

# Advancing Clinical Practice Skills: Low Vision Rehabilitation



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## Site Description

### Major Charles Robert Soltes Jr. O.D. Blind Rehabilitation Center

- Comprehensive, patient-driven program that addresses all levels of visual impairment commonly associated to conditions such as TBI, CVA, and acquired/progressive eye diseases
- Team consists of visual rehabilitation specialists with optometrists and ophthalmologists
- Referrals made by Low Vision optometrist or primary-care ocular doctor that guide treatment plans for the certified low vision therapist (CLVT)

**Mission:** "to care for those 'who shall have borne the battle' and for their families and survivors" (US Department of Veteran Affairs, n.d.)

## Identified Needs

- Educate clients on compensatory strategies and use of assistive technology into Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)
- Incorporation of mental health in optometry treatment visits
- Increase number of CLVT specialists in optometry and primary eye-care clinics

## Literature Review

### Common Themes

- Lack of confidence in occupational therapy (OT) services providing visual rehabilitation (Molitor & Mayou, 2018; Smallfield et al., 2017)
- Most successful outcomes received by multi-disciplinary teams with rehabilitation specialists (Das et al., 2019; Macnaughton et al., 2019; Smallfield et al., 2017)
- Success focusing on patient goals and desired ADLs and IADLs (Blaylock et al., 2017)

### Gaps in Knowledge

- Not enough OT presence in the field of low vision therapy (Blaylock et al., 2017; Macnaughton et al., 2019; Smallfield et al., 2017)
- Call for more comprehensive approaches and use of golden standard assessments (Grider et al., 2014; Macnaughton et al., 2019; Smallfield et al., 2017)

## Student Learning Objectives

By the of the DCE, the doctorate student has:

- Demonstrated knowledge and clinical skills in low vision therapy
- Met competency evaluation scores through demonstration of practice skills
- Advocated for occupational therapy services at the capstone site

## Project Description and Implementation

**Purpose:** For the doctorate student to advance clinical practice skills in visual rehabilitation as a future occupational therapy practitioner with a specialty certification in low vision therapy

Building Experience	Evaluating	Advocating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in treatment sessions</li> <li>Collaboration with primary care and low vision specialty optometrists</li> <li>Development of patient rapport, patient-driven goals, and establishing strengths using visual assessments</li> <li>Assistive equipment assessment and training</li> <li>Ensure transfer of learning through follow-up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly evaluations and goal development with capstone site supervisor</li> <li>Self-evaluation to check progress in learning and advancing goals</li> <li>Completed competency standards for CLVT based off ACVREP requirements, who is the governing board for certification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued an on-going needs assessment on the program/facility</li> <li>Critical use of SWOT analysis and observations</li> <li>Interviewed staff at the facility with different roles</li> <li>Shared results and advocated need for OT services with staff through lunch hour in-services</li> </ul>



## Evaluation and Outcomes

Competencies: Did the applicant...	Pass	Fail	Comments
1. Demonstrate appropriate interpersonal relationships and the ability to work closely with colleagues and community professionals as a member of the interdisciplinary low vision team including OD/MD?			
2. Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior?			
3. Demonstrate a working knowledge of teaching and learning principles?			
4. Demonstrate the ability to assess the visual environment, provide appropriate environmental adaptations, and teach the use of environmental cues for using vision?			
5. Demonstrate an ability to interpret assessment data provided by professionals from a variety of disciplines?			

### Evaluation Methods:

- Low Vision Therapy Competency Checklist according to the ACVREP Low Vision Therapy Handbook (see left)
- Student self-evaluation form  
Original assessment created by the student to track their own learning goals, reflect on their experience, and collect questions
- Verbal feedback from in-service presentations

### Outcomes:

- 350+ hours of experience and completing all low vision competency requirements
- Passing of CLVT examination and obtaining certification
- Disseminated needs assessments results that advocates the positive impact OT services can provide using in-service learning opportunities shared among staff

## Scholarly Deliverables

- Completed competency evaluation forms for the CLVT examination qualification
- CLVT Certification
- Recorded in-service presentations for ocular health professionals on OT scope of practice, and the need for the profession in vision rehabilitation



## Implications for OT

- Strong need for future OT that are certified in low vision therapy to serve this specific community
- Job opportunities in niche eye-care settings such as primary optometry or specialty low vision clinics
- Research opportunities to address gaps of knowledge within rehabilitative services for visual impairment



## Recognition

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References available upon request