Resources for Individuals who have Low Vision or Blindness

Eye health, impact of vision loss, programs and services

Presenter
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Outreach & Referral Coordinator
Tips to Protect Your Eyes

- Have a comprehensive dilated eye exam
- Quit smoking or never start
- Maintain your blood sugar levels
- Know your family’s eye history
- Be cool and wear your shades
- Give your eyes a rest
- Eat right to protect your sight
- Clean your hands and contact lenses properly
- Wear protective eyewear
Vision and Aging

• Normal changes as adults age
  - Difficulty reading mail, newspapers, signs etc.
  - Need for more light
  - Problems with glare

• These and other changes may also indicate more serious problems, like glaucoma or diabetes related eye damage.

• Individuals can’t tell the difference – an eye doctor can!
Low Vision Difficulties

• Recognizing a familiar face
• Reading print
• Perceiving contrast
• Seeing obstacles such as curbs and steps
• Managing medication
• Traveling independently
The Impact of Vision Loss

Vision loss impacts a person’s:

- Independent living
- Travel and mobility
- Work and school
- Mental health

Independent living
- Read mail, medication, food labels and newsprint
- Write a check
- Dial a telephone
- Shop for groceries
- Prepare meals and cook
- Participate in hobbies / activities
The Impact of Vision Loss

Vision loss impacts a patient’s:

- Independent living
- Travel and mobility
- Work and school
- Mental health

Travel and mobility

- Cross streets
- Read street and bus signs
- Drive a car
- Recognize faces
- Socialize
The Impact of Vision Loss

Vision loss impacts a patient’s:

- Independent living
- Travel and mobility
- Work and school
- Mental health

Work and school:
- Use a computer
- Use a tablet and/or phone
- Read and write
- Travel to and from work/school
- Lost job, income, dignity
- Dependent on strangers
The Impact of Vision Loss

Vision loss impacts a person’s:

- Independent living
- Travel and mobility
- Work and school
- Mental health

Individuals may feel:

- Depressed
- Isolated
- Embarrassed
- Anxious
- Abandoned

Rehabilitation should be a part of good care.
Lighthouse Guild Services
Connecting to Services

- Call the Health Center - 212-769-6300: Schedule a low vision exam
- Contact Lisa Beth Miller - 646-847-4615: Programs and services, resources and to register with the New York State Commission for the Blind
When to Seek Services or Make a Referral

• Significant complaints about difficulties with activities of daily living.
• Complaints about contrast or night vision.
• Feelings of anxiety, depression or hopelessness.
• Legal blindness, 20/200 or less in the better seeing eye.
• Individuals who have not had a physical or eye examination within the past year or have been diagnosed and do not yet have any symptoms.
• One-to-one conversation on immediate needs and resources.
Lighthouse Guild’s Health Center Services

- Low Vision Optometry
- Primary Care Physicians
- Endocrinology
- Podiatry
- Occupational Therapy
- Guild Care Adult Day Health
- Behavioral Health
- EyeCare EyeWear Eyeglass Shop
GuildCare: Adult Day Health Care

• Services available to adults ages 18 and older who have been diagnosed with a chronic medical condition.
• Offers an alternative to nursing homes.
• Centers in New York City, Albany, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls.

A team of licensed professionals provide:
• Nursing care
• Medication management
• Morning snack and noon meal
• Social and therapeutic activities
• Vision rehabilitation therapy
Behavioral Health Services

Only behavioral health center in the United States focused on people who are blind, visually impaired, or at risk for vision loss.

• Psychiatry
• Medication Management
• Psychotherapy
• Group Therapy
  • Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
  • Cardiometabolic illnesses (such as diabetes or heart disease)
• In-person or Telehealth (phone or zoom)
Technology Center

Premier Assistive Technology Resource occupies 11,000 square feet at Lighthouse Guild’s New York City headquarters, offers a one-stop resource for vision care, rehabilitation, and technology training.

• **Assessments** by Lighthouse Guild experts to determine visual capacity, lifestyle, personal goals, and comfort with technology.

• **Opportunities** to try out and learn how to use cutting-edge and basic technology devices.

• **Solutions** such as: wearable devices that convert text to speech, recognize faces, and identify currency; devices that maximize useful vision; specialized eyeglasses, magnifiers, CCTVs, computers, and smart home technology.
Tele-support Groups

Facilitated by licensed clinical staff

- Parent support – specific to the eye condition of child (Albinism, Retinopathy of Prematurity, etc.)
- Adult tele-support (35yo and older)
- Young Adult (19-34yo)
- High School (9th & 10th/11th & 12th)
Youth Services

Saturday Youth Skills Program  
**Ages 6-13**
- Social and recreation program
- Yoga, drama, art projects, computer training and much more

Saturday Youth Transition Program  
**Ages 14-21**
- Social and recreation program
- Teaches daily living skills, work readiness, computer training, drama, yoga and much more

Summer Pathways Program  
**Ages 14-21**
- Career exploration
- Work experience
- Community outings
- Daily living skills
Volunteer Reader Services

Volunteers read a wide variety of personal, academic and professional material in print and online.
Vision and Vocational Rehabilitation Services

New York State Commission for the Blind – for those eligible

• Independent Living Skills Program and Adaptive Living Program
• Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Services for Older Adults

Adaptive Living Program

• Aged 55 and older
• Not interested in employment

Independent Living Skills

1. Training in household tasks
2. Orientation and Mobility
Orientation and Mobility Training

• White cane training
• Using public transportation
• Outdoor mobility
• Indoor mobility
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

• Low Vision Services
• Social casework
• Counseling

• Academic instruction
• Assistive technology training
• Work readiness and career services
Lighthouse Guild Tech Pals

The program matches young adults (aged 18-24) who are blind or visually impaired to serve as technology mentors to older adults aged 55+ who are also dealing with vision loss. The mentors teach the older adults how to use accessibility features and apps on their mobile phones and tablets.
Behavioral Health Professionals (psychiatrists, social workers, etc.)
Occupational Therapists, Ophthalmologists and Optometrists
For information about Programs & Services:
Lisa Beth Miller, Outreach & Referral Coordinator,
millerl@lighthouseguild.org • 646-847-4615
Thank you.