



Older Individuals who are Blind – Technical Assistance Center

Innovative Solutions for Remote and Virtual Training

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Objectives

Participants will identify strategies for:

- Working as a remote employee
- Doing remote assessments with consumers
- Providing remote instruction



Suggestions for Working Remotely

- Identify a designated work area
- Have necessary equipment
 - Work phone
 - Secure computer
- Follow a daily routine
- Document work completed
- Communicate with team members



Confidentiality

- Keep documentation and consumer files in a secure location.
- Ask consumers how they would like to receive communication.
- When working in a group, ask consumers to identify themselves by first name only.



Create Remote Teams

- Administrative and support staff
- VRT, rehab teacher, and assistant
- O&M specialist
- Assistive technology instructor
- Case manager, counselor, social worker



Needed Skills

- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Creativity and innovation
- Good listening skills
- Use of clear and descriptive language
- Patience



Telephone Calls

• Strengths:

- Most people have access to a telephone.
- Consumers usually know how operate a telephone.

Weaknesses:

- It may feel distant.
- Individuals with hearing impairments may have difficulty.
- No ability to share visual information
- People talk over each other on a conference call



Video Call via Smartphone

Strengths:

- Individuals with a smartphone usually have access to a video calling service.
- Allows for sharing of visual information

Weaknesses:

- Individuals may not know how to use the video calling service.
- Individuals may feel uncomfortable with video calling.



Virtual Conference Platforms

Strengths:

- Each person can share visual information.
- Virtual platforms increase consumers' AT skills.
- Each person can mute background noise.

Weaknesses:

- Some people may not know how to virtual platforms.
- Joining by phone requires two steps.
- Virtual conferencing requires internet.
- Background noise is distracting if not muted.



Remote Rules

- Identify each participant.
- Set an allotted amount of time and stick to it.
- Participants should identify themselves when speaking.
- Use mute when not speaking.
- Choose a specific topic.
- Group consumers with similar needs.
- Provide practical ways to use new skills.
- Give homework.
- Review.



Assessment

Safety questions:

- Can you dial 911?
- Tell me about your support system.
 - Groceries
 - Medication
- Have you recently fallen?
- Can I connect you with telephone support or activity groups?



Skills Assessment

- Can they hear you on the phone?
- Use standard assessment and look for any needs that can be addressed by phone.
 - Information and referral
 - Talking books
 - Labeling & organization
- Document your observations and what is unclear.



Provision of Aids and Devices

- Mail devices that the consumer has already showed ability to use
- Follow up with phone call and review instructions for use
- Ask:
 - Have you used the device? If so, how?
 - Have you encountered any problems?



Information and Referral

- When services are limited in some way, provide information and referral.
- Provide information about:
 - Eye conditions
 - What types of services are available
- Referral to:
 - Community programs
 - Hadley



Questions and Comments



Resources

- Hadley
- Telephone Support and Activity Groups



For more information, visit

- www.oib-tac.org
- www.blind.msstate.edu
- www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu



OIB TAC

Older Individuals who are Blind – Technical Assistance Center

OIB-TAC is developed by the National Research & Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) at Mississippi State University to provide training and technical assistance to designated state agencies and others serving older individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) under the Department of Education, grant no. H177Z150003 receives project support from the following:

