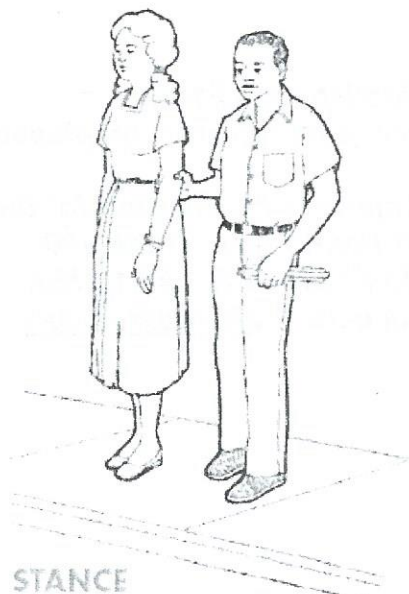


Suggestions for Guiding Individuals With Visual Impairments

During conversations with persons who are visually impaired, use a normal tone of voice and be as specific as possible when giving directions. For example, instead of pointing and saying “the chair is over there”; say “the chair is next to you on your right”. Also, if someone else speaks to the individual with visual impairment through you, suggest they speak to the individual directly.

Human Guide

1. Tell the person that the Sighted Guide Technique is a safe and graceful method of traveling indoors and outside. You will act as a team and share responsibilities when traveling.
2. Ask the person you're guiding to take your arm. Do this by gently touching the person's arm and ask the person to hold onto your arm immediately above the elbow (four fingers on the inside and thumb on the outside).
3. Explain that you will be walking a half step ahead. As the guide, it's your responsibility to avoid obstacles, thus allowing enough room for the combined width of both of you. Let the person know in advance of any approaching stairs or curbs, and whether they go up or down.
4. Begin walking at a normal pace. While walking, you can discuss the physical layout of the area, pointing out landmarks (e.g. doorways, sloped surfaces).



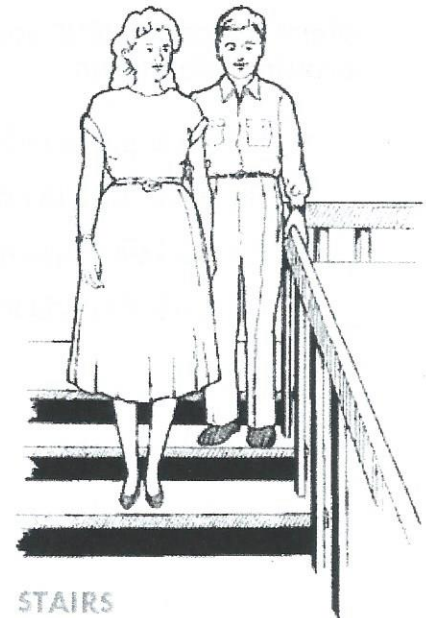
Narrow Area Technique

1. When there is not enough room for your combined width, Narrow Area Technique may be used. When approaching a narrow space, put your guiding arm behind your back and towards the center to give the visually impaired person a physical cue that you are both entering a narrow space.
2. The visually impaired person should move directly behind you in single file, and straighten his/her arm. This position (now one whole step behind) reduces the possibility of tripping over each other's feet.
3. Return your guiding arm to the original position after passing through the narrow space. This is a physical cue that indicates that he/she can return to the normal sighted guide position.



Stairs

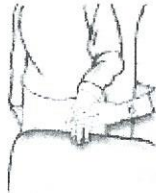
1. Tell the person you are guiding that you are approaching stairs and whether they are going up or down. Approach stairs directly and pause to allow him/her to locate the first step and the railing. If the person being guided is not on the handrail side, ask if he/she wishes to change sides.
2. As you step down, remain one-step ahead, proceeding as you would normally. Stop when you reach the end of the stairs. This indicates that you have reached the bottom or top (landing), and say, "you have one more step to go".



Seating

When guiding someone to a seat, try one of the following:

1. When approaching the chair from behind, place the person's hand on the back or side of the chair. You can mention which way the chair is facing. From then on, most people will manage by themselves.



2. When approaching the chair from the front, guide the person so that his/her knees contact the seat. If appropriate, guide the person's hand to the back or side of the chair and assist in turning around.

Doors

Inform the person that you are approaching a door and provide him/her with the following information:

1. Whether the door is opening towards or away from you.
2. To which side the door is opening (right or left).
3. Encourage the person to hold the door open as he/she passes through it.
4. If the door needs to be closed, encourage him/her to do so whenever possible.



NOTE: When people have additional handicapping conditions, these techniques may need to be adapted. We recommend that an Orientation and Mobility Specialist be consulted in these cases.