

Advice on Supporting People with Acquired Deafblindness

In our online course, [“Providing Support for Acquired Deafblindness”](https://utbildning.nkcdb.se/courses/forvarvad-dovblindhet) (utbildning.nkcdb.se/courses/forvarvad-dovblindhet), five people share their best advice on what you should keep in mind. Here, we have made a summary of some of their advice. We hope you will find them helpful! If you want to learn more, welcome to join the course.

Make Your Presence Known

Always make sure to let the person know you are there by making physical contact.

For example, place your hand on their arm or shoulder.

Also, let them know when you are leaving, for instance, by using the social-haptic signal for “go.”

Do Not Be Afraid to Ask

Do not be afraid to ask the person with deafblindness how they prefer things to be done and how you can assist them in the best way possible. Maintain an open dialogue and collaborate. Support them in tasks they need assistance with to manage. Do it together instead of you doing it for them.

Encourage Trying

Focus on seeing things as opportunities rather than obstacles. Encourage the person with deafblindness to try doing things themselves or with your support. This can boost greater independence. Perhaps you can find solutions together. This can apply for something they would like to do but feel incapable of.

See the Individual

Remember, there is always a person behind the deafblindness. Take time to see who they really are – a person with their own life, interests, abilities, and resources. Build trust by being open and sharing a bit about yourself.

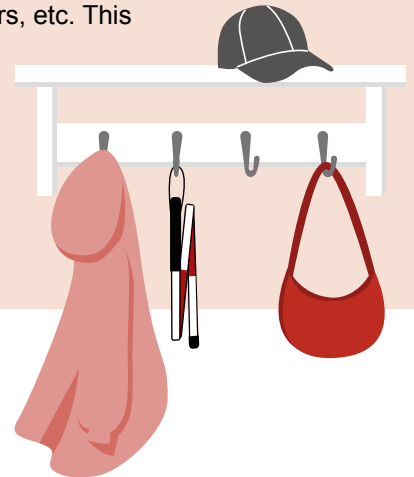


Stay Calm and Clear

Keep in mind to be calm and clear when speaking and/or signing. This also applies when guiding or showing something. This helps reduce misunderstandings and stress for the person with deafblindness.

Everything in Its Place

Ensure that every object has a designated place. Remember to put items back where they belong and to close doors, etc. This reduces the risk of minor and major mishaps and helps avoid the stress of not being able to find things.



Physical Contact

Keep in mind that physical contact is necessary when supporting someone with deafblindness. Be aware of what that means. Try to be aware of what you convey through the physical touch.

Avoid Tactile Noise

Try to avoid tactile distractions, i.e. things on your person or in your environment that can disturb the tactile sense, such as some types of rings on your fingers, clothing details, long nails, loose hair, drafts from fans, and/or vibrations from different objects.



Risk of Isolation

Do not hesitate to reach out, for example, by calling or texting. Ask if the person with deafblindness wants to talk or needs assistance. Always respect “no” as an answer.



Offer Your Support

You can offer your assistance in different situations – for example, by demonstrating how technical devices work or by sharing some other skill you might have. This aims to help the person with deafblindness to become as involved and independent as possible.

