Learning About Disabilities

**Visual Impairment/Blind**

There are a variety of visual disabilities, although the umbrella term *visual impairment* is frequently used to describe the consequence of an eye condition or disorder. There are three major categories of visual disabilities: **visual impairment**, **legally blind**, and **blind**. A diagnosis within these categories is determined by an individual's visual acuity (the clarity or sharpness of vision - measured at a distance of 20 feet).

### TYPES OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

**Visual Impairment**
Individuals who are visually impaired have acuity between 20-80 and 20-200 with correction in the better eye.

**Legally Blind**
To be considered legally blind an individual must have an acuity of 20/200 or less, with correction in their better eye.

**Blind**
Individuals who are blind have no measurable acuity, though they may have some sensitivity to light.

### COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS

**Large Print Text Materials**
Enlarging a letter-size document to a legal-size document is one method of enlarging print. Commercial large print materials are usually in an 18 or 20 point font; however, enlarging print to any size that makes it readable for the individual is appropriate.

**Audio-Taped or E-Text Materials**
National organizations and campus readers can audio-tape printed materials. Books may be scanned into E-text and read by a screen reader. Typically, reading lists need to be obtained in advance to provide adequate lead time for obtaining taped text or E-text materials.

**Screen Readers**
Screen readers read aloud printed materials through a MAC or PC. Disability Resources has access to a number of screen reading programs.

**Braille**
There are a variety of adaptive technical products that read, write, and print in Braille.

**Close-Circuit Televisions (CCTV)**
CCTV’s enlarge print material that is placed on a movable tray, and the magnified image of the document is projected onto a screen. CCTV’s are available in most of the Case libraries.

**Software-Driven Text Enlargement**
These programs display text with a variable degree of magnification. This is available through Disability Resources and is easy to load onto a PC or Mac. Personal magnifiers can also be used to read printed materials that can be held close to the eyes.

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