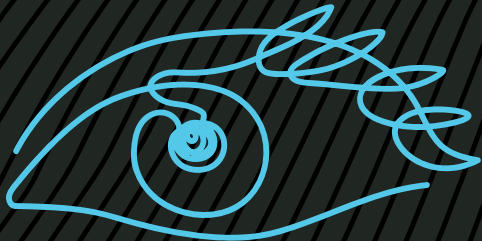


Training Clients with Communication Disorders

Clear communication, and some thoughtful preparation, can make all the difference for clients with visual, auditory or speech impairments.



Low Vision or Blind

An estimated 93 million people in the U.S. are at high risk for vision loss. Visual impairment can include difficulty seeing or distinguishing objects and colors, and some people may not be able to see at all, even with assistance (e.g., glasses, contacts, medications, surgery). Common visual impairments include macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

Considerations

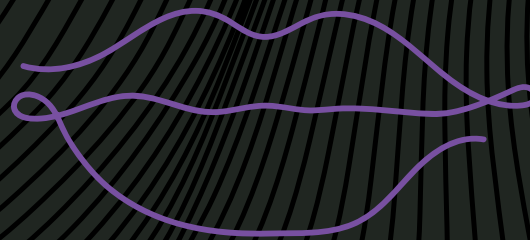
In the main, those with visual impairments can follow ACSM's general exercise recommendations. However, some visual impairments are caused by underlying medical issues or treated with interventions that can affect exercise. Glaucoma medications can affect heart rate, and diabetic retinopathy is, of course, caused by diabetes. You should also determine clients' level of visual impairment and modify your communication style accordingly.

Hard of Hearing or Deaf

Auditory impairments constitute partial or complete loss of the ability to hear, affecting Roughly 5% of the world's population. Further, only 17% of those who need hearing aids regularly wear them.

Considerations

Some types of hearing loss are also associated with balance issues, so assess for these early. Those with mild hearing loss might require a quieter setting in order to hear your instructions. Learning sign language, even just the alphabet, can be of great assistance when communicating with clients whose hearing loss is more severe.



Speech Impaired or Nonverbal

Speech impairment, or aphasia, can present as disrupted speech or a complete inability to speak. Generally caused by brain injury or damage, it is categorized by type and severity (e.g., Broca's, Wernicke's, anomic, global, primary progressive). Roughly 7.6% of U.S. adults live with a speech disorder.

Considerations

Make sure you understand the underlying cause of your client's aphasia – it could be due to a condition relevant to exercise, like stroke – ensure your instructions and exercise modalities are well thought out, and keep your instructions short and easy to understand. Crucially, don't speak over your client or anticipate their sentences, even if you think you know what they're trying to say.