



Through my eyes... Catherine Riley



8 FUNDAMENTALS OF WORKING WITH A VISUALLY IMPAIRED MUM IN MIDWIFERY BY CATH RILEY, FOUNDER

1. VISIBILITY

Just because you can't see the disability doesn't mean it's not real, never assume.

2. PRIDE

Some people lack confidence and can be embarrassed by their disability. Encourage your mum that they should be proud of who you are and what you represent.

3. SUPPORT

Asking for help is tough. I've spent my whole life determined to be independent but being a mum has meant that I can't always do this and asking for help is ok and sometimes necessary.

4. UNDERSTANDING

Understanding is key. You'd always ask someone's name and what they'd like to be called. So, when you learn that a mum has additional needs ask the question 'how can I best support you', 'what do you need'.

5. TIME

Give mum more time. I can do most things the same as everybody else but sometimes I just do it differently. and this can take longer so make sure they don't feel rushed.

6. GADGETS

Every day's a school day. As a new parent, every day is a challenge, learning as you go. Having a disability adds more difficulty so encourage your mum to test out the latest gadgets to help - there's so much out there.

7. COMMUNITY

Getting out and about with the children is hard and often causes stress and anxiety. I'm so lucky to have a brilliant network of family and friends. Be sure to recommend not only local mum groups but also local VI groups.

8. NETWORKS

You don't know what you don't know so advise your mums on available support networks and groups to leverage expert advice and guidance.

9. SUPPORT GROUPS

Blind Parents UK - have breastfeeding support groups, closed parent groups as well as Whatsapp groups.

RNIB Connect - are all regional, so for me it is RNIB Connect Northwest.

Partially Sighted Society - an online resource sharing hints and tips.

Through My Eyes - my online support group on Facebook or Instagram.

Blind Parents Connect - an online social media forum to parents to share issues.

Blind/Partially Sighted People

Association - offers great information and provides daily information feeds.