

Basics of Blindness and Low Vision – Understanding a Low Incidence Disability

Suggested Activities for Students

Explore Advocacy Groups in Your Area:

American Council of the Blind [Home | American Council of the Blind \(acb.org\)](#)

National Federation of the Blind [Homepage | National Federation of the Blind \(nfb.org\)](#)

What are the missions of these two organizations?

Contact one of the organizations and ask if a member would be willing to do an informational interview with you in order to enhance your understanding of blindness.

Find Your State’s Talking Books Library: [NLS at the Library of Congress](#)

If possible, request a visit and learn how the Talking Books program works.

Locate Your State’s Vocational Rehabilitation Services: [State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies](#)

Does your state have a combined agency or a separate agency that serves individuals who are blind or have low vision?

What is the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)?

Research the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) and contact a Teacher for the Visually Impaired (TVI) in your local area and ask to learn more about the ECC.

Contact the Office of Disability Services at your University:

Find out how a student who is blind or has low vision would receive support and accommodations. What is the process? Does the student have to apply? Is self-report sufficient or is other documentation of disability required?

Review the Accessibility Resources offered by the NRTC: [Accessibility Resources | NRTC](#)

View these videos to learn more:

Braille - [The Story of Reading Braille](#)

Mobility - [Sighted/Human Guide Technique](#)

Independent Living Skills Training - [Independent Living Skills](#)

In Class Activities – Case Study Discussion

Instructions: Break into groups of 3 or 4. The instructor will assign a case study, if needed, the same case study can be used by more than one group. As a group answer/address the following:

- Summarize the possible adjustment issues the individual may be having related to their eye condition.
- What possible functional limitations may they be experiencing with activities of daily living and employment (if applicable)?
- What other factors other than the vision loss may be barriers to independence and/or employment? Are there factors related to culture or intersectionality?
- What professionals or service providers would be helpful in supporting adjustment and independence?
- If you were a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor/counselor what are some goals or objectives, you might work with the individual to develop that would support adjustment to disability?

Choose a speaker for your group and summarize your discussion for the class.

Case Study 1:

Juan Garcia is 39 years old, unemployed, and lives in a small home where he and his wife have lived for the last 15 years. He was a self-employed welder and has a small and very cluttered shop behind his home. He was successfully self-employed for 12 years. Over the last 3 years he has lost almost all of his vision due to glaucoma. He is incredibly angry and has started to drink heavily. His wife and family are afraid for him to do much independently and he has fallen a few times. His wife tries to mollify him, but recently called Vocational Rehabilitation/Blind Services. Juan was angry when he found out, but agreed to meet with them although he thinks it will be a waste of everyone's time.

Case Study 2:

Millie Smith is 46 years old, lives alone, and works as a rural postal worker. She is ignoring her Type 2 diabetes and increasing problems with her vision. She is resistant to keeping track of her food intake. She grabs fast food on the run often and says it's too hard to "track carbs." She has always struggled with being overweight. Her employer requires annual driving tests and eye exams, and she is becoming concerned that she will not pass the eye exam. She is unsure who to contact for help.

Case Study 3:

Lyndsey Brown is a 37-year-old lawyer. She was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa at age 19 in her first year in college. She was able to successfully earn her Bachelor and JD even as her vision loss progressed. She comes from a long line of lawyers in her family, but she is the first one that is female. Two years ago, she had a daughter of her own. Her vision has severely decreased. She has some training in assistive technology and some devices but has been reluctant to use it in professional settings. Her mother is encouraging her to quit her job and focus on her child. Her mother never worked and has been available to help Lyndsey with her daughter and around the house. Lyndsey's husband works as a teacher and has said he would support whatever decision she makes. Lyndsey is depressed and angry. She worked hard to become a lawyer, now, she is supposed to give it up. She had a case with Blind Services in college and is curious if there might be something they could help her with now.

Case Study 4:

Eric Johnson is 17 years old and has albinism and a visual acuity of 20/200. He has long straight white hair, pale skin, and is severely sensitive to light and glare. His parents recently began suspecting drug use. He has become increasingly rude and disrespectful toward his parents. His parents have always tried to treat him the same way they treat his siblings and do not understand this rebellion and attitude. Eric has been subject to considerable bullying and teasing while growing up and he hates that he looks so different. He wants his driver's license and refuses to participate in Orientation and Mobility training and refuses to learn how to use public transportation. He has an IEP meeting next month and the school has suggested a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor attend. Eric can't believe everyone wants to talk about his "future career" when they won't even let him drive.

Case Study 5:

Jean Davis is 28 years old and has glaucoma. She currently works as an administrative assistant for a daycare. She refuses to comply with her eye drops as they burn her eyes and cause a lot of irritation. Jean prays multiple times each day and believes God will heal her and restore her vision. She told her last Vocational Rehabilitation counselor that she has faith God is going to heal her and that turning to the medication would be a

lack of faith and that would make God not answer her prayers. Jean lives with her mother and father and her father is the pastor of her church. Jean has been hiding her decreasing vision from her employer.