

ASSESSING CLIENT READINESS FOR GUIDE DOG MOBILITY: READINESS CATEGORIES & INDICATOR CHECKLIST

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CATEGORY: MOTIVATIONAL READINESS

1. Is the client motivated primarily by the goal of achieving independent mobility with a guide dog?
2. Is the client prepared for a major commitment in order to be successful?
3. Is the client prepared to play their role in the person – guide dog relationship to become a successful team?
4. Does the client understand that a guide dog requires a '24/7, 365 days a year' care?
5. Is the client prepared for the responsibility of caring for a guide dog over the long term?
6. Is the client positive about living with a guide dog when it is off-duty and forming a long-term relationship?

CATEGORY: PSYCHOLOGICAL, COGNITIVE & EMOTIONAL READINESS

7. Does the client have any cognitive challenges that will impose limitations on developing and maintaining the leadership role with a guide dog?
8. Will the client be able to comprehend and remember the skills and knowledge needed to be successful with a guide dog and apply them independently over the long term?
9. Will the client be able to process sensory input and make decisions quickly enough while multi-tasking?
10. Is the client emotionally stable so they can form a satisfactory long term working relationship with a guide dog and respond/attend to its physical and emotional needs?
11. Does the client have the necessary level of maturity to be successful with a guide dog over the long term? (Younger clients).

CATEGORY: PHYSICAL READINESS

12. Does the client have the necessary strength to manage an appropriately matched guide dog?
13. Does the client have the necessary motor skills, range of motion, reflexes, flexibility and coordination to work with a guide dog?
14. Does the client have the capacity to walk for approximately 20 minutes or a total of a mile a day at a speed conducive to guide dog travel without experiencing cardiovascular stress, shortness of breath, fatigue or undue muscle soreness? (A short rest break is acceptable).
15. Does the client have the ability to maintain balance while negotiating curbs and steps, traveling over varied surfaces, managing the guide's behavior and executing the body movements required when completing turns and following a guide dog?
16. Does the client have the ability to react quickly enough if the guide dog exhibits inappropriate behavior, makes directional changes, slows down/speeds up or ceases/commences movement?

CATEGORY: ENVIRONMENTAL READINESS

17. Does the client have an understanding of the principles and practice of orientation both indoors and outdoors extending to route planning and execution?
18. Has the client developed the kinesthetic, auditory and time-distance skills in addition to spatial representation and non-tactile travel abilities to be dynamically oriented while working with a guide dog?
19. Does the client have a minimum of three purposeful routes, (to destinations) to enable a guide dog to maintain a safe and satisfactory standard of guiding performance and satisfy its physical and emotional needs?
20. Does the client have the skills, knowledge and experience to complete intersection analysis and understand traffic patterns to complete safe, independent street crossings?
21. Is the client 'dynamically oriented' to the initial routes/destinations they intend to use immediately following their guide dog-client training program?

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CATEGORY: SENSORY READINESS

- 22. Is the client legally blind in both eyes and requires a primary mobility aid for safe, independent travel?
- 23. Can the client use hearing, residual vision or a combination of both to detect the locality and directional flow of traffic to enable safe street crossing decisions?
- 24. Can the client receive and interpret sufficient kinesthetic, proprioceptive and haptic input to follow, manage and support a guide dog as well as interpret its movements and behavior?

CATEGORY: ACCOMMODATION & DOG CARE READINESS

- 25. Can the client provide a guide dog with safe and hygienic accommodation at home and at work?
- 26. Are there other people or dogs/pets in the client's environment that could pose a safety risk to a guide dog either physically and/or emotionally?
- 27. Does the client plan to remain living at their current address for a minimum of six months following their guide dog-client training program?
- 28. Does the client have the financial means to support a guide dog?

CATEGORY: ADULT LEARNING READINESS

- 29. Does the client understand their learning style, strengths and challenges?
- 30. Can the client self-advocate and communicate information to instructional staff to facilitate their learning?
- 31. Does the client have experience with their preferred learning media and can use it with minimal assistance to access supporting educational materials?
- 32. Can the client function independently away from home in a new environment with a minimum of assistance, e.g. ADL's & medical needs?
- 33. Can the client follow a timetable, be on time to lessons/appointments and implement instructions?
- 34. Will the client be successful in a group setting?

CATEGORY: SOCIAL READINESS RELATED TO GUIDE DOG MOBILITY

- 35. Has the client discussed their guide dog mobility goal with their support and social network?
- 36. Is the client prepared and capable of communicating with and directing others in order to foster appropriate interactions with a guide dog and to maintain an environment that preserves its training, health and positive behavior?
- 37. Has the client addressed and resolved any issues indicating concern, confusion or a lack of support for a guide dog within their social network which may impose challenges and limitations?
- 38. Is the client aware and have they considered the increase in public attention, admiration and scrutiny that will result from being accompanied by a guide dog and are they overall positive about this prospect?

CATEGORY:

DOG KNOWLEDGE READINESS

- 39. Does the client understand the roles of the guide dog user and the guide dog within a mobility context?
- 40. Does the client understand that guide dogs are indeed dogs and their behaviors are influenced by their environment, instincts and senses as well as formal training?
- 41. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require occasional management to deal with distracted behavior and to redirect its attention back on guide work?
- 42. Does the client understand that dogs are social animals and respond favorably to human leadership?
- 43. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require regular energy expenditure opportunities both in and out of guide work?
- 44. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require regular feeding and watering?
- 45. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require regular leash-relieving opportunities in all types of weather conditions?
- 46. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require regular grooming and shed hair?
- 47. Does the client understand that a guide dog will require routine veterinary care and sometimes unplanned vet care being unable to work until it recovers?
- 48. Does the client understand that a guide dog has a finite working life and the process of retirement and subsequent retraining can be emotionally difficult?