



AER Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) Division

VRT News Fall, 2019

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Message from the Chair

Greetings colleagues, friends, and vision rehabilitation professionals alike--

We are full swing into that most wonderful time of the year and I hope you are being inundated and spreading the good cheer! Ok, I'll stop with the holiday cliches :D I hope you are receiving the thanks you deserve and feel the need to pass it on. **DO NOT** forget that many times we do not get to see the fruits of our labors. What we do, say, or the smile we share is a drop in the bucket, but those ripples will carry. I know the frustration of seeming to not have made an impact. Please be aware that you **HAVE**. It just may not be seen today or tomorrow. Other times, you have to be on the lookout for that good news.

Ok, so that may have still seemed a bit full of cliches. However, this holiday season, I am thankful for **YOU**. **YOU** who have inspired me to join this field, **YOU** who inspire me to greater challenges and heights, and **YOU** who do the hard work.

Be well,

Amber Mooney, M.Ed. CVRT
AER VRT Division Chair

Watercoolers: Learning and Earning CEU's!

Did you miss the last watercooler in September? Fear not! Our amazing presenters, Sue Dalton and Jennifer Ottowitz, sent an awesome handout to share! Sorry, no CEU's with the handout....

Making Sense of the Myths and Miracles of Marijuana

For information on the federal law regarding the use of marijuana, visit:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/state-laws-related-to-marijuana>

and

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/21/812>

At the time of the writing of this handout 33 states and the District of Columbia have legalized the use of marijuana for medical purposes. The laws within these states vary.

For more specific information on state laws regarding medical marijuana, visit:

www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-medical-marijuana-laws.aspx

The American Medical Association is generally opposed to the use of medical marijuana. For more information, visit:

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/11/20/ama-reaffirms-opposition-to-marijuana-legalization>

The American Glaucoma Society and the Canadian Ophthalmological Society have written position statements against the use of medical marijuana as a treatment for glaucoma. Read the full text of these position statements at:

http://www.americanglaucomasociety.net/patients/position_statements/marijuana_glaucoma

and

<http://www.cos-sco.ca/advocacy-news/position-policy-statements/medical-use-of-marijuana-for-glaucoma/>

Does Marijuana Help Treat Glaucoma or Other Eye Conditions? By David Turbert, Dan Gudgel – June 17, 2019:

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/medical-marijuana-glaucoma-treatment>

Medical Marijuana – Harvard Health Publishing – Peter Grinspoon, M.D. June 25, 2019:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/medical-marijuana-2018011513085>

For some answers to frequently asked questions regarding the use of marijuana, visit:

<http://norml.org/marijuana/medical/item/medical-frequently-asked-questions>

and

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/frequently-asked-questions-and-facts-about-marijuana>

Video on marijuana use:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Md2WNqqxTQ>

Next watercooler: Wednesday, December 10.

Session: Survey Results: The Changing Roles of the VRT

Wednesday 12/11 7:30pm EST

A current understanding of the VRT position will be explored through the results of the 2017 Roles and Functions of VRTs Survey Data. Demographics of survey participants, frequency that specific VRT job tasks are performed, and factor components are reported. Comparisons to 1989 data will also be made to examine how job roles have changed over the last quarter century.

Presenter: Elyse Connors, Ph.D

Elyse Connors is an assistant professor in the Blindness and Low Vision department at Western Michigan University. She serves as a co-administrator for the VRT program. Her area of research include safer medication management for persons with vision loss, the job tasks and roles of currently practicing VRTs, and the use of GIS to spatially map health resources and areas of need to identify health disparities.

Resources!

As a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist working in a center-based program, I teach a class once a week called Personal Resources (PR). This class is mainly learning about resources in the blindness/low vision community whether locally, nationally, internationally, low tech or high tech. Here are some of my favorites! What do you use?

Talking Books program (Library of Congress)

Hadley

Mississippi State

Flying Blind Top Tech Tidbits

NFB

ACB

AFB

HKNC

World Blind Union

Lighthouse for the Blind

Vispero (Zoomtext, JAWS)

NVDA

Microsoft Narrator

USABA
APH
AppleVis
ADA
CAP (client assistance program)
LSS
MaxiAids
Independent Living Aids
Blind Mice Mega Mall
AIRA

Whew! I think that covers with what I am familiar! I know I could mention a couple dozen or so that would apply more regionally, but I don't want to be too biased! As I noted above, please let me know what YOU use with your clients!

Who, What, When, Where, How, Why of the AER VRT Division

Have you ever thought, "Who are those people that spearhead the VRT division? How did they get there? What do they actually DO? Could I do something like that? Where does it all start?"

If those questions have ever tickled your mind in the least, here are some answers! You the body of VRTs have the opportunity to run the division and elect the positions of VRT Division Chair-Elect, and Secretary/Treasurer every two years. The beauty of the Chair position is that no one goes in alone or goes in cold. As chair-elect you have two years to work with your team to see how things are done, think to how they could be done differently and better, and to plan what you might want to do for your two years. Plus, once the chair steps down, they become immediate past chair and are there for assistance and support! Each position is a two-year term. This sounds a little daunting, I know, but I promise it is a blink of the eye (pun intended?). You can do as much or as little as you desire for the division during your time! Elections are held the year of international convention and the term starts at convention.

So, that is the who and when. Where? Besides going to International Convention (which is mandatory) everything is done by emails and conference calls.

