

Unit 24: Understanding Sensory Loss

Level:	3
Unit type:	Optional (Group B1)
Credit value:	3
Guided learning hours:	21

Unit introduction

Sensory loss can affect individuals in different ways. How it affects individuals can depend on the cause of the sensory loss, which senses are affected and what kind of support has been put in place. Having a good understanding of sensory loss in all its forms is essential in supporting these individuals effectively.

This unit will give you an understanding of the range and causes of sensory loss, the potential negative impact and how effective communication can support an individual to maintain their independence.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, learners need to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Understand the causes and range of sensory loss which may occur for an individual	1.1 Define congenital sensory loss, and acquired sensory loss 1.2 Explain sensory loss in terms of the five main senses 1.3 Explain the demographic factors which influence the incidence of sensory loss in the population
2 Understand the factors that impact on an	2.1 Analyse how different factors can impact on individuals with sensory loss 2.2 Analyse how societal attitudes and beliefs impact on individuals with sensory loss

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
individual with sensory loss	2.3 Explore how societal attitudes and beliefs can impact on service delivery
3 Understand the importance of effective communication for individuals with sensory loss	3.1 Explain the methods of communication used by individuals with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sight loss • hearing loss • deaf-blindness 3.2 Describe how the environment facilitates effective communication for people with sensory loss 3.3 Explain how effective communication may have a positive impact on the lives of individuals with sensory loss
4 Understand how to recognise when an individual may be experiencing sensory loss and actions that may be taken	4.1 Identify the indicators and signs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sight loss • hearing loss • deaf-blindness • somatosensory loss • anosmia and ageusia 4.2 Explain actions that should be taken if there are concerns about the onset of sensory loss or changes in sensory status 4.3 Explain sources of support for those who may be experiencing the onset of sensory loss

Unit content

What needs to be learned

Learning outcome 1: Understand the causes and range of sensory loss which may occur for an individual

Causes of sensory loss

- Congenital.
- Acquired.

Sensory loss

- Sight loss.
- Hearing loss.
- Deaf-blindness.
- Loss of olfactory sense (smell).
- Loss of taste.
- Loss of tactile sense.

Demographic factors which make sensory loss more or less likely

- Having worked in a noisy environment.
- Prolonged use of visual display units (VDUs)
- Ageing and life expectancy.
- Smoking and other lifestyle factors.

Learning outcome 2: Understand the factors that impact on an individual with sensory loss

Factors that can impact on an individual with sensory loss

- Home life and living situation.
- Existing informal/formal care provision.
- Lifestyle factors.
- Employment/study.
- Other/existing disabilities:
 - mobility
 - communication
 - cognitive
 - emotional.
- Communication.

What needs to be learned

- Information.
- Familiar layouts and routines.
- Mobility.

How sensory impairment may make an individual more vulnerable to health and/or safety risks

- Identifying visitors/safe situations.
- Using household appliances.
- Performing personal care duties.
- Choosing and preparing food/drink.

The social, emotional, and intellectual impacts of sensory loss

- Difficulties in socialising, making/meeting friends, isolation.
- Confusion, disorientation, anger, loneliness.
- Impaired learning, opportunities, dealing with adapted learning methods.

How societal attitudes and beliefs can impact service delivery

- Barriers to employing people with sensory impairment.
- The social model of disability.

Learning outcome 3: Understand the importance of effective communication for individuals with sensory loss

Methods of communication

- Methods used by people with full or partial sight loss:
 - Braille
 - Moon
 - large print
 - use of high contrast
 - appropriate fonts
 - magnifiers.
- Methods used by people with hearing loss:
 - British Sign Language
 - lip-reading/lip-speaking
 - text messaging
 - hearing loop systems/hearing aids.
- Methods used by people with deaf-blindness:
 - deaf-blind sign language.

What needs to be learned

Adapt the environment to facilitate effective communication

- Staff training.
- Use of colour/contrast.
- Reduced background noise.
- Lighting.
- Specialist equipment, e.g. tactile phone buttons, Braille keyboard/signage.
- Tactile flooring.

