



Vision Therapy and Rehabilitation

Background

Vision therapy and rehabilitation is a prescribed, individualized treatment plan designed to develop, correct, improve or rehabilitate specific dysfunctions of the vision system. It includes the treatment of ocular motility dysfunctions; non-strabismic binocular disorders (eye teaming disorders); strabismus (misalignment of the eyes); amblyopia (a form of suppression that can lead to poorly developed visual acuity in one or both eyes); accommodative disorders (focusing problems); and visual information processing disorders, including visual-motor integration.

Vision therapy and rehabilitation may also be effective in the treatment of eye and vision problems related to traumatic brain injury.

Vision therapy and rehabilitation programs typically involve guided, structured eye activities and the use of therapeutic or performance lenses, prisms, filters, occluders, specialized instruments, low vision devices and/or computer programs. The course of therapy may last weeks to several years depending on the nature and severity of the deficit(s), and will include regular intermittent monitoring by the supervising optometrist.

Policy Issue

Vision therapy and rehabilitation is sometimes misunderstood by patients and by some eye health professionals. Enhanced public awareness and education for eye health providers can help to improve understanding and knowledge of these programs.

Policy Position

The Canadian Association of Optometrists considers vision therapy and rehabilitation to be effective individualized prescribed programs that are used to develop, correct, improve or rehabilitate specific dysfunctions of the vision system. Vision therapy gives individuals of all ages the opportunity to develop visual abilities and visual efficiency most suited to their needs. Successful vision therapy can enable individuals to achieve or to return to their desired level of performance, enhancing their quality of life.

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References

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