What? Here is the breakdown of some of the fundamentals of the positions:

- 1st year chair elect: participate in division conference calls, support division
- 2nd year chair elect: put together awards committee to select AER VRT Division awards, look for candidate for chair elect and secretary/treasurer, as well as participate in division calls and support
- 1st year chair: set up and lead division conference calls with immediate past chair, chair elect, and secretary /treasurer, coordinate webinars/watercoolers

- 2nd year chair: set up and lead division conference calls with immediate past chair, chair elect, and secretary /treasurer, coordinate webinars/watercoolers, look for candidate for chair elect and secretary/treasurer
- 1st year immediate past chair: create division newsletters, participate in division conference calls, support division
- 2nd year immediate past chair: create division newsletters, participate in division conference calls, support division, look for candidate for chair elect and secretary/treasurer

Why and How: How is easy; just send me an email or call! Why... I was contacted four years ago and when I was asked if I was interested I thought, "Hm, this could be a good opportunity to grow as a VRT, expand my knowledge and career, meet new and noteworthy people, and challenge myself! I have been having fun from day one and would say yes all over again. Let me know what YOU think!

It's a bird...it's a plane... it's AER INTERNATIONAL!!!

Earn CEU's, rub elbows, grown and learn, have fun! The 2020 AER International Conference this year is in St. Louis, Missouri the gateway to the country and beyond! July 22-26.

With conferences come **Awards!** We know that all VRTs dedicate themselves to their work and go out of the way for consumers. However, we know there are those out there who do it all on a level that is just barely human and deserve the recognition. Check out the awards below, what they represent, who has won them before and how you can nominate them. Please don't let the list of procedures overwhelm you! YOU deserve to go in the history books!

VRT Division Awards & Criteria

The Bruce McKenzie Award for Lifetime Achievement

Purpose: The Bruce McKenzie award is a biennial award established by the VRT Division to honor Bruce McKenzie for his pioneering leadership in the field of rehabilitation teaching. It is the Division's highest award, presented to an exemplary individual for outstanding contributions to the field of rehabilitation teaching and independent living services. It is the Division's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Criteria:

- A nominee shall be an active or retired vision rehabilitation therapist/vision rehabilitation therapy supervisor.
- A nominee must have 10 years or more of service in the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.
- A nominee shall have exceptional leadership qualities.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due

consideration.

- A nominee's contribution shall have been national or international in scope.
- A nominee shall be a member of the Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division.

Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

Past Bruce McKenzie Award Recipients:

2010 B.J. LeJeune

2012 Lenore Dillon

2014 George Abbott

2016 John McMahon

2018 Laura Vittorioso and Diane Weiss

The Elizabeth Lennon Award for Meritorious Achievement

Purpose: The award shall be presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the profession of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy, Rehabilitation Teaching, general rehabilitation, or community affairs. Such contributions may be in the form of published materials, presentations, leadership experiences, or work history.

Criteria:

- A nominee shall be active in or retired from the field of vision rehabilitation therapy.
- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the rehabilitation field.
- The uniqueness of a nominee's contribution to the field shall be given due consideration.
- A nominee shall be a member of AER.

Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment history, leadership qualities, contributions, achievements and professional memberships.
- All nominations must be submitted and seconded in writing.

- If possible, a copy of the nominee’s curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

Past Certificate of Recognition Award Recipients:

2010: Susan Dalton
 2010: Patricia Smith
 2012: Marybeth Harrison
 2014: John McMahon
 2016: Polly Abbott

The Alice Raftary Rising Star Award

Purpose: The award shall be presented to an individual who demonstrates potential for exceptional leadership and is expected to provide a unique and lasting contribution to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy.

Criteria:

- A nominee shall be an ACREVP-certified vision rehabilitation therapist.
- A nominee should have no more than three years of VRT professional service.
- A nominee should demonstrate outstanding professionalism and service to the field.
- A nominee shall be a member of the VRT Division

Nominating Procedures:

- All nominations should include biographical information, education and training, employment, leadership qualities, contributions and achievements.
- A supervisor or professional mentor should submit the nomination.
- All nominations should be submitted and seconded in writing.
- If possible, a copy of the nominee’s curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient.
- Nominations must be submitted to Chair & Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.

Past Rising Star Award Recipients:

2010: Ian Shadrick
 2012: Cammy Moraros
 2014: Joseph Jorgenson
 2016: No Award Presented
 2018: Amber Mooney

The Susan and Paul Ponchillia VRT Publication Award

Purpose: The VRT Division is offering a Publication Award to recognize a VRT Division member whose publication contributes highly to the field of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy. Submissions may include, but are not limited to, journal articles, books, chapters of books, and development of or significant contributions to websites. This award carries a \$250 honorarium to further encourage VRT Division members to write and publish.

Criteria:

- Author(s) must be a member(s) of the VRT Division.
- The publication should be within the current biennium (July 2006—June2008)
- The publication submitted should contribute to the rehabilitation field and enhance our knowledge base.

Nominating Procedure:

- Nominations may be submitted by the author or by another member of the Division.
- A copy of the publication must be submitted to the Awards Committee. Only publications costing over \$25 will be returned, please indicate as such with your submission.
- If possible, a copy of the author's curriculum vitae should be included.
- The Division Awards Committee shall select the award recipient and the division of the honorarium, if necessary.
- Nominations must be submitted to the Chair-Elect and Awards Committee Chair.
- Cover letter must include: Author's name and Contact Information; Nominator's name and contact information (if different than author); A Brief Summary of the Publication (no more than 2 paragraphs) of the significance of the publication; Publication date(s)/ Website date(s); and Publication title and credits.

Past VRT Publication Award Recipients:

2010: Vision Aware
2012: Margaret Cleary
2014: John McMahon & Kristy Swallow (Co-Authors)
2016: Maureen Duffy
2018: Steven Kelley

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

February 15, 2020 Deadline for articles for next issue of VRT News. Send articles to Amber Mooney at amooney@theiris.org.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Division Board Contact Information

Chair: Amber Mooney, M.Ed., CVRT
amooney@theiris.org

Please contact me if you have any questions, concerns, or errors regarding the VRT newsletter.