



Recommendations for Person-Centered Care of Patients with Blindness or Vision Impairment (BVI)

	Tips:	Examples:
Communication	<p>Large print and bolded materials</p> <p>Arrange interpreter services (if needed) ahead of time.</p> <p>Look directly at the patient.</p> <p>Electronic copies of medical information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High contrast AND large print (>20pt Times Roman) is crucial for the ability to read. • For those with (syndromic) hearing loss, in-person sign language interpreter services and/or video remote interpreting should be scheduled in advance. • Ask that a caregiver come with patients especially those with any cognitive decline. • Avoid looking towards the interpreter in the room. • Consider using a scribe to reduce the need to type into a medical record. This can allow you to look directly at the patient. • You may speak louder than normal but <u>do not shout</u>. Do not shout or exaggerate your words since this may distort how the words sound or appear on the lips. If a patient does not understand you, choose a different one rather than repeating it. • Some may require materials in Braille or an electronic copy to be used through text to speech applications.
Exam Room Set-up	<p>Make sure patient walkways are void of any obstacles.</p> <p>Avoid bright lights or loud background noises that can affect the ability to see or understand you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate tripping hazards. • Allow patients who navigate with cane or guide dogs to have the space. • Describe layout of room. • Do not have a window or light behind you as this may create glare.



<p>Accessibility Prior to Appointments</p>	<p>Provide helpful information to help patients with BVI making appointments.</p> <p>Provide resources for patients to know what they should expect when they arrive at the clinic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful information may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Old medical records ○ Medications currently used (or request that they are brought in) ○ Insurance coverage • Ask patient about any accommodations to make sure they are appropriate (some may have dual physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities). • Send instructions on any arrival information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parking instructions, valet parking ○ Location of ramps, doorways, elevators, where to sign-in ○ Inform if human guides are available
<p>How to Make the Clinic Accessible</p>	<p>Help identify BVI patients to alert everyone that a patient has vision loss.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not pet or play with guide dogs. • If you guide the patient, have the patient hold your bent elbow as you walk slightly in front of them. Give verbal cues along the way, such as “we’re entering a doorway”, “to your right is a chair”, etc. • Place appropriate vision impairment or ocular diagnosis codes on the problem list. • Insert any communication and accommodation needs into the electronic health records. • Use alerts to notify staff if any accommodations are needed when appointments are scheduled.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Human Guide Program at Michigan Medicine

<https://disabilityhealth.medicine.umich.edu/clinical/accessibility-disability-accommodations/human-guide-michigan-medicine>

Training video can be accessed here: https://umichumhs.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8B5AIJNQDLUGL9Y

For those who are DeafBlind, staff interpreters can be reached at:

- Interpreter Services - Main Office: Phone: (734) 936-7021; Fax: (734) 998-5368; InterpreterServices@med.umich.edu

Readings on general best practices:

Schneider K. Caring better for patients who are blind or visually impaired. Am Fam Physician. 2013 Dec 1;88(11):774. PMID: 24364526.
<https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2013/1201/p774.pdf>