

VISUAL FUNCTION QUESTION INVENTORY FOR ADULTS

COPING STRATEGIES

Strategies for recognising people

- learn to use other senses such as hearing to recognise the voice
- use other specific visual features e.g., glasses, haircut, gait rather than face
- tell friends/ family to be aware of the problem and introduce themselves when they approach

Strategies for getting around

- use guide cane/long cane/hiking stick to feel the ground in front or hold onto elbow/jacket/belt of a companion so you can tell if the ground is uneven or tilting
- practise trouble spots with companion giving verbal prompts for how to proceed
- use verbal prompts or physical cues (tapping) to alert to obstacles on floor
- remove patterned carpet in favour of plain floor surfaces
- enhance colour contrast with flooring
- highlight stair treads with bright paint or dots in the middle of steps
- use coloured marker on floor beyond last step
- use coloured “room trails” on wall
- place a marker at eye level to identify obstacle
- minimise height variations of walking surfaces
- use handrails on both sides of stairs
- use spotlights at landing and base of stairs to throw shadows and enhance depth perception
- reduce amount of furniture
- avoid rearranging furniture
- remove sharp edges and glass furniture
- remove doors which are often collided with
- visit busy venues at quiet times first to familiarise and plan routes
- draw a map of the route with pictures you recognise or use digital camera to make a route map of familiar sights
- use mnemonics or rhymes to help remember routes

Strategies for finding things in a complex visual scene

- ask friends and relatives to use verbal prompts and large visual targets to guide you to chosen object (“look at the red roof, then the blue sign”)
- give time to process scene
- use digital camera and enlarge images of the object of interest on screen

Strategies for finding things

- organise your living environment to reduce clutter and the visual complexity of the area
- use labelled storage zones
- use coloured tape to demarcate areas on table
- use hanging vertical wardrobe with day’s clothes inside, stored from bottom up eg socks, trousers, T-shirt in different compartments
- hang clothes in groups and matched for colour
- colour-label clothes with buttons of different textures, or use a speaking colour detector
- limit type and number of items in drawers
- place shoes at eye level
- use plain walls, floors, bedspreads
- spotlight key areas

Strategies for eating

- use plain plate with no pattern
- use contrasting coloured place mat under the plate
- keep portions of food separate
- provide bright coloured foods of different colours
- turn plate around to see food on both sides

Strategies for concentrating

- limit number and duration of visually demanding tasks
- scheduled time-outs between tasks
- allow time for physical movement to “calm down” between visual tasks

Strategies for watching TV or films and moving objects

- try smaller TV screen size if screen is too big to scan
- try larger TV screen or sit closer to enlarge object of interest
- use flat screen
- try different types of programs with different visual compositions (eg films, “talking heads”, cartoons)
- try old cartoons and films which may have fewer distractions and slower pace than current films (join a film/ DVD club or get second hand copies)

Strategies for reading

- use good lighting
- use optimum print size and line spacing
- limit viewing to only the amount of text that can be coped with – try dark card with a suitable sized rectangle cut in it to view a small area of print at a time
- photocopy and enlarge printed material, if computer not available
- enlarge text on computer screen
- occlude text that has just been read with a card or Typoscope
- use a ruler or contrasting card to highlight beginnings and ends of lines
- use software which displays single words at a time
- if you have a visual field defect (homonymous hemianopia) which stops you seeing to one side you may have problems seeing finding the start or end of the line. Use software which displays text vertically or turn the book on its side to read towards the seeing area of your field of vision i.e. read downwards for loss of right side of field of vision or upwards for loss of left side of field of vision

Strategies for eyes playing tricks – hallucinations only

- use up to date glasses
- use good lighting (and a night light if hallucinations occur at night)
- try to ignore, not focus on, visual hallucinations
- look away from the hallucination towards another object, or go to another room
- tell yourself the hallucinations are not real and will stop shortly
- talk to others about the visual hallucinations
- change things in the room
- increase your social activities
- ask for referral to specialist counsellor/psychologist/psychiatrist for help with coping strategies if the above suggestions do not help and you find the hallucinations upsetting

For more information on coping strategies or for practical support and advice, talk to your eye doctor.