**Section 3 – Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Core Domain Body of Knowledge Areas**

1. **Knowledge of the Blindness System**
	1. Know demographics of blindness and visual impairment
	2. Know the history of the education and rehabilitation services for people with visual impairments
	3. Know major legislation governing blindness services and disability issues including eligibility criteria for services
	4. Know the philosophy, structure, and governing legislation of independent living programs.
	5. Know the structure and funding sources of private, state/province and federal blindness systems
	6. Know the major blindness consumer groups, their philosophies and the services/benefits they offer
	7. Know advocacy strategies used to promote positive attitudes towards, and inclusion of, individuals with disabilities and other under-represented populations
	8. Identify major publications and information resources relating to services for people with visual impairments
	9. Know services to children and youth including, in the U.S., IDEA, Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) and age appropriate service delivery including the Individualized Education Programs (IEP)
	10. Know vocational rehabilitation practices and regulations, including the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE), and the Individual Program Plan (IPP-Canada)
2. **Medical Aspects of Blindness and Low Vision**
	1. Know the relationship between etiology of vision loss and the effect of that loss upon individual development, behavior and environmental needs, including implications for vision rehabilitation therapist services:
		1. Anatomy of the human visual system
		2. Diseases and disorders of the human visual system
		3. Functional implications imposed by diseases and disorders of the human visual system
		4. Range of medical, surgical, and optical remediation for diseases and disorders of the human visual system
		5. Specific medical and physical contraindications for diseases and disorders of the human visual system
		6. Systemic diseases, acquired medical conditions and traumatic injury and their impact on vision

vii. Possible side effects of medications and impact on functioning and the rehabilitation process

* 1. Know how to complete an assessment to determine whether visual, non-visual or a combination of strategies is appropriate to achieve specific goals of the learner
	2. Know how to select or create and implement a functional vision assessment to identify and quantify the level of current visual functioning
	3. Know how to select or create and implement a sequential instructional program to integrate the use of low vision aids and strategies to specific instructional needs of individuals who are visually impaired including:
		1. Fixating, focusing, tracking and scanning skills, including techniques for eccentric viewing and fixation
		2. Visual perceptual skills
		3. Vision stimulation training and instruction
		4. Instruction in a range of techniques for print reading or access
		5. Assessment and adaptation of environmental variables and materials for personal, educational, and vocational tasks, including organization lighting, color, glare control and contrast
		6. Instruction in the use of equipment and adaptive devices for persons who are visually impaired including, in daily living activities, reinforcing instruction in the use of optical devices as prescribed by optometrists and ophthalmologists
		7. Assessment of natural and artificial lighting and implementation of strategies to optimize visual functioning
	4. Know appropriate resources and referrals for environmental, media, and instructional interventions used to alleviate or modify the functional effects of specific eye disorders
1. **Professionalism and Practice Methods**
	1. Know effective case management practices, including methods for data collection and case reporting
	2. Know interdisciplinary teamwork principles and appropriate referral processes
	3. Know the legal and civil rights relating to rehabilitation, transition planning, vocational services and advocacy of protected persons
	4. Know the historical development, current status, practitioner demographics, and major issues in the field of vision rehabilitation therapy (VRT) (i.e. home teacher, living skills instructor, rehabilitation teacher, access technology specialist)
	5. Know the CVRT Code of Ethics, the Scope of Practice, and privacy/confidentiality regulations. [Editor’s note: privacy regulations include HIPAA in the US and PIPEDA in Canada]
	6. Know the standards and practices of certification and accreditation
	7. Know the principles of individualized program planning, including transition, independent living and vocational rehabilitation services and programming
	8. Know the skills and abilities to assess, design and implement an individualized service plan based on client/consumer needs
	9. Know how to write and effectively document; including goals and objectives with measurable outcomes.
	10. Know the roles and functions of a private contracting VRT
	11. Know appropriate resources to meet the need for services or adapted materials by and for individuals with visual and/or multiple impairments
	12. Know methods for securing, instructing and working with volunteers, peers, para-professionals, vendors and private contractors
	13. Know methods for the design and delivery of in-service workshops to consumers, communities, service organizations, etc.
	14. Know how to communicate effectively with clients/consumers, family members, peers and other professionals.
	15. Know how to evaluate and integrate new and existing technology into vision rehabilitation services.
	16. Know how to manage casework services related to itinerant teaching.
2. **Independent Living : Personal Management**

