Understanding Vision Loss and Aging

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1

Housekeeping

- Recording
- Renaming Yourself
- Transcription Service
- PowerPoint
- Put Questions in the Chat
- ppotten@uark.edu

2

Arkansas Roadmap Initiative

The Roadmap Initiative is designed to improve our states' knowledge and ability to work together to respond to and serve older victims of abuse and financial exploitation.

An infrastructure is developing to support collaboration among victim service providers, programs that serve older Arkansans, and other allied professionals to better meet victims' needs.

3

Why are we talking about Vision Loss and the Roadmap Initiative?

The first priority is to be able to do your job. To remain trauma informed.

You or your agency may have a key role in connecting older individuals with vision loss with the information, support and services they need.

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Today's Presenters:

Paula Pottenger, M.Ed. Partners for Inclusive Communities, University of Arkansas

Melanie Thornton, MA, CPACC, Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach, Partners for Inclusive Communities, University of Arkansas

Kyle Ryan Kiper, M.A., CRC, Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

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Numbers – Vision Loss and Aging

Source: 2011 Centers for Disease Control National Health Interview Survey

Age 65 to 74: 12.2%
Age 75 & Over: 15.2%
9.2 million American adults 65 years and older report experiencing significant vision loss.

This does not include those living in nursing homes, or other institutional living situation.

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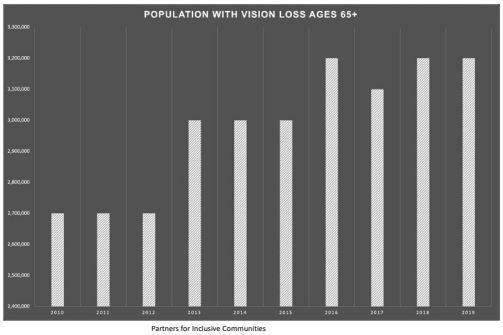

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Understanding Terminology

Legal blindness is a level of vision loss that has been legally defined to determine eligibility for benefits.

Medically diagnosed central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the best possible correction, and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less.

Often, people who are diagnosed with legal blindness still have some usable vision.

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Low Vision

"a person who has measurable vision but has difficulty accomplishing or cannot accomplish visual tasks even with prescribed corrective lenses.

But who can enhance his or her ability to accomplish these tasks with the use of compensatory visual strategies, low vision devices, and environmental modifications" (Corn & Lusk, 2010, p. 4-5).

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Other Terms You May Have Heard - 1

Total/Complete Blindness: Not used to determine government benefits. Describes vision where the individual cannot see any light or form. Of the people with eye disorders, only about 15% can see nothing at all.

Light Perception: Can see light but not much else.

Sighted Guide: walking with, and guiding, a person who is visually impaired, safely and efficiently.

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Other Terms You May Have Heard - 2

Orientation and Mobility: Profession specific to blindness and low vision that teaches safe, efficient, and effective travel skills

White Cane: Allows its user to scan their surroundings for obstacles or orientation marks. Also helpful for onlookers in identifying the user as blind or visually impaired and taking appropriate care. (White Cane Laws)

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What happens to everyone's vision as we age?

Need more light.

Difficulty reading and doing close work.

Problems with glare.

Changes in color perception.

Reduced tear production.

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Causes of Blindness

(We will not be covering them all!)

The four most common causes of Blindness in the aging population:

- Age Related Macular Degeneration
- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Diabetic Retinopathy

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14

Age Related Macular Degeneration

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss among older people.

It is a condition that affects the center portion of the eye.

Central vision and seeing detail is impacted.

A substance called “drusen” collects in the macula – a small area at the center of the retina. The drusen prevents oxygen from reaching your eye.

There is both “dry” and “wet” macular degeneration. Wet advances more quickly.

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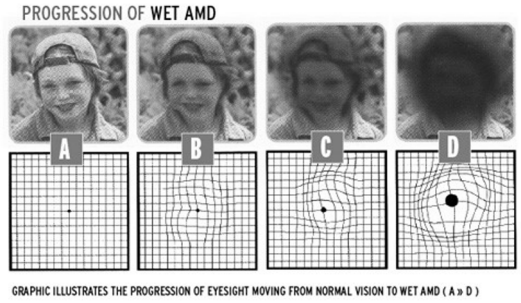

16

Glaucoma

Glaucoma damages vision because of high pressure from the fluid inside the eye. When the aqueous humor (fluid) does not drain properly, increased pressure can damage the optic nerve.

Glaucoma can have no symptoms until the damage is done and is irreversible.

Regular screenings are important.

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17

18

Cataract

A cataract is a cloudy area that forms in the lens of the eye.

Cataracts cause an overall blurring and haziness of vision.

Everything may look out of focus.

May be very sensitive to bright light and glare.

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20

21

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetes can damage the tiny blood vessels in the retina. It is related to poorly controlled blood sugar levels.

This condition results in overall blurred vision and blind spots from bleeding in the eye that damages the retina.

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23

Challenges to Independent Living:

REGARDLESS OF THE DEGREE AND TYPE OF BLINDNESS, LETS LOOK AT SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT ARISE FOR A PERSON WITH VISION LOSS DUE TO AGING:

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Reading

- Bank statements
- Terms and Conditions
- Privacy Agreements
- Medication Directions
- Reading for Pleasure
- Reading for Learning

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Access to Information

Online information
Maps
Name on a nametag
Who is in the room. Do I know them?
Who is at the door?
Where is the electrical outlet?
Other

26

Transportation

Driving
Bus routes
Other public transportation
How do I get rides?
Can I afford to take a cab everywhere?

