



25 January 2024, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran – A series of specialized self-care training packages has been designed for people with blindness, vision impairment, deafness and hearing loss, as well as their caregivers. The Iranian Ministry of Health and Medical Education devised the series in collaboration with WHO, Tehran University of Medical Sciences (TUMS) and various nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Each package has 2 parts: the first for the individual with the disability and the second for the caregiver. The overarching goal is to empower both individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, elevating their overall well-being and quality of life.

Vision and hearing impairments can have profound and far-reaching effects. Globally, over 2.2 billion people have near or distance vision impairment – at least 1 billion cases of which could have been prevented or yet to be addressed. Projections indicate that by 2050, almost 2.5 billion people worldwide will have some level of hearing loss. At least 700 million of this number will need hearing rehabilitation.

Challenges faced by adults with blindness and vision impairment include lower employment rates and higher rates of depression and anxiety. Communication barriers often lead to social isolation, loneliness and frustration. The self-care training packages aim to address such issues by giving people with blindness, vision impairment, deafness and hearing loss, along with their caregivers, essential life skills and coping mechanisms to better manage the unique challenges they encounter.

This initiative aligns with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education's commitment to foster inclusivity and ensure that every individual, regardless of ability, has the tools to lead a fulfilling life. The collaboration with WHO, TUMS and NGOs reflects a shared effort to make a positive impact on the lives of those with sensory impairments and their support networks.

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