

I See a Library!

Making Libraries More Accessible to
the Visually Impaired

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Test Your Knowledge!

Are these true or false?

- Being visually impaired means you can't see anything.
- Only old people have vision loss.
- It is important to speak loudly to people with vision loss so they get the message.
- People with a visual impairment can't read print materials or access information.
- It is inevitable that we will lose our eyesight when we get older and nothing can be done about it.
- People with vision loss have better hearing than the rest of the population.
- It is difficult and expensive to make things more accessible.

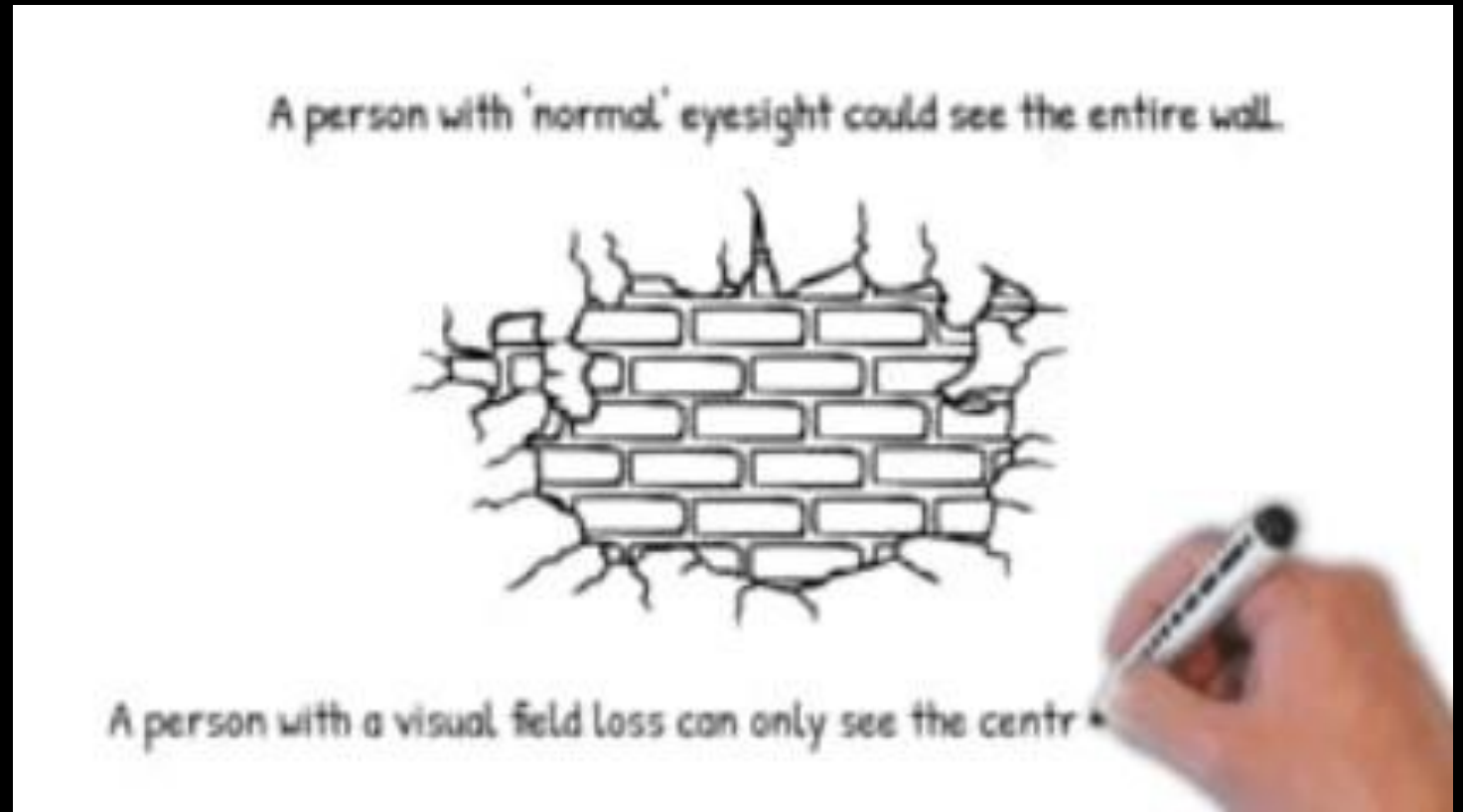
Why Does It Matter?

