



VISUAL IMPAIRMENT: TYPES, CAUSES, COPING STRATEGY AND LEGAL RIGHT

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DEFINITION OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Visual impairment refers to a significant reduction or loss of vision that cannot be corrected by glasses, contact lenses, medication, or surgery. It can range from mild to severe, and can affect one or both eyes. Visual impairment can also be referred to as low vision, legal blindness, or total blindness, depending on the extent and severity of the vision loss. It can have a significant impact on a person's ability to perform daily tasks, navigate the environment, and engage in social and educational activities.

TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Types of Visual Impairment are following

1. Low vision.
2. Blindness.
3. Total blindness.

TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT EXPLAINING FURTHER

There are different types of visual impairment, which are classified based on the degree and nature of the vision loss. The main types of visual impairment include:

- 1.Low Vision:** This refers to a partial loss of vision that cannot be fully corrected with glasses or contact lenses. People with low vision may have difficulty seeing details, distinguishing colors, and navigating in low-light conditions.
- 2.Blindness:** This refers to a complete loss of vision in one or both eyes. People with blindness may not be able to see anything or may only be able to perceive light or darkness.

TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT EXPLAINING FURTHER

3. Total Blindness: This refers to a complete absence of vision in both eyes. People with total blindness have no perception of light or darkness and rely on other senses to navigate and communicate with their environment.

4. Deaf-Blindness: This refers to a combined loss of vision and hearing, which can significantly impact a person's ability to communicate, interact with others, and access information.

Other types of visual impairments can be caused by a range of conditions or factors, such as color blindness, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, retinitis pigmentosa, and age-related macular degeneration.

CAUSES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

There are various causes of visual impairment, including the following:

- 1.Refractive Errors:** This is the most common cause of visual impairment and includes conditions such as nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia), and astigmatism. These conditions occur when the shape of the eye prevents light from focusing on the retina, causing blurred vision.
- 2.Cataracts:** A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. It is often associated with aging but can also be caused by other factors such as genetics, injury, or certain medications.
- 3.Glaucoma:** This is a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, which can lead to vision loss and blindness. It is often associated with high eye pressure but can also occur with normal eye pressure.

CAUSES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

4. **Diabetic Retinopathy:** This is a complication of diabetes that affects the blood vessels in the retina. It can cause vision loss and blindness if left untreated
5. **Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD):** This is a condition that affects the macula, the central part of the retina that is responsible for sharp, central vision. AMD can cause blurred or distorted vision, and in some cases, complete loss of central vision.
6. **Infections or Injuries to the Eye:** These can damage the structures of the eye and cause visual impairment.
7. **Inherited or Genetic Conditions:** Some visual impairments are caused by genetic conditions, such as retinitis pigmentosa, which can cause vision loss over time.

EFFECTS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Visual impairment can have various effects on a person's physical, psychological, and social well-being. The effects may vary depending on the degree and type of visual impairment. Here are some of the common effects of visual impairment:

- 1. Physical Effects:** Visual impairment can affect a person's ability to perform daily activities, such as reading, writing, driving, and mobility. It can also cause eye strain, headaches, and fatigue due to the effort required to see clearly.
- 2. Psychological Effects:** Visual impairment can affect a person's self-esteem, mood, and emotional well-being. It can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration, anxiety, and depression. It may also affect a person's ability to socialize, engage in hobbies or activities they enjoy, and maintain a positive outlook on life.

EYE DISEASE

There are many different types of eye diseases that can affect the eyes and vision, ranging from mild and common conditions to more serious and rare diseases. Some common eye diseases include:

- 1.Cataracts:** A clouding of the eye's natural lens that can cause blurry or cloudy vision.
- 2.Glaucoma:** A group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve and can lead to vision loss or blindness.
- 3.Macular Degeneration:** A disease that affects the macula, the part of the eye responsible for central vision, and can cause loss of vision in the center of the visual field.
- 4.Diabetic Retinopathy:** A complication of diabetes that can damage the blood vessels in the retina and cause vision loss.

EYE DISEASE

5. **Conjunctivitis:** An inflammation of the conjunctiva, the clear tissue that lines the inside of the eyelid and covers the white part of the eye, also known as "pink eye."
6. **Dry eye Syndrome:** A condition in which the eyes do not produce enough tears or produce poor-quality tears, which can cause discomfort, redness, and blurred vision.
7. **Retinal Detachment:** A medical emergency in which the retina separates from the underlying tissue, which can cause sudden vision loss.
8. **Strabismus:** A condition in which the eyes do not align properly, causing double vision or a lazy eye.