Know how to select, design and implement a sequential instructional program to meet the specific independent living needs of learners who are blind or visually impaired including knowing how to:

* + 1. Design appropriate methods and materials used for the adaptations/ modifications of personal management skills.
		2. Instruct personal hygiene skills and techniques (i.e. shaving, nail care, dental care).
		3. Instruct dressing and grooming techniques (i.e. hair care, application of makeup, selection of appropriate and/or color-coordinated clothing).
		4. Instruct adaptive eating techniques.
		5. Instruct adaptive time management techniques (i.e. making appointments, use of adapted timepieces, managing daily calendar).
		6. Instruct care and maintenance of clothing (i.e. laundering, ironing, mending).
		7. Instruct adapted needle threading and sewing techniques.
		8. Instruct socialization skills (i.e. body language, gestures, self-advocacy, gathering and processing interpersonal information).
		9. Instruct identification, organization and labeling of medications to promote proper and safe usage.
		10. Instruct adapted medication administration techniques as appropriate (i.e. use of eye drop guide)
		11. Use methods and technology for adaptive management of diabetes (i.e. insulin measurement, glucose monitoring, medication management, record keeping, vision-related precautions, related resources)
1. **Independent Living: Home Management**

Select, design and implement a sequential instructional program to include appropriate methods and materials used for the adaptation/modification of home management skills.

* 1. Know how to teach kitchen skills including:
1. Identification, organization and labeling systems for kitchen and household items for operation, efficiency and safety
2. Use of adaptive kitchen and household safety techniques and equipment
3. Meal preparation skills including but not limited to:
	* + 1. Use of adaptive techniques for menu planning, grocery shopping, organizing and labeling
			2. Food preparation i.e. pouring, cutting, dicing, measuring
			3. Cold prep i.e. spreading, opening containers and boxes
			4. Access to nutritional and dietary information
			5. Adaptive cooking i.e. stove top use, oven use, and alternative devices and methods

b. Know how to teach use of adaptive techniques for money identification and management budgeting, banking on-line, automatic bill paying, debit card management and record keeping

c. Know how to recruit and manage volunteers/employees (i.e. readers, drivers, shoppers)

d. Know how to teach use of adaptive techniques of home mechanics (i.e. use of hand tools, performing minor repairs, changing light bulbs***/***batteries)

e. Know how to teach use of adaptive techniques of household cleaning (i.e. sweeping, dusting, vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, washing windows)

f. Know how to teach upkeep and maintenance of home appliances

g. Know how to teach the use of home systems (i.e. regulating thermostats, use of home security systems, smoke detectors/fire extinguishers)

 **6. Communication Systems**

Select, design and implement a sequential instructional program for:

a. Teaching adaptive reading skills to learners who are blind or visually impaired including:

1. Conducting a reading media assessment (i.e. standard/large print, tactile, audio) to assist learners in reaching their reading goals
2. Demonstrating competency with both the Unified English Braille Code and the English Braille American Edition [Editor’s note: UEB has now officially replaced English Braille American Edition]
3. Demonstrating knowledge of braille readiness activities
4. Knowing how to teach braille reading
5. Knowing alternative and augmentative communications systems, including; use of standard accessibility features in existing technology, computer screen magnification and screen reading programs, tactual output displays, electronic video low vision devices, telecommunication systems for deaf-blind persons, and communication boards
6. Knowing how to integrate low vision optical devices prescribed by an eye care specialist into a reading program
7. Knowing how to identify appropriate adaptive resources for instruction in basic reading skills

b. Teaching adaptive writing skills to learners who are blind or visually impaired including:

1. Braille writing with braille notetakers, brailler, slate and stylus
2. Keyboarding
3. Handwriting instruction techniques
4. Handwriting guides and devices and what constitutes a legal signature.
5. Note taking skills
6. Labeling methods
7. Techniques for teaching raised line drawings and tactile graphics
8. Techniques for producing raised line drawings and tactile graphics
9. Identifying appropriate resources for adaptive writing skills/tools
10. Adaptive/electronic notetakers
11. Current “off the shelf” technologies

c. Teaching recording skills, including storage and retrieval of information and maintenance of equipment:

