

# How do I interact with a DeafBlind person?

The following are tips to consider when interacting with an individual who has a dual sensory loss.

- Say the person's name or lightly touch them on the hand or arm before speaking to them.
- Do not shout!
- Speak at a normal volume. You may need to move closer but don't raise your voice.
- Speak at a normal rate, unless you have a tendency to speak fast, then slow down a little.
- Do not over emphasize or exaggerate your speech.
- Do not say "never mind" or "forget it"!
- In an area that echoes, you may need to speak a little softer and perhaps move a little closer to the individual.
- When repeating perhaps state the sentence in a different manner. For example, instead of "Do you want to go shopping?" You might say, "Want to go to the store?"
- If possible, turn background noise down or off.
- When in a group setting, try to only have one person speaking at a time.
- Specify when changing topics.
- Avoid saying only one word but rather say short sentences to help put the word in context.
- Talk directly to the person and not around them.
- Do not answer questions that are directed to the individual.
- Inform the person when you are moving away or leaving.
- When using phonetics, use words that are not similar to others. For example, "T" for tango and "P" for puppy.
- When stating numbers, use single digits. For example, five six rather than "fifty-six".
- Give directions such as left or right rather than "over here" or tapping on the table or chair. Distinguishing where sounds are coming from is often difficult.
- When something needs to be repeated, only one person needs to restate it. Multiple voices at the same time makes comprehension very problematic.
- Remember, everyone is different, so these are tips to consider. You cannot go wrong with simply asking the individual, when in doubt, "How can I help you hear me better?"