



Working with Visually Impaired Participants In and Out of the Arena

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About Diana

- Level 1 Equine Facilitated Learning (The HERD Institute®) & Horse Powered Reading®
- Executive Assistant at The HERD Institute®
- Founder of Horses Offering People Education (H.O.P.E. in MA, LLC)
- Owner of 2 OTTBs - Coffee (5) & London (18)



About Diana

- Born with congenital cataracts
- Cataracts removed at 6 weeks old, led to development of Glaucoma
- Retinal detachment in right eye at 5 years old
- Current vision: 20/60 (left eye), 20/70 (right eye)



Normal Eye Function

Muscles
Conjunctiva
Cornea
Lens
Vitreous
Retina
Macula
Optic nerve

Iris
Pupil
Sclera

Cleveland Clinic ©2022

What is 'Visual Impairment'?

- Used to describe any amount of vision loss
 - Low Vision
 - Legally Blind
 - Totally Blind
- Visual acuity between 20/70 and 20/400

Low Vision

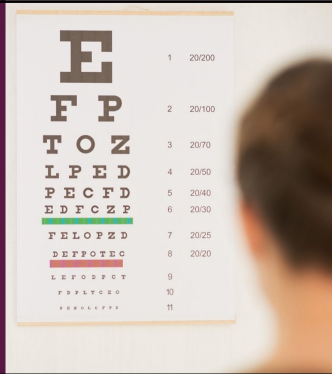
- Impaired vision (20/70 - 20/200) that can not be corrected by glasses, surgery, or medication
- Hyperopia aka "Farsightedness"
- Myopia aka "Nearsightedness"
- Common causes:
 - Glaucoma
 - Cataracts
 - Macular Degeneration
 - Diabetes
 - Multiple Sclerosis

HYPEROPIA
Farsightedness: distant objects are easier to see than near objects.

MYOPIA
Nearsightedness: nearby objects are clear, distant objects are out of focus.

Legally Blind vs. Totally Blind

- Legally Blind:
 - Visual field = 20/200 or less in "better" eye with correction (glasses, contacts)
- Totally Blind:
 - Complete loss of vision
 - Less than 2% of people with visual impairments experience total blindness



C.L.E.A.R.

Consider. Language. Environment. Adapt. Relate.

C - Consider

- What is the participant's visual field?
- What additional support do they need from staff, volunteers?
- Is a 'floater' volunteer necessary to act as a visual marker?


Not all visually impaired participants are the same!





L - Language

- Be **SPECIFIC!**
- Use visual markers rather than "over there" when giving directions
- Right & Left directional cues
- Ask for directions to be repeated back to ensure participant understands



E - Environment

- Inside vs. Outside
- Light sensitivity
 - Sunglasses
 - Shade
- Facility accommodations
 - Mounting ramp



A - Adapt

- Tack
 - Freedom Rider Tack Shop
- Arena
 - Ground poles with matching standards
 - Dressage markers
- Equipment
 - Teaching Aids for EAS
 - Rainbow Wooden Dice
 - Over-Fence Buckets
 - Sensory Trail Cards



www.freedomrider.com











R - Relate

- How does this relate to our equine partners with visual impairments?
 - Uveitis
 - Cataract
 - Corneal Ulcer

Consider. Language. Environment.
Adapt.



Questions?