

A pair of glasses with a hand adjusting them, overlaid with a grid of letters. The letters are arranged in a grid pattern, with some letters appearing larger and more prominent than others. The background is a light, neutral color.

# CLIENT & FAMILY EDUCATION ON LOW VISION

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BY: MELONY ARABBO

# WHAT IS LOW VISION?

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- Low-Vision occurs when there is damage to structures of the eye or the pathway from the retina to the visual cortex
- Low-Vision can be a result of a chronic condition such as diabetic retinopathy or macular degeneration
- Acute conditions might be due to a sudden stroke

# WHY IS LOW-VISION A PROBLEM?

- Low-Vision can jeopardize the safety of ones' well being; they could be more susceptible to falls and be of danger to others and themselves when driving.
- One of the main components of activities of daily living (ADLs) is vision. If our vision is being compromised or is low, we are not able to be completely independent.

# IMPORTANCE OF CLIENT & FAMILY EDUCATION

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Clients with low-vision may have questions and concerns about their eye condition, whether they can drive, read, care for children, travel or work.

As occupational therapists, we should be prepared to answer any questions related to low-vision that our patient may have about the process or the severity of their prognosis.



# CONDITIONS THAT CAN CAUSE LOW- VISION IMPAIRMENTS

- **THE FOUR MOST COMMON CONDITIONS THAT CAUSE LOW-VISION ARE:**
  1. MACULAR DEGENERATION
  2. DIABETIC RETINOPATHY
  3. GLAUCOMA
  4. CATARACTS

# TREATMENT APPROACHES

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- Educate the client and family on the nature of their eye disease and expectations of vision rehabilitation.
- Therapeutic activities: scanning, eccentric viewing, and reading skills
- Environmental Modifications: lighting contrast and glare
- Non-optical assistive devices: visual, tactile, and auditory
- Optical magnification
- Resources and handouts

# TIPS FOR MAKING PRINT READABLE

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- Use larger print
- Avoid decorative fonts as well as use bold type because the thickness helps make the letters legible
- Make sure the color is legible: dark blue and green are most preferred
- Avoid glossy pages because it causes a glare
- **Contrast is important:** make sure that if the background is light, then the lettering should be dark & vice versa
- **Tracking between the letters:** allow a good amount of space between the letters
- **Margins:** an extra-wide binding margin makes it easier for the patient to use a magnifier on the paper

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## HOW CAN THE INTERVENTIONS IMPROVE OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT?



The interventions I listed can improve occupational engagement by allowing the patient to be able to read and write with their low vision



As shown in the video, she lost vision in her central field but was able to continue reading and writing with a magnifier



I provided multiple tips and strategies to allow a patient with low-vision to be able to participate in various activities



# OTHER PROFESSIONS



- **Patients who are experiencing low-vision can see an ophthalmologist or optometrist**
- **An ophthalmologist is a medical or osteopathic doctor who specializes in eye or vision care and perform eye surgery. They are also able to prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses to correct vision problems.**
- **An optometrist can test and correct the diagnosis of the patient, the treatment, and management of vision changes. They are not a medical doctor. They usually perform eye exams and vision tests.**

# VIDEOS

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goBsqLDrF6g>
- This is a video of a patient who has macular degeneration and uses a magnifier to assist with reading and writing
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VAUHoj73GQ&list=PLNoI8zIT\\_PIDRPjRCdpOEdzSDeoT4ITG&index=11&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VAUHoj73GQ&list=PLNoI8zIT_PIDRPjRCdpOEdzSDeoT4ITG&index=11&t=0s)
- This is a video on how family members can be helpful to someone with low-vision
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWmaZZDgPX0>
- This is a video on how people with low vision can maintain their independence

# RESOURCES

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American macular degeneration  
foundation website:  
<https://www.macular.org/>

National Eye Institute website:  
[https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-  
about-eye-health/resources-for-  
health-educators](https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/resources-for-health-educators)

Space camp for interested  
visually impaired students:  
<http://www.scivis.org/index.htm>

# REFERENCES

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- Occupational therapy with aging adults: promoting quality of life through collaborative practice by Barney, K., & Perkinson, M. Chapter 10: Occupational Therapy Interventions for Older Adults with Low vision
- <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/what-is-ophthalmologist>
- Access to Participation Occupational Therapy and Low Vision by Melanie T. EUexson, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA