



## Visual Impairment: Facilitating Communication

**In Quebec, there are more than 100 000 people living with a mild to severe visual impairment.**

In our society, whether we like it or not, visuals and images dominate our lives. It is important "to look good", "to take care of your appearance", "to see and be seen".

Every day, 80% of the information we receive is visual: at this very moment, you are taking in information with your eyes...

There are many ways to facilitate communication with seniors living with visual impairments. This sheet will provide you with tips and advice to help you develop a satisfying and enjoyable relationship.

We wish you pleasant reading and a rewarding companionship journey.

**Little Brothers**

Source: Québec Foundation for the Blind

**For more information, please contact:**

Regroupement des aveugles et amblyopes du Montréal métropolitain

5225 rue Berri, bureau 101  
Montréal (Québec) H2J 2S4  
Tél: 514-277-4401

<https://bit.ly/techniques-guide-accompagnateur> (in French only)



## Did you know?

In Quebec, the *Semaine québécoise de la canne blanche* takes place the first week of February every year and has been in existence since 1947.

Electronic white canes, that can detect obstacles with ultrasonic sensors and alert users via in-hand vibrations, have been available since 2014.

It is possible to learn guiding techniques for the visually impaired to assist with errands and help them get around safely.



## Good practices

- Announce your presence, name the person and name yourself when arriving for your visit;
- Be calm and create a safe environment;
- Act naturally and give precise indications regarding your movements;
- Speak at a normal pace;
- Notify the person when you are going to take his or her arm or hand;
- Assess the state and safety of the environment. Leave everyday objects within reach. Offer to check whether certain adaptations to their home would facilitate getting around and limit risks;
- Suggest meeting with a specialist to find out more about possible technical aids;
- Always place yourself in front of the person when you go outside. Let the person hold your arm rather than holding their arm;
- Inform them of your departure at the end of the visit.



## Attitudes to adopt

- Keep in mind that your compassionate and caring presence makes all the difference.
- As a volunteer, share your observations: your coordinator is available to gather information about your companion's health and to provide you with perspective and support for challenges you may encounter.
- As a caregiver, be sure to maintain contact with professionals and trusted members in the elder's network to ensure appropriate support.
- Get information on guiding techniques, audio books and adapted technologies.



## Things to avoid

- Touching the person without warning;
- Moving around without speaking;
- Moving everyday objects;
- Speaking on another person's behalf.

## Additional resources

### Telephone

Info santé : 811

Fondation des aveugles du Québec :  
514 259-9470

### Online

Portail [www.pour-les-personnes-agees.gouv.fr](http://www.pour-les-personnes-agees.gouv.fr),  
*Vivre à domicile avec une maladie ou un handicap*,  
<https://bit.ly/vivre-a-domicile-maladie-handicap>.  
(in French only)

Association sportive des aveugles du Québec,  
<https://sportsaveugles.qc.ca/> (in French only)

Institut Nazareth & Louis Braille,  
<http://www.inlb.qc.ca/> (in French only)

Fondation INCA, <https://cnib.ca/fr> (in French only)

Audible, *Audio books*,  
[https://www.audible.ca/?language=en\\_CA](https://www.audible.ca/?language=en_CA)

BibliObs, "*Vers la nuit*", le livre qui vous met dans la peau d'un aveugle, <https://bit.ly/vers-la-nuit>,  
article d'Amandine Schmitt, 2017 (in French only).