

Scenario:

Vision and Hearing Loss Simulator

People with dementia and older adults often experience a range of sensory deficits including reduced vision and hearing. This training scenario is comprised of an online simulator developed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, which mimics various visual and hearing impairments across multiple settings. It is designed to help us to understand what it may feel like to experience these various symptoms.



Aims

The aim of this training scenario is to simulate impairments of vision and hearing that are often associated with aging and dementia.



Learning Objectives

- To demonstrate the variety of visual/hearing impairments often experienced by older adults and people living with dementia.
- To foster empathy and understanding for individuals experiencing these symptoms



When to use this scenario

This training scenario is optimally suited to an online training course. However, it may also be viewed on a laptop screen during in-person training. It is suitable for both healthcare staff and family members of people with dementia.



Equipment

- PC / laptop / tablet / phone (internet connection)
- Headphones/earphones (optional)



Downloadable supporting materials

- Slide show
- Evaluation form



Facilitation Instructions

Briefing:

- Some of the visual impairments that can occur with dementia include cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, etc.
- Age-related hearing loss, or presbycusis, is the most common form of hearing loss and people can experience mild, moderate or severe symptoms. There are also other hearing conditions common in older age which include different forms of tinnitus.

Activity Instructions

- Forward the following link to participants via your chosen platform e.g., Gmail, Zoom chat, Microsoft Teams:

<https://pathlore.dhs.mn.gov/Courseware/DisabilityServices/HRDHHS18/simulator/index.html#/>



- Instruct participants to press the play symbol in the center of the screen to begin the video.
- Along the top of the page, there are options to experience vision and hearing loss in different settings (cards, family, PCA, yoga).
- On the bottom left-hand side of the screen, there is an option to simulate different types of vision loss, and along the bottom right-hand side there is an option to simulate different types of hearing loss.
- Click 'Normal' to pull up the options for each.
- To adjust the degree of severity of these conditions, use the cursor to drag the sliding bar labeled 'Severity'
- Give the participants approx. 5 minutes to explore the video simulation



10 minutes

Group Reflection / Discussion



- Allow time for a group discussion or for individual reflection
- Ask participants to consider:
 - What other day-to-day tasks/activities may be affected by vision and hearing loss?
 - What signs or behaviour may indicate that a person may be experiencing vision and/or hearing loss? (e.g. more withdrawn during group activities, confused during conversations, etc.)
 - Is this training scenario an effective means of simulating these visual and auditory impairments?

Helpful Tips



Using earphones/headphones would allow for a more immersive experience when simulating hearing conditions – however, ensure that volume is not too loud, as some of the demonstrations involve loud and high-pitched noises.

Additional Resources



These websites offer advice for supporting people with vision and hearing loss:

- <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/sight-hearing-loss>
- https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/helpsheets/Helpsheet-OtherInformation04-HearingLoss_english.pdf