1. Identify and teach operation and maintenance of a variety of audio recording and listening devices
2. Teach audio indexing techniques and managing audio files
3. Electronic listening, reading, and recording resources (e.g. Optical Character Readers, digital books, daisy formats, NIMAS)
4. Telecommunication devices and their features including smart phones and tablets
5. Techniques for using telecommunication devices, smart phones and mobile devices with accessible apps that can be applied throughout VRT domain areas
6. Radio Reading Services and telephone information services/audio information networks
7. Instruct the learner in strategies to recruit sighted readers
8. Identify appropriate resources for training in listening and recording skills
9. Resources and methods of downloading books that utilize electronic reading platforms

d. Teachingmeasurement and calculation skills including:

1. Adapted calculators and/or abacus
2. Measurement devices
3. Appropriate resources for measurement and calculation skills
4. Awareness of software/applications that are appropriate for assisting with mathematical calculations
5. Resources for adaptive mathematics, and science equipment

**7. Braille and Other Tactual Systems**

* 1. Ability to read standard contracted literary braille [Editor’s note: this refers to Unified English Braille]
	2. Ability to write standard contracted literary braille, using slate and stylus, mechanical braille and electronic braille notetaker
	3. Ability to assess tactual perception of the learner and adapt/modify instructional materials accordingly
	4. Ability to select, design and implement a sequential program for teaching braille reading
	5. Ability to select, design and implement a sequential program for teaching braille writing
	6. Ability to assess and adapt printed materials into an appropriate, usable tactile format
	7. Ability to scan, create and edit electronic files for braille production using appropriate technology, including computer software and hardware
	8. Identify appropriate braille resources and transcription services
	9. Awareness of alternative braille codes and resources for additional instruction [Editor’s note: for example - Fishburne and Moon type]
	10. Ability to select/create and administer diagnostic tests of braille literacy and reading/writing speed and accuracy

**8. Access/Assistive Technology**

* 1. Know the various types of emerging access/assistive technology
	2. Skill in the use of access/assistive hardware and productivity software and applications
	3. Ability to assess and assist learners in deciding which access technology and/or hardware modifications will best meet their goals
	4. Ability to select, design and modify a sequential instructional program incorporating the use of access/assistive technology based on learners’ abilities
	5. Ability to perform an ecological assessment of the learner's workplace
	6. Know how to access tech support, technology manufacturers and distributors.
	7. Awareness of access/assistive technology training resources
	8. Know various online education delivery formats and identify resources to address access issues
	9. Know the role of an assistive technology instructional specialist and referral process.
	10. Know universal design principles and universally designed products

**9. Recreation and Leisure**

* 1. Ability to select, design, and implement a sequential instructional program to meet the specific recreation and leisureneeds and interests of learners, including:
1. Crafts, hobbies and adapted games
	* + 1. Cultural, religious, and educational pursuits
			2. Sports and recreational activities
			3. Community participation/integration
	1. Ability to identify and organize materials, techniques and resources for planning and implementing recreational and leisure activities
	2. Ability to identify appropriate referral resources or additional recreational and leisure pursuits, including specialized blindness programs (i.e. BOLD, USABA, Blind Golfers Association)

[Editor’s note: this would also include Ski for Light. Additionally, it is important to be aware of resources for children and adults that exist through various organizations that provide information on recreation and leisure through their websites including, but not limited to American Foundation for the Blind (AFB), American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and Association for Education and Rehabilitation of Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) through its new Physical Activity & Recreation Division]

**10. Aging and Vision Loss**

* 1. Know the major demographic trends in aging and vision loss
	2. Know the major physiological, sensory, social, economic, and cognitive/perceptual changes in the aging process
	3. Know the major theoretical and psychosocial aspects of aging
	4. Know the current network of services to older adults, including entitlement programs, health-care service delivery systems, adult protective services and residential and institutional living arrangements/options
	5. Know the current policies and legislation related to aging and vision loss
	6. Know appropriate referral resources and referrals for services for older adults

**11. Deaf-blindness**

* 1. Ability to utilize alternative communication systems for individuals who are deaf-blind [Editor’s note: such as TASL and Haptic communication]
	2. Identify appropriate resources for instruction in other forms of communication used by individuals who are deaf-blind
	3. Know appropriate methods and materials for the adaptation of independent living skills for individuals who are deaf-blind
	4. Identify resources for services to persons who are deaf-blind
	5. Identify resources for services to persons who are aging with hearing and vision loss
	6. Identify local resources for acquiring equipment and training

