

# **Living with Low Vision**

## **Questions and Answers:**

### **What you can expect from CSBPS Low Vision Clinic**

#### **What is low vision?**

A person is diagnosed with low vision when ordinary glasses, contact lenses, medical treatment and/or surgery cannot correct a person's sight to the normal range. An eye care physician determines whether you have low vision.

#### **What is low vision rehabilitation?**

The goal of low vision rehabilitation is to maximize any remaining eyesight so you are able to perform the tasks and activities that you enjoy. The process of rehabilitation involves:



- Evaluation by an eye care physician with special low vision training
- One-on-one training with a low vision specialist in the use of devices and techniques
- Patient education about living with low vision

#### **What is a low vision evaluation?**

At the CSBPS low vision clinic, a specially trained eye care physician performs an evaluation to determine how your remaining vision can be used more effectively and explains the devices and techniques available to assist you.

#### **Is this another medical examination? "No."**

- A low vision evaluation is not a medical exam to determine eye health.
- Prior to visiting the low vision clinic, your referring eye doctor must have already completed an eye health exam.
- CSBPS will need a copy of your latest vision exam report prior to scheduling an appointment for you to visit the clinic.

- Your referring eye doctor will continue to monitor your eyes regularly for any eye conditions that could result in eye health complications or additional vision loss.

## What is low vision training?

Once the optometrist has completed your low vision evaluation you will be taught how to use your remaining vision more effectively by rehabilitation professionals trained in specialized techniques and familiar with the latest available devices. For example, you may:

- Learn new visual skills in order to better utilize your peripheral vision.
- Learn to use different techniques and devices to perform certain tasks including: better lighting, higher contrast and enlarged print.
- Learn to use special optical lenses such as magnifiers and spectacle microscopes.

## Can't I just buy a high-powered magnifier from SightConnection?



SightConnection does not sell high-powered magnifiers or other optical devices over the counter because customers get the most out of these devices when our Low Vision Specialists help select the most appropriate items and provide training in how-to-use them properly. If you do not know which device to use or how-to-use it, you will likely end up more frustrated and discouraged rather than better prepared to live with low vision.

## Loaner Program

The CSBPS low vision clinic service includes a loaner program that allows clients to take several devices home to practice and see which works best for them. Clients then return the loaners and purchase only those best suited for their needs. *Clients are not allowed to keep loaners because we want each customer to have a new device with a 30-day return option as well as complete instructions and warranty information.*

## **How do I make an appointment with the CSBPS low vision clinic?**

If you have been referred directly by your primary eye doctor, you will receive a call from us to schedule an appointment. Due to demand for clinic services, appointments are usually set 4 to 6 weeks from the time of the call. You will need to give your referring eye doctor written consent to release information to CSBPS about your eye health history. Once your doctor has sent us your eye health history and referral, we will call you to schedule an appointment.

*Patience is a virtue: Completing this process can take several weeks.*

## **How long does the low vision service take?**

The low vision service agreement generally requires two visits. The first appointment usually lasts 1-1/2 hours, and includes the initial evaluation by our doctor and training with a low vision specialist. Follow-up visits are one hour or less and include additional training.

## **How do I prepare for the first appointment?**

Before your appointment, we will call you for some preliminary information. It is most helpful if you can think ahead and note any specific problems you are having at home, work or school because of your failing vision. These may include problems with reading, watching television, getting around your neighborhood or other activities. This process works best when you focus on specific needs and goals.



## **What should I bring to the appointment?**

- Glasses or magnifiers you are presently using
- Special materials, forms, books or hobbies you want to be able to work with
- Your Medicare card and information about any other insurance carriers

## How much does the low vision clinic cost?

The combined cost for the two visits generally runs under \$300, subject to deductibles and copays. Medicare and other insurance may cover some low vision services. Additional training is available at \$25 an hour. This additional training cost is not covered by Medicare or insurance and payment is required at the time of the visit.

The cost of low vision aids is extra. Medicare and most insurance companies do not cover the cost of low vision aids. CSBPS has a loaner program that allows you to try out low vision devices at home between your first and second visit.

No one is turned away due to inability to pay.

---

## C•S•B•P•S

### Programs and Services

- Low vision clinic and low vision rehabilitation
- Instruction in independent living skills
- Professional counseling and support groups
- Safe travel and orientation training
- Education, information and referral services
- Assistive Technology resources
- Adaptive aids specialty store, SightConnection

Since 1965, our mission has been to work with individuals, families and communities to restore, maintain and enhance the independence and well-being of people with impaired vision.

### **Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted**

9709 Third Ave NE #100, Seattle, WA 98115-2027

(206) 525-5556 (v/tdd)

(800) 458-4888 (v/tdd)

(206) 525-0422 (fax)

Email: [csbps@csbps.com](mailto:csbps@csbps.com)

Website: [www.csbps.com](http://www.csbps.com)

Adaptive Aids Store: [www.SightConnection.com](http://www.SightConnection.com)

Agency hours: 8 AM – 5 PM, M-F

SightConnection Store hours: 9 AM - 5 PM, M-F

*©2006 Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted*

*Support for this publication provided by the Alfred and Tillie Shemanski Trust Fund*