



Blindness and Low Vision Support Group February 18th Recap

Recap

At our February support group meeting, we focused on understanding visual distortion, sharing participant experiences, and hands-on exploration of smartphone accessibility tools

Participants shared practical strategies and personal experiences, including:

- Glasses designed to optimize vision, where the optometrist intentionally adjusted refraction testing to match the participant's areas of residual vision
- The importance of clinicians being aware of areas of reduced or variable residual vision when prescribing lenses and conducting visual assessments

Why Do Straight Lines Look Wavy or Squiggly in Macular Degeneration?

- In macular degeneration, the central part of the retina becomes damaged and uneven
- When light hits this distorted retinal area, straight lines are mapped incorrectly to the brain, causing them to appear wavy or squiggly instead of straight

Helpful strategies discussed included:

- Redirecting gaze away from the affected central region
- Actively using areas of residual peripheral vision to reduce distortion
- Optometry Resource Shared

[Invision Optometry Website](#)

Technology & Accessibility Exploration

After the group discussion, we split into virtual and in-person sessions

Virtual group:

Open Q&A focused on accessibility tools, device-specific challenges, and troubleshooting

In-person group:

Small groups worked hands-on with specific tasks participants wanted to improve, using:

- iPhone and Android devices
- Magnifier App
- Seeing AI
- Google Gemini
- Built-in accessibility features on each device

Key takeaways:

- Android accessibility settings can vary significantly depending on the phone model, which can make features harder to find or use consistently
- Apple devices and different iOS versions also affect which accessibility tools are available and how they appear
- Older operating systems may have fewer customization options compared to newer versions

Closing & Feedback

- We concluded the session by completing participant surveys, which help us understand what is most useful and how we can continue improving future support group meetings

Upcoming Meeting:

Topic: Mobility, Balance, and Fall Prevention

Guest speaker: Michelle Naito, PT

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Time: 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Format: In-Person with virtual component (Zoom)

[Support Group Website](#)

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