How effective communication may have a positive impact on lives of individuals with sensory loss

- Improved health and emotional wellbeing.
- Improved quality of life.
- Making a positive contribution.
- Choice of control.
- Freedom from discrimination.
- Economic wellbeing.
- Personal dignity.

Learning outcome 4: Understand how to recognise when an individual may be experiencing sensory loss and actions that may be taken

Identify the indicators and signs of sensory loss

- Sight loss:
 - moving about cautiously
 - holding books or reading material close to the face or at arm's length
 - overcautious driving habits
 - finding lighting either too dim or too bright
 - frequent eye glass prescription changes
 - squinting or tilting the head to see
 - difficulty in recognising people
 - changes in leisure activities
 - changes in personal appearance
 - bumping into objects
 - appearing disoriented or confused.
- Hearing loss:

What needs to be learned

- not responding when you speak to them from behind
- often asking people to repeat what they have said
- not hearing when someone knocks at the door or rings the bell
- complaining that people mumble or speak too quickly
- having difficulty hearing when several people are present
- needing the TV/radio/stereo to be louder than is usual for others
- having difficulty following speech with unfamiliar people or accents
- having problems using the telephone.
- Deaf-blindness:
 - any combination of the above lists for sight and hearing loss.
- Somatosensory loss:
 - reporting of unusual physical sensations/pins and needles
 - dropping or crushing objects
 - difficulty picking up objects
 - balance issues
 - failure to notice injuries
 - itching
 - failure to notice or respond to temperature changes.
- Anosmia and ageusia:
 - consuming food/drink which has gone off, e.g. spoiled milk etc.
 - burning/overcooking food
 - personal hygiene issues.

Actions that should be taken if there are concerns about onset of sensory loss or changes in sensory status

- Record concerns and the reasons for these.
- Identify what sort of approach needs to be taken with the individual.
- Identify what forms of consent might need to be obtained.
- Obtain an assessment for the individual and make a referral.
- Identify others who should be involved in an assessment.
- Agree additional support with the individual if needed.

Sources of support for those who may be experiencing onset of sensory loss

- Local authority.
- Charity organisations, e.g. Sense, RNIB, Fifth Sense.
- General practitioners, hospitals.

Essential information for tutors and assessors

Essential resources

There are no special resources needed for this unit.

Assessment

This unit is internally assessed. To pass the unit, the evidence that learners present for assessment must demonstrate that they have met the required standard specified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

This unit must be assessed in accordance with the assessment strategy (principles) in *Annexe A* of the associated qualification specification.

Assessment of all learning outcomes (knowledge) may take place in or outside of a real work environment.

Centres are responsible for deciding on the assessment activities that will enable learners to produce valid, sufficient, authentic and appropriate evidence to meet the assessment criteria.

The unit is assessed by a portfolio of evidence. Further information on the requirements for portfolios is included in *Section 4 Assessment requirements*.

Wherever possible, centres should adopt a holistic and integrated approach to assessing the skills units in the qualification. This gives the assessment process greater rigour, minimises repetition and saves time. The focus should be on assessment activities generated through naturally occurring evidence in the workplace rather than on specific tasks. Taken as a whole, the evidence must show that learners meet all learning outcomes and assessment criteria over a period of time. It should be clear in the assessment records where each learning outcome and assessment criterion has been covered and achieved.

Suggested resources

This section lists resource materials that can be used to support the delivery of the qualification.

Textbooks

Eggermont J – *Hearing Loss: Causes, Prevention, and Treatment*, 1st edition (Academic Press, 2017) ISBN 0128053984

Evans M and Whittaker A – *Sensory Awareness and Social Work*, 1st edition (Sage Publications Ltd, 2010) ISBN 9781844452910

Websites

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk	Royal National Institute for Deaf People – provides information, advice and guidance for people and organisations affected by hearing loss.
www.deafblind.org.uk	Charity representing those with combined sight and hearing loss.
www.fifthsense.org.uk	Fifth Sense – the charity for people affected by smell and taste disorders.
www.nhs.uk/conditions/anosmia	NHS guidance on loss of smell and related loss of taste.
www.rnib.org.uk	Royal National Institute of Blind People – a leading source of information on sight loss and the issues affecting blind- and partially- sighted people.
www.sense.org.uk	Charity supporting those with other combined sensory impairments.