

## *February is Low Vision Awareness Month*

### *Practical Distance Learning for Visually Impaired Soars During Pandemic*

According to the National Eye Institute, approximately 12 million Americans have vision impairment that can't be corrected by lenses or medication. The vast majority are older adults, who have faced disproportionate vulnerabilities during the pandemic. Newly released data confirms that clinical depression among visually impaired is nearly three times the level than the general population.

Hadley, the leader offering practical help at a distance for visually impaired for over [100 years](#), continues to experience a surge of low vision and blind users from across the country. They're turning to the new [Hadley.edu](http://Hadley.edu) to help navigate life during the pandemic.

Hadley's practical help is offered through free audio and video-based, professionally staffed tutorials, which was built on many months of research and development based on the needs, wants and desires of visually impaired adults.

Among the most popular Hadley class offerings since the onset of COVID-19 has been technology-based workshops, including new learning modules for those with vision loss on [how to use Zoom](#), as well as how to access special [low vision features](#) on their cell phones, smart devices, and computers.

While many businesses and public spaces have introduced new layouts or restrictions to try and limit the spread of the virus, these adjustments actually make places harder for visually impaired people to navigate, meaning they may go out less.

"Vision loss is an isolating condition to begin with, stated Julie Tye, President and CEO of Hadley. "The pandemic has made it even worse. People can't get to their senior center or to their vision rehab agency or a vision professional," Tye continued. "It is difficult to maintain social distance in public when you can't see six-feet in front of you."

To keep users engaged, connected and informed during the pandemic, Hadley has just released the [latest episode](#) of *Hadley Presents: A Conversation with the Experts*, an audio podcast, featuring Dr. Tim Murray of the American Society of Retina Specialists, answering common questions about eye diseases such as macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy.

### **About Hadley**

The mission of Hadley is to create personalized learning opportunities that empower those with vision loss to thrive --- at home, at work and in their communities. A 501(c)(3) non-profit, Hadley relies on contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations to fund its programs.