**12. Teaching and Learning Strategies**

* 1. Know contemporary learning theories appropriate for adults, young adults, and children
	2. Know how to utilize the principles of andragogy (adult learning theory), in relation to vision rehabilitation therapy assessment and teaching processes
	3. Know the lifespan human development
	4. Ability to utilize listening, and problem-solving skills during interview, preliminary history taking, and comprehensive vision rehabilitation assessment to formulate an effective treatment plan
	5. Ability to design, select and implement appropriate methods and materials for comprehensive vision rehabilitation therapy assessments and training
	6. Ability to create and modify lesson plans that contain appropriate goals, objectives, and task analysis based on interpretation of assessment results
	7. Ability to adjust and modify lesson plans according to the assessment of consumer needs and abilities
	8. Know vision rehabilitation therapy teaching methodologies utilized in itinerant and center-based service delivery systems
	9. Know appropriate instructional strategies for the transfer of independent living skills from the training center to the home and community environments
	10. Identify appropriate resources and referrals to accommodate diversity and differences in learning
	11. Ability to use multiple teaching strategies, i.e., problem-based learning, motivational counseling, chaining, etc.

**13. Psychosocial Aspects of Blindness and Vision Loss**

* 1. Know the factors affecting an individual's adjustment to vision loss, visual impairment, and the rehabilitation process
	2. Know the impact of vision loss and visual impairment on family, friends and significant others
	3. Know the relevant theories of adjustment to vision loss [Editor’s note: theories such as Kubler-Ross, Carroll, Tuttle& Tuttle and Livneh]
	4. Know the key elements necessary for the establishment of an appropriate working relationship with learners and their caregivers
	5. Know the theories of counseling techniques to facilitate adjustment to vision loss.
	6. Ability to design and implement consumer-driven strategies of self-advocacy
	7. Identify appropriate community resources and referral process for counseling services for individuals as well as families, friends, and significant others

**14. Individuals Who are Blind or Visually Impaired With Additional Disabilities**

* 1. Know eligibility criteria for the classifications, major legislative issues, and current demographics of disability groups
	2. Know the interactive effects of physical, sensory, cognitive, social, and/or emotional disabilities upon individuals who are blind or visually impaired, their relationships and environments
	3. Have familiarity with and implications of alternative mobility devices (i.e. wheelchairs, walkers, support canes) and transportation options that may be utilized by persons with visual impairment with additional disabilities
	4. Know appropriate methods, materials, and devices for the adaptation of independent living skills by individuals who are visually impaired with additional disabilities
	5. Identify appropriate resources and referrals for services to persons who are visually impaired with additional disabilities
	6. Know and understand issues and resources available to assist persons with a range of disabilities
	7. Ability to assess when and how to refer consumers to other appropriate qualified specialists

**15. Research**

* 1. Know the basic language and concepts of research
	2. Ability to understand and evaluate research studies
	3. Ability to obtain and apply research findings to best evidenced based rehabilitation practices for individuals who are blind or visually impaired
	4. Ability to formulate a hypothesis in order to explore the feasibility of needed research
	5. Know the ethical considerations in research
	6. Know contemporary research issues and needs in education, disability, access technology, and rehabilitation

**16. Orientation and Mobility**

* 1. Know how to select, design and implement a sequential instructional program to familiarize a blind or visually impaired learner with indoor orientation and basic mobility skills including:
		1. Basic orientation techniques
		2. Human Guide techniques [Editor note : also referred to as Sighted Guide]
		3. Self-protective techniques
		4. Independent indoor movement [Editor note: this does not include navigation of stairs nor does it include the evaluation, prescription or instruction in the use of a support cane or long cane.]
		5. Systematic search patterns
		6. Seating techniques
		7. Room familiarization
		8. Sensory development techniques
	2. Identify appropriate orientation and mobility resources
	3. Know dog guide programs, including an understanding of regulations related to public access of dog guides
	4. Ability to assess when to refer for evaluation by a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

**17. Employment related skills:**

1. Know appropriate instructional strategies for the transfer or integration of independent living skills from the rehabilitation setting to the employment environment
2. Ability to perform a job analysis of the learner's workplace, taking into consideration ergonomics, modifications and access technology needed to perform assigned duties
3. Ability to assess when to refer a consumer to a vocational rehabilitation counselor
4. Identify appropriate resources and skills related to job search activities, i.e. applications, interview skills, resumes, online sites, follow-up skills