.gov/blindrehab/

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