

Guide Dogs.

Seeing beyond the myth - debunking assumptions about low vision

—
Guide Dogs Queensland
2024



The primary barrier to accessibility and inclusion is often a lack of knowledge or understanding.

This fact sheet aims to expose some of the common myths and misconceptions surrounding low vision or blindness and hopefully increase your understanding around the key issues.

Myth:

People who are blind cannot see at all.

Fact:

About 90% of people with low vision have some remaining vision that can be very beneficial to everyday function and getting around.

For example, some people may have a small “tunnel” of vision that, with the use of a long cane to check the ground ahead, can lift their head to see visual detail in the distance. Other people may have some peripheral vision.

Myth:

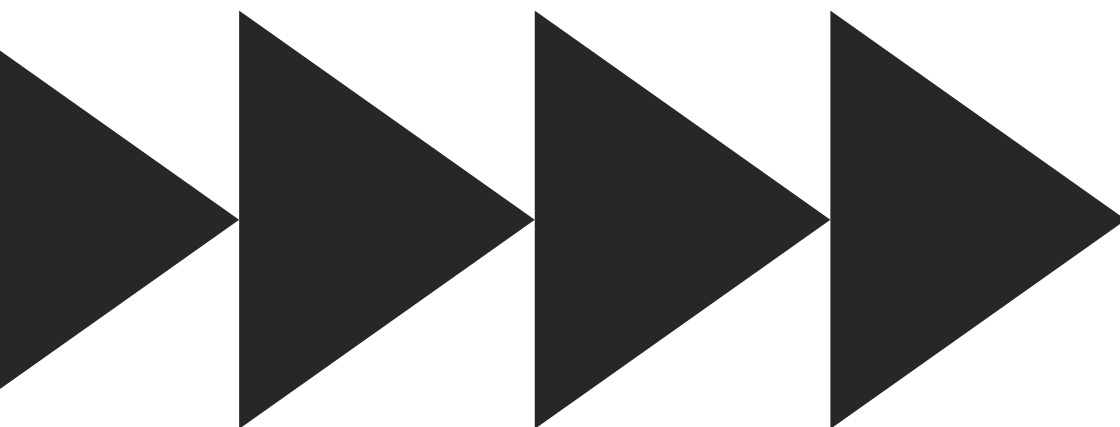
People with low vision or blindness have superior hearing.

Fact:

People with low vision or blindness have the same hearing ability as a person with vision.

However, children and adults with low vision or blindness can learn to use their hearing to localise traffic sounds and distinguish environmental features such as covered walkways, walls and fences by the way they reflect sound.

In other words, while sighted people tend to concentrate more on their vision, people who have low vision or blindness tend to rely more on their hearing to make sense of the world.



Myth:

All people with low vision or blindness can read braille.

Fact:

Not all people who have low vision or blindness can read braille as they may lack the tactile sensitivity to read braille and tend to rely more on audio material and screen reading technology.

Other people with low vision may manage reading by using large print material or use magnifying devices that make the print large enough to read.

Myth:

People with low vision or blindness are unable to live independently.

Fact:

People with low vision or blindness can learn to do relatively everything a sighted person can including cook, get out and about in the community, travel, work, study and enjoy a fulfilling life.

Myth:

People with low vision or blindness cannot use most technology.

Fact:

Not true! Technology is a way of life for people with low vision or blindness. These days computers, mobile phones, applications and other technology is very helpful in enhancing a person's independence and helps to make the world more accessible.

**Myth:**

All people with low vision or blindness will require a Guide Dog.

Fact:

Every person with low vision or blindness has a unique experience and journey, which does not necessarily involve the use of a Guide Dog.

In fact, most people with low vision or blindness who require a mobility aid choose a long cane to assist with getting around. The process of matching a person with a Guide Dog is a carefully considered one and takes into account the needs and desires of a person with low vision or blindness.

Myth:

You need to speak loudly to a person with low vision or blindness.

Fact:

Not true! There is no need to shout when you are speaking to a person with low vision or blindness. Speak in your normal tone of voice.

Myth:

You need to be careful not to say things like “See you later”.

Fact:

Saying sight-related words and phrases like “it’s nice to see you”, “see you later” or “watch out!” are not likely to cause offense. People with low vision or blindness will often use these phrases too.

When you are talking to someone with low vision, simply behave like you normally would with any other person. It helps to introduce yourself by name and speak to them directly and not just to the person they are with.

Myth:

People using a long cane or Guide Dog need support when crossing a road.

Fact:

Never assume that people using a long cane or Guide Dog require help crossing a road. People with low vision or blindness are skilled at listening for traffic and using traffic crossings.

A good rule to follow is always to ask a person first if they require assistance. If guiding someone across a road, let them take your arm.

We are here to help. For more information please contact:

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