



What is deafblindness?

What do we mean by deafblind?

Deafblind is a term that is used when a person has a combination of both impaired vision and hearing. Dual sensory loss is another term that can be used to describe deafblindness.

Definition of Deafblindness

“Deafblindness is described as a unique and isolating sensory disability resulting from a combination of both a hearing and vision loss or impairment which significantly affects communication, socialisation, mobility and daily living.”
Australian Deafblind Council (ADBC) 2004

Effects of deafblindness

- A small number of people will have no sight or hearing
- Other people who are deafblind will have varying degrees of vision and/or hearing
- Experiences and understanding of the world around them will be different depending on whether the person was born deafblind or acquired reduced vision and hearing later in life

Emotional impact of deafblindness

- The impact of deafblindness on a person’s life will vary
- The impact on a person who has a severe sight and hearing impairment can be complex
- Deafblindness can affect a person’s ability to access information, to communicate and socialize, leading to feelings of isolation

- A person can experience low self-esteem, lacking confidence to move about independently and to carry out daily tasks

Causes of deafblindness

- People who are born deaf and blind—this could be due to hereditary conditions or because of diseases contracted during pregnancy such as Rubella (German Measles)
- People who are born deaf and later experience deteriorating sight. Usher Syndrome for example causes deafness at birth and vision impairment later in life
- People who are born vision impaired or blind and experience significant hearing loss
- Other causes include accident, injury and disease; and for significant numbers of people the ageing process is a cause of deafblindness

For more information contact:
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The Royal WA Institute for the Blind and the West Australian Deafblind Association

Ending the isolation.

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