
The Nordic definition of deafblindness:

Deafblindness is a distinct disability.

Deafblindness is a combined vision and hearing disability. It limits activities of a person and restricts full participation in society to such a degree that society is required to facilitate specific services, environmental alterations and/or technology.

Comments:

These comments are a clarification to the definition of deafblindness.

1.

Vision and hearing are central in getting information. Therefore a decrease in the function of these two senses that carry information from distance increases the need to use senses that are confined to information within reach (tactile, kinaesthetic, haptic, smell and taste), as well as leaning on memory and deduction.

2.

The need for specific alterations regarding environment and services depends on

- the time of on-set in relation to communicative development and language acquisition;
- the degree of the hearing and vision disability, whether it is combined with other disabilities and whether it is stable or progressive.

3.

A person with deafblindness may be more disabled in one activity and less disabled in another activity. Therefore each activity and participation in it needs to be assessed separately.

Variation in functioning within each activity and participation in it may also be caused by environmental conditions and by internal personal factors.

4.

Deafblindness causes varying needs for co-creating alterations in all activities and especially in

- all kinds of information;
- social interaction and communication;
- spatial orientation and moving around freely;
- activities of daily life and effort demanding near-activities including reading and writing.

Co-creating means that the person with deafblindness and the environment are equally involved. The responsibility for this to occur lies on society.

5.

An interdisciplinary approach including specific know-how related to deafblindness is needed in service delivery and environmental alterations.