27

Orientation and Mobility

Navigating streets
Navigating buildings and rooms
Where thing are located (example – check in desk)
Safety in the home – Not seeing obstacles

28

Household

Cooking
Cleaning
Organizing
Finding Things

29

Recreation

Watching TV
Reading for Pleasure
Shopping
Attending Sporting Events
Games
Other.

30

Discussion Question:

In the work you do, how might those challenges impact an individual who is experiencing abuse or financial exploitation?

(Please put your comments in the chat)

31

Independent Living Strategies

Environmental modifications
Low vision devices
Other assistive technology – (such as screen readers)
Compensatory visual strategies

32

Video – Environmental Modifications

Vision Aware – Fabulous Website – American Foundation of the Blind

https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/home-modification/home-adaptations-video/

33

Low Vision Device Categories -1

Too Many to List All!

Clocks and Watches
Low Vision Electronics
Electronic Magnifiers
Magnifiers
Sunglasses & Filters
Low Vision Lighting
Daily Living Products
Books and Reading Aids
Games and Crafts

34

Low Vision Device Categories-2

Too Many to List All!

- Educational Products
- Healthcare Products
- Telephones
- Braille Products
- Orientation and Mobility
- Assistive Technology
- Talking Products
- Products for Deaf-Blind
- Clearance

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Simple Hand-Held Magnifier

36

Tactile Timer – White on Black

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Electronic Magnifier

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Vision Buddy Television Viewer

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Sources of Support – 1

(Not inclusive list!)

- In Arkansas: Division of Services for the Blind - Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program.
- Service Organizations: Example: American Printing House for the Blind.
- Vision Aware Website and Others–Excellent.
- Product Vendors: LS&S Catalog is one.

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Sources of Support - 2
(Not inclusive list!)

- Those with good insurance may find help from ophthalmology professionals.
- Consumer and Service Organizations – Kyle will provide us more information about those.

41

Division of Services for the Blind

DR. MEGAN LAMB, FIELD SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR

Arkansas Department of Commerce
Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

42

Eligibility Requirements for DSB Programs -1

Require a visual disability to receive services

Programs do not have any income requirement

Total Blindness

Any permanent visual condition resulting in total loss of vision

43

Older Individuals Who Are Blind

Empowers individuals to maximize their independence in the home and community

At least 55 years of age, no upper limit on age may be set

Vision loss must constitute a barrier to independent living

Expectation that services will enable them to function more independently

Individuals in residential care facilities are eligible to receive all services if other criteria are met

46

Older Blind Services -1

Vision Assessments for Eligibility
Low Vision Assessments
Surgical or Therapeutic Treatments
- Prevent, correct, or modify disabling eye conditions

Assistive Technology
- Devices, Evaluations, and Training

Orientation and Mobility Services

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Older Blind Services - 2

Reader Services
Interpreter Services
Personal Attendant Services
Communication Skills
Daily Living Skills
Transportation
- To enable a consumer to participate in services

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Older Blind Services - 3

Advocacy Training and Support
Counseling
  Peer, Individual, and Group
Information, Referral, and Community Integration Services
Community Awareness Activities

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Independent Living Items

Individuals with visual impairments who need assistance

DSB keeps stock items on hand to distribute

Consumers who need training, multiple items, or are eligible for other programs will be referred to the appropriate program

Can provide magnifiers, kitchen items, signature guides, talking watches/clocks, talking health care items

No age limit or employment requirement

50

Division of Services for the Blind Contact Information

Megan Lamb
Megan.Lamb@arkansas.gov
To make a referral for any DSB programs contact us at:
501-682-5463 or 1-800-960-9270
https://arcareereducation.org/services/division-of-services-for-the-blind

51

Questions from Registration

Vision loss and people with developmental disabilities.

Help us understanding the impact of combined hearing and vision loss.

Lasik Surgery.

52

LASIK Surgery: Considerations Over 60

Higher risk over 60.

Not recommended if you have cataracts.

Probably not recommended if you have dry eye syndrome.

Not recommended if you have glaucoma.

LASIK thins the cornea, which can make it more difficult to diagnose early glaucoma

53

LASIK Surgery: Considerations Over 60-2

General health

Eye injuries

Vision stability. Your prescription should be stable for at least one year before surgery.

54

Busting the Misconceptions

"Everything that is printed or is online is automatically accessible to people who are blind or low vision."

"There's no need to worry about digital or document accessibility unless I get a specific request from a person who has vision loss."

Introducing: Melanie Thornton

55

Digital Accessibility

- Screen reader and Text to Speech Software
- Accessible Documents and Websites

56

Video and Movie Accessibility

- Captioning
- Audio Description

AD

CC

57

Kyle Kiper

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58

Resources:

https://visionaware.org/ - An AFB website

https://visionaware.org/everyday-living/essential-skills/an-introduction-to-orientation-and-mobility-skills/sighted-guide-video/ - Sighted guide techniques.

https://ar-ican.org/ - Assistive Technology Resource

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59