- Increase access to information
- Reduce social isolation
- Provide a sense of belonging
- Vision impairment is common and increasing as our population ages
 - 2.4 million Americans 40+ are visually impaired (per the NEI)
- It's the law
 - Visit [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov) for more info



What Is Visual Impairment?

Let's learn more about what exactly it means to be visually impaired



Types of Vision Loss



What Can I Do?



Contrast

- When creating materials including handouts, newsletters, posters, and flyers, having good contrast is important.
- Contrast is important to creating an accessible environment to provide for independent functioning
- Let's see just how important it is!

This slide is an example
of good contrast.

This slide is also an example
of good contrast.

This slide shows good
contrast.

Merry Christmas!

Why else might this slide be problematic?

Contrast in Action

Let's take a look at common library signage.

- What's good about this particular sign?
- What could be better?



Contrast in Action

- Can you find the library sign?
- How might a patron know this is a library anyway?
- Bonus question: What other issue might be indicated here?



Contrast In Action: Light Switches

Good Contrast



Bad Contrast



Contrast in Action: Signage

Good Contrast



Bad Contrast



Where/how else can I improve contrast?

- Publications/newsletters
 - Check defaults
- Return slips
- On workspaces
- Light switches and charging stations
- Computers
 - More on this later!
- Eliminate visual clutter
 - Keep it clean, think of it as 'classic'

Magnification

Note: Only a low vision provider or optometrist can prescribe magnifiers!

Types of magnification:

- Large print
- Video magnifiers (CCTVs)
- Handheld magnifiers
- Wearable magnifiers (glasses)



Size Matters

- 12 point
- 14 point *
- 24 point
- 32 point
- 48 point
- 60 point
- 72 point

Even if you can't print an entire newsletter in 72-point print, you almost certainly can enlarge the font on your PowerPoint slides, in programs, and on posters



Why can't magnification
fix everything?

- Visual field loss requires smaller print, not larger
- Magnification doesn't take into account glare & design

Lighting & Glare

- Good lighting helps enhance contrast and improves visual function
- Bad lighting can create glare and make visual function more difficult



Types of Lighting

- Natural Lighting
- Simulated natural lighting
 - [Ott Lamps](#)
- Bulb Types
 - Incandescent
 - Fluorescent*
 - Halogen
 - LED
- Direct Lighting
- Indirect lighting



Lighting in the Library



Area for improvement? A darker surface provides less glare



Fighting Glare

- [Acetate Sheets](#)
- [Visors](#)
- Shut the Blinds
- Move direct lighting to indirect lighting
- Provide dimmer switches
- Swap out cold light for warm
- Direct patron to less bright section of the library

Technology

- Keyboard Stickers
- Workplace accommodations as discussed
 - Lighting
 - Contrast with mouse
- Both Windows and Mac computers have built in accessibility for disabled users
 - Windows Accessibility Page for vision
 - Apple Accessibility Page for vision

Other Ideas

- Programming: Audio described movie night
- Provide print copies of PowerPoints and presentations in advance
- Sign patrons up for National Library Service (also open to those with reading and physical disabilities) or NFB Newslane



General Etiquette

- Speak to the blind person, not their companion(s)
- Remember, they are not hearing impaired, there's no need to yell or speak loudly
- Service animals are working. Do not pet, feed, or distract them
- Give specific directions based on distance or clock orientation
- It's fine to use words like "see" and "look"
- Don't play guessing games. Introduce yourself by name and title until you know the person knows who you are
- Don't grab the person's arm. Ask if they need assistance and offer your arm
- When in doubt, ask!

Resources & Wrap Up

- Please visit my toolkit at <https://rurallibraries.org/visually-impaired>
- Every single state has a state agency for the visually impaired
- National Library Service (<https://www.loc.gov/nls/>)
- Consumer advocacy groups like the National Federation of the Blind ([NFB.org](https://www.nfb.org)) and American Council of the Blind ([ACB.org](https://www.acb.org)) will help with information and advocacy nationwide & have local chapters
- Local civic organizations, especially the Lions Club whose mission is to be 'knights of the blind'

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Contact Me!

Questions? Feel free to contact me any time:

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- Library.sd.gov/BTB

