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# Respectful Interactions

# Tips for Interacting with an Individual who is DeafBlind

## Approaching a DeafBlind Person

* When approaching a DeafBlind person, let them know you are there by placing your hand on their shoulder. Maintain contact with the person until they visually or tactually locate you.
	+ [Demonstrative Video](https://vimeo.com/580351758/8ae07354fe?share=copy)
* Always identify yourself immediately. Never say “guess who” to a person with a combined hearing and vision loss. This is considered rude.
* Always Inform the individual when you or others are entering or leaving the room.
	+ [Demonstrative video](https://vimeo.com/hknc/hapticsenterexit)

## Provide Access to Information

* Provide information about the person’s surroundings such as who is in the room, what people are doing, the layout of the room. Check in with the individual to determine what information they would like to receive. Also find out how they would like to receive this information; sign language, speech, text or touch (Haptics and/or PT). \*\*Learning just a few common Haptic and/or PT signals can make a tremendous difference.

[Haptic Video Series](https://www.helenkeller.org/resources/haptics-video-series/)

[ProTactile](https://www.tactilecommunications.org/Resources/ProTactile)

* Provide accessible feedback when communicating with an individual who is DeafBlind. A great deal of our communication is expressed via facial expressions and body movement. If the individual does not have access to this “feedback” it can feel like they are “talking to a wall”. Make sure to provide information such as I’m nodding, I’m laughing, or I’m shocked to the individual via speech, sign or touch (Haptics or PT). Check in with the individual to see what method/s they would prefer.

## Hand under Hand Technique

* When guiding a person’s hand to an object or person place your hand under their hand. They will place their palm on the top of your hand and follow your movements. This way the DeafBlind individual is in control. They can disconnect when and if they choose. Never grab the person’s hand and pull.
* [See demonstrative video](https://vimeo.com/817654856/532b18fee5?share=copy)

## Be Aware:

* Many DeafBlind people need their hands to communicate. Be aware of this. They may not be able participate in an activity such as eating or putting on their coat and access communication at the same time. Make sure to provide information ahead of time or wait for the individual to complete the activity they are participating in and then attempt to communicate with them. Allow for extra time for this.
* Everything takes longer when you have a combined hearing and vision loss. Be aware of this and a lot for additional time.
* Always offer to include the DeafBlind individual in your conversation. Never say this is not important or I will tell you later. Allow the individual to determine if they would like to be included or not, do not make that decision for them.

  