OASIS
Support for People with Vision Loss

Family Support

It's a Family Issue

Family support for loved ones who are living with vision loss is very important to maintain their physical and mental health. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), managing vision loss can take a toll on both the physical and mental health of a family member coping with sight loss. It can affect physical health by increasing the risk of falls and the quality of life, and it can have a big impact on mental health. In a recent CDC study, 1 in 4 adults with vision loss reported anxiety and depression.

Family members can help by treating the vision loss as a family issue, providing the support needed to adjust to life with sight loss. The Family Caregiver Alliance advises that family members should strive to be as supportive, informed and caring as possible to help loved ones deal with the challenges of reduced vision.

Tips for Assisting your Loved One with Vision Loss

- **Be Patient:** Give your loved one the time and space to process the range of emotions and feelings they are going through, which can include fear, grief, anger, denial, and helplessness. The time needed for this grieving process is different for everyone.

- **Listen:** Providing a listening ear is one of the most important things you can do with your family member who is new to vision loss or who has lived with blindness for many years.

- **Offer Assistance:** Ask before helping to encourage independence. Let your loved one know you're available and always there if they need help with something specific. Some examples are: offer to give them a ride to medical appointments or for errands. Help to shop for groceries or assist with meal preparation. Assist them at social events, such as holidays or outings.

- **Acknowledge Progress:** Offer praise and acknowledge the progress your loved one has made, such as mastering a new skill, task or activity.

- **Talk About Issues:** Work together on finding solutions to any issues that arise. Don't give up on finding the needed help or resources.

- **Learn about Transportation Services:** Help your loved one become familiar with transportation services available for them, including public transportation and any services offered by local places of worship or community groups.

Resources for Families Coping with Vision Loss

Help your loved one maintain health and reach a comfortable level of confidence in activities of daily living, mobility, and independence with vision loss – when they are ready. This can include simple adaptations in the home, mobility training, vocational resources, support groups, social services and more that are offered by numerous organizations.

Please visit our webpage, ***Organizations that Support the Blind and Visually Impaired***, for a comprehensive list of organizations, including those shown below, that offer resources for you and your loved one.

- **Family Caregiver Alliance**
- **American Foundation for the Blind**
- **National Council on Aging**
- **Hadley**
- **Illinois Department of Human Services: Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Customer and Community Blind Services**

OASIS is here to help you. Contact us for more information.

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