

Sunglasses Evaluation Tips: Serving Adults with Intellectual Disability

Note: For best results copy and paste the URLs given into your browser.

1. Prepare your kit.

- Please see COMS Toolkit / Sunglasses Evaluation kit for suggestions on what to include.
- Ensure that your kit includes frames of different sizes and styles. Comfort is often a vital piece of an individual's ability to keep sunglasses (or eyeglasses) on.

2. Plan your strategy.

- Refer to General Assessment Protocol by Marshall Flax (page 4 of Conducting Sunglass Evaluations What You Need to Know by Mary Tellefson found at: (<http://wcbvi-oandm.wikispaces.com/file/detail/Conducting+Sunglass+Evaluations.doc>)
- Although personal preference is the major factor in choosing the correct filter color, start with known colors for the individual's eye diagnosis. Also see document by Mary Tellefson referenced above.
- Offer choice to the individual from the very start – the same shade, but 2 different percentages of color; or 2 different colors of the same intensity, etc.
- Sunglass evaluations often occur over multiple visits and at different times of day. Prepare (if possible) one to three different pairs to leave with the individual and his/her staff to try out. Ask staff to note which the individual prefers.
- Plan for success – even if sunglasses can't be tolerated by the person, have a plan in place – use of hat with a wide brim, use of a sun umbrella, suggestions for positioning the individuals' seat or wheelchair to minimize direct light/glare, car window shields to protect for glare/sun sensitivity, etc. Do not leave the individual or staff without an eye sun protection alternative.

Sunglasses Evaluation Tips: (continued)

Resources (continued)

- Plan for the future: Is there a goal the individual can work toward? I.E., keeping the sunglasses on for longer periods of time; keeping the sunglasses on only during particular activities (and then over time increasing the number and type of activity that the individual is encouraged to wear the sunglasses); etc.

3. Make it fun!

- Invite caregivers to work with you during the evaluation. Role play, have the staff try on the sunglasses first, followed by the individual.
- Conduct sunglass evaluation while individual is engaged in a preferred activity and/or has favorite materials close by to reach for/interact with.
- Offer praise while observing reaction.

4. Educate as you go along.

- Why does the particular eye condition of the individual cause a sensitivity to light or glare?
- Why is a particular color of filter often recommended for the eye condition? Why are sunglasses important to wear in general? Use your favorite go to resource(s) to prepare prior to the evaluation.
- Give pamphlets on the eye condition(s) and also benefits of sunglasses use.

5. Demonstrate/simulate functional implications of eye diagnosis with and without use of filters.

- Use vision simulators (like Zimmerman Simulator kit) and occluders.
- Set up simple activities for staff (near, intermediate, and distance).
- Use favorite activities of the individual with ID (for staff to engage).

Sunglasses Evaluation Tips: (continued)

Resources (continued)

6. Additional Resources

- Conducting Sunglass Evaluations What You Need to Know by Mary Tellefson: <http://wcbvi-oandm.wikispaces.com/file/detail/Conducting+Sunglass+Evaluations.doc>
- American Academy of Ophthalmology: Recommended Types of Sunglasses <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/glasses-contacts/sunglasses-recommended-types>
- Links/Resource Brochures on Focus website: www.focusonvisionandvisionloss.org
- Prevent Blindness Resources:
 - Sunglass Fact Sheet https://www.preventblindness.org/sites/default/files/national/documents/fact_sheets/Sunglasses_FS28%284.28%29.pdf
 - Choosing UV Protection <https://www.preventblindness.org/choosing-uv-protection>
 - UV Aware Quiz https://www.preventblindness.org/sites/default/files/national/documents/fact_sheets/MK20_UVAwareQuiz.pdf
- Discovery Eye Resources:
 - Archive of sunglasses articles: <http://discoveryeye.org/tag/sunglasses/>
 - Difference Between Polarized and Absorptive Lens <http://discoveryeye.org/general-differences-between-polarized-and-absorptive-lenses/>