EFFECTS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

3. **Social Effects:** Visual impairment can impact a person's social life and relationships. It can make it difficult to communicate with others, read facial expressions or body language, and participate in social activities. It can also lead to social isolation and exclusion from the community.

4. **Educational and Occupational Effects:** Visual impairment can have significant impacts on a person's education and career prospects. It may make it difficult to read or learn, participate in academic or professional activities, or work in certain occupations.

5. **Safety Concerns:** Visual impairment can also pose safety risks, such as falls, accidents, and difficulty navigating the environment.

COPING STRATEGIES FOR VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Individuals with visual impairment can employ various coping strategies to manage the effects of their condition and maintain their independence and well-being. Here are some examples of coping strategies:

- 1.Assistive Technology:** Using assistive devices such as magnifiers, screen readers, and speech recognition software can help individuals with visual impairment read, write, and communicate more easily.
- 2.Orientation and Mobility Training:** Learning how to navigate the environment safely and efficiently using a white cane or a guide dog can help individuals with visual impairment maintain their independence and mobility.
- 3.Braille Literacy:** Learning Braille, a tactile writing system, can help individuals with visual impairment read and write independently.

COPING STRATEGIES FOR VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- 1.Social Support:** Building a strong network of family, friends, and support groups can provide emotional support and practical assistance.
- 2.Accessible Design:** Ensuring that the environment is accessible and easy to navigate can make it easier for individuals with visual impairment to move around and complete tasks.
- 3.Self-care:** Engaging in activities that promote physical and emotional well-being, such as exercise, meditation, or hobbies, can help individuals with visual impairment manage stress and improve their overall quality of life.
- 4.Advocacy:** Advocating for one's rights and needs can help individuals with visual impairment access the resources and accommodations they need to live independently and fully participate in society.

LEGAL RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

People with visual impairment have certain legal rights that protect them from discrimination and ensure that they have access to the resources and accommodations they need to live independently and participate fully in society. Here are some examples of legal rights for people with visual impairment:

- 1.Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The ADA is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments, in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications.
- 2.Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** This law prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities that receive federal funding, including schools, colleges, and universities.
- 3.Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** This law ensures that children with disabilities, including visual impairments, receive a free and appropriate public education that meets their unique needs.

LEGAL RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

4. **Fair Housing Act (FHA):** The FHA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.
5. **Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA):** This law ensures that individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments, have equal access to air travel and accommodations.
6. **Voting Rights Act:** This law protects the right to vote for individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments, and requires that polling places be accessible.
7. **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA):** This law provides employment and training services to individuals with disabilities, including visual impairments, to help them gain skills and find employment.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Communicating with people with visual impairments can be challenging, but there are several tips that can make communication more effective and comfortable for both parties. Here are some tips for communicating with people with visual impairments:

- 1.Introduce Yourself:** When meeting someone with a visual impairment, introduce yourself and speak clearly. This helps them know who is speaking and makes it easier for them to follow the conversation.
- 2.Speak Naturally:** Speak in a normal tone and speed. Do not shout or speak slowly, as this can be condescending and make it harder to understand.
- 3.Be Descriptive:** Use descriptive language to provide context and help the person with a visual impairment understand what is happening. For example, instead of saying "over there," say "to your left, near the door."
- 4.Offer Assistance:** If someone with a visual impairment appears to be having difficulty finding their way or completing a task, offer to help. Ask how you can assist and wait for them to accept before providing assistance.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- 5. Avoid Assumptions:** Do not assume that someone with a visual impairment has other disabilities or is less capable. Treat them with the same respect and dignity as anyone else.
- 6. Allow time to Respond:** People with visual impairments may take longer to process information or respond to questions. Be patient and allow them the time they need to respond.
- 7. Avoid Physical Obstacles:** Keep physical obstacles out of the way, such as chairs or other items that could cause tripping or stumbling.
- 8. Avoid Gestures:** Avoid using gestures or pointing as a way of communicating. This can be confusing for someone with a visual impairment who cannot see the gesture or pointing direction.
- 9. Ask for Permission:** If you need to guide or assist someone with a visual impairment, ask for permission first. Do not touch or guide them without their permission.

THANK YOU

