



7 Stages of Vision Loss

As we continue our mission to empower individuals facing blindness and vision impairment (BVI), it's essential we recognize the emotional landscape that often accompanies vision loss. Whether sudden or gradual, losing vision can be deeply disorienting, and each person's path is unique.

To help us better support our clients—and to strengthen our peer support programs—I wanted to share the **7 Stages of Vision Loss**, adapted from traditional grief models but specifically shaped by our work and insight from those with lived experience:

1. Shock and Disbelief

"This can't be happening to me."

The initial reaction may be one of emotional numbness or detachment. Clients may seem distant or overwhelmed as they try to absorb what's happening.

2. Denial

"It's not that bad."

Many try to carry on as usual, minimizing the change. This is a natural, protective response, but one that can delay needed adjustments or services.

3. Anger and Frustration

"Why me?"

Emotions may flare as clients wrestle with the loss of control or the unfairness of their situation. Our empathy and calm presence matter most here.

4. Bargaining

"Maybe if I just... things will go back to normal."

People often search for ways to regain a sense of control. This is a time to gently reinforce that while vision loss is real, life with vision loss can still be rich and fulfilling.

5. Depression and Withdrawal

"What's the point?"

Feelings of isolation, grief, and hopelessness can surface. This is where our peer support groups and compassionate outreach become lifelines.

6. Acceptance and Adjustment

"I can live with this."

This stage marks a turning point. With the right tools, skills, and support, many begin to reclaim independence and redefine what's possible.

7. Meaning and Integration

“I’ve grown through this. I want to help others.”

Vision loss becomes a part of someone’s story—not the end of it. Many go on to inspire others and lead with purpose, just as many of our peer mentors do every day.

As we guide and walk alongside those we serve, let’s remember that these stages don’t always follow a straight line. People may revisit stages or move forward and back. What matters is that **we create space for their journey**, offering tools, encouragement, and unwavering respect along the way.