



TOWN OF BROOKLINE

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

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Assisting People With Vision Loss During The Pandemic *Town of Brookline Releases Instructional Video Guide*

BROOKLINE, MA – August 5, 2020 - The Town of Brookline, Massachusetts has just released a new [instructional video](#) telling and showing via demonstration clips how to guide a person with vision loss in a variety of everyday situations. This video is free to all and may be used by any agencies, organizations, groups, or individuals who find it useful.

Many people would like to assist a person with vision loss when appropriate but hesitate because they do not know-how. People with vision loss often turn to strangers in various public places for assistance in getting to their desired location, whether it is to cross the street or to find an elevator in an office building or hospital. This new video offers standard instructional guiding techniques for people to understand the best approaches on how to guide someone with vision loss.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, maintaining social distance when guiding a visually impaired person can be challenging. Modifications to the standard guiding techniques are recommended as we work together to mitigate the transmission of the virus. When guiding a visually impaired person, both the individual and the guide should be wearing masks and be facing in the same direction, so their breath is not directed towards one another. Using a glove can protect from skin-to-skin contact.

"Educating the public on how to guide people safely with vision loss makes everyone more comfortable. These suggested modifications necessitated by the pandemic are certainly timely, said Paul Saner, Co-Chair of Brookline's Economic Development Advisory Board, and former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. "A sighted guide providing access while respecting social distancing furthers inclusion," he continued.

Additional ideas for safe guiding while social distancing can include placing a hand on the guide's back instead of the arm, putting a shopping cart between the individual and the guide with the guide in front, using an adequately sanitized extra cane, as a guiding pole with each person holding one end, and verbal guiding from behind the person with vision loss. The person with vision loss should also be using their usual mobility aid, such as a cane or guide dog, for added safety.

Produced by the Town's Commission on Disability, along with [Brookline Age-Friendly Cities TV](#) and [Brookline Interactive Group](#), the video is simple and offers repetition in the demonstrations to make learning and remembering easy.

Appearing in the demonstration video are Paul Saner, Brookline Town Meeting member, Co-Chair of Brookline's Economic Development Advisory Board, and former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and Michael Allen, LCSW, Social Worker at the [Brookline Senior Center](#). The video is narrated by Sassy Outwater-Wright, Executive Director, [Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired](#).

The video is available now on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eddk-5SBv8&feature=youtu.be>

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