Living with Glaucoma: Connecting People with Vision and Health Services

Presented by
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Lighthouse Guild is the leading not-for-profit healthcare organization dedicated to addressing and preventing vision loss through coordinated vision and health services. With Lighthouse Guild, people who are at risk for, or affected by, vision loss have access to all the resources necessary to lead full, independent and productive lives.
Lighthouse Guild

• Broad spectrum of Vision and Healthcare services
• Serving people of all ages
• Direct services: all 5 boroughs of NYC
• National training and support programs
Let’s Talk About Your Vision

• Normal changes as we get older
  - Difficulty reading
  - Difficulty readings signs
  - Need for more light
  - Problems with glare
• These and other changes may also indicate more serious problems, like glaucoma or diabetes-related eye damage
• Individuals can’t tell the difference – an eye doctor can!
Let’s Talk About Glaucoma

- Usually associated with chronic elevated eye pressure
- Damages the optic nerve
- Usually painless
- 90% of glaucoma-related blindness is preventable with early detection and treatment

No obvious symptoms in the early stages.
How Glaucoma Affects Visual Function

- Inability to see objects outside of field of central vision
- Diminishes side vision, affecting ability to get around safely
- Difficulty seeing in low light
- Decreased perception of contrast
What challenges do people with advanced glaucoma experience?

- Mobility issues: inability to see curbs, changes in surfaces and other obstacles; fear of accidents due to peripheral vision loss
- Poor night vision
- Difficulty reading
- Decreased response to magnification
- Inability to differentiate colors
- Reduced contrast
- Increased need for light
- Issues of compliance with taking multiple glaucoma drops
- Depression related to vision loss
What can be done to help people with glaucoma adapt to life with vision loss?

Low Vision Rehabilitation Services:

• Enable people to make best use of remaining vision
• Help people adjust to low vision or blindness
• Introduce skills, strategies and technology to maximize function
• Customized to meet individual needs; provided at home and in the community
What is Low Vision?

• Vision loss that cannot be corrected to “normal” with medication, surgery or with conventional eyeglasses or contact lenses
  - Low vision is a FUNCTIONAL LOSS
  - Even people who are legally blind can have low vision
• Low vision is usable vision, with potential for rehabilitation

Usually the first step in vision rehabilitation is a low vision examination.
The Low Vision Exam

Functional exams by specialists:

• Evaluate remaining vision, including contrast sensitivity
• Question how patient interprets facial features, street signs, print and other cues
• Assess overall visual function to help people make best use of remaining vision

Doctor may prescribe optical device(s)
Optical Low Vision Devices

- Spectacles
- Hand magnifiers
- Stand magnifiers
- Telescopic lenses
- Absorptive lenses (sunglasses)
- Electronic & Hi-tech devices
- Field-expanding devices
- Non-optical illumination
Non-Optical Vision Devices

- Large print and correct lighting
- Lap desk, luxo lamp
- Reading, typoscope
- Writing, black ink
- Talking books
- Insulin gauge
Technology Devices for People with Vision Loss

Tablets

Phones that Can Read to You

Smartphones
Low Vision Exam Outcomes

• Training in use of prescribed devices
• Patient/caregiver/family education about condition and impact on daily function
• Recommendation of strategies to prevent injuries and loss of independence
• Registration for New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), if appropriate
• Referral to other services, as needed
Low Vision Rehabilitation Services: Training Programs

Helping people regain function and maximize usable vision to remain safe, self-sufficient and active at any stage of life. Center based and in the community.

- Independent Living Skills Training
- Orientation & Mobility Instruction
Other Low Vision Rehabilitation Services

• Academic Skills: Preparing for higher education
• Adaptive Technology Center: Specialized training and computer modifications
• Career Services: Training and placement
Health Center Services

Lighthouse Guild provides a wide range of services and support you need to live fully and independently.

We are a Medicare and Medicaid provider, and accept most insurance plans.

- Primary care/internal medicine
- Behavioral health
- Diabetes education
- Endocrinology (diabetes specialist)
- Eye doctor (including vision rehabilitation)
- HIV/AIDS
- Nephrology
- Neurology (including treatment for migraines)
- Podiatry
- Physiatry (rehabilitation, wheelchair & brace specialist)
- Physical and occupational therapies
Diabetes Care for People with Vision Loss

- Diabetes self-management education, with special emphasis on those who are blind or at risk of vision loss
- Introduction of an instruction in use of adaptive medical equipment
- Support groups
Normal and expected responses to vision loss include:

- Anxiety and Fear
- Anger
- Sadness or Depression
- Helplessness
- Frustration
- Boredom
- Denial

Lighthouse Guild’s Behavioral Health Services provide expertise in caring for people with vision loss, traumatic brain injury, diabetes and other chronic medical conditions.
Behavioral Health Services:

We offer the following services:

• Individual, couple and family psychotherapy
• Psychiatric evaluation
• Psychopharmacology and medication management
• Group psychotherapy
• Crisis intervention 24/7
• Social services
Adult Day Programs

- **Guild Care: Adult Day Health Care**
  - Manhattan
  - Albany
  - Buffalo
  - Niagara Falls
Services for Children and Families

- Preschool Program
- Tele-Support for Parents and Teens
- Lighthouse Guild Parent Support Network
- Youth and Teen Programs
- Scholarships
Offered to nurses, social workers, case managers, medical students, optometrists and ophthalmology residents:

- Online continuing education
- Customized workshops and clinical training
When to Seek Services

- Problems with daily activities due to vision problems
- Significant visual field loss
- Difficulties with contrast or night vision
- Legal blindness

When to Seek Services

Come to Lighthouse Guild for help with your vision problems

Because of your vision, do you have difficulty (check as many as apply):

YES NO
☐ Reading the newspaper, even while wearing glasses
☐ Moving around the house (such as bumping into things)
☐ Cooking or using the stove
☐ Identifying money or paying bills
☐ Recognizing faces
☐ Are you feeling sad, depressed or anxious about vision loss?

If you have a vision problem that is interfering with your quality of life, let Lighthouse Guild help. Learn from Lighthouse Guild professionals how to be safe and self-sufficient in your daily life — at home and in the community.

YES NO
☐ Have you had a physical exam in the past year?

Please complete the form below and return it to a Lighthouse Guild representative.

Name ___________________________ Date of Birth: ___/___/___
Address _________________________ Apt # _________________________
City ___________________________ State ______ Zip ____________
Telephone # __________________________ E-mail _________________________
☐ Please call me to schedule a vision screening exam.
It is OK for someone from Lighthouse Guild to call me. I understand there is no obligation to enroll in Lighthouse Guild programs.

Signature __________________________ Date ______________

Lighthouse Guild
800-284-4422
lighthouseguild.org
Coverage for Services

• Lighthouse Guild is a Medicare and Medicaid provider, and accepts many insurance plans

• People who are legally blind may be eligible for sponsorship through the New York State Commission for the Blind
Thank you.