



CONDUCTING A PETS AS THERAPY VISIT [5]

APPROACHING & COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS & CLIENTS - SPECIAL CASES

Visual Impairment - Some definitions

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disability as *"a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."*

Partially-sighted indicates some type of visual problem which has resulted in a need for special education

Low vision generally refers to a severe visual impairment, not necessarily limited to distance vision. Low vision applies to all individuals with sight who are unable to read the newspaper at a normal viewing distance, even with the aid of glasses or contact lenses. They use a combination of vision and other senses to learn, although may require adaptations in lighting or the size of print, and, sometimes, Braille.

Legally blind indicates that a person has less than 20/200 vision in the better eye or a very limited field of vision (20 degrees at its widest point). Totally blind individuals learn through braille or other non-visual media

A Visually Impaired or Blind Person

- ❖ When you enter the room, speak to the person and **tell them who you are**
- ❖ Speak in a **normal voice** and **never shout**
- ❖ Do not grab them to attract their attention
- ❖ It is helpful to **describe your pet** during the visit: what he or she looks like, their personality traits and body expressions
- ❖ Be sure to **encourage the person to touch your pet**, as tactile stimulation is an extremely important means of gathering information for someone who is visually impaired
- ❖ **Always tell the person when you are leaving** and give them the opportunity to say goodbye to your pet
- ❖ If you can, have a look at the web site www.guidedogsfortheblind.org.uk for further guidance