

## Accessibilities Workbook Review

Notes from 2/16/2022

We finished the Accessibilities Workbook and voted next to review the CEC Handbook created in Hawaii in 2011, the only CEC handbook in existence that we know of but for a smaller version out of Area 44, which we also plan to review.

We had only 5 members in attendance tonight. The reading was the last few pages in the workbook which consisted of kit contents and workshops ideas. We read the samples letters and noted that the letter to professionals working with blind or deaf or those with mental health challenges was generic enough to be used widely and elsewhere.

We also pondered the “intellectual processing” terminology and whether that was an acceptable description. We didn’t explore this fully.

Bobby followed up with this note: I would like to share a few thoughts from the tonight’s reading from p.19. The International Accessibility Symbol is shown twice on page 19... it seems to me we (AA) has already acknowledge the use of this symbol and as such why shouldn't we use it as our (AA) symbol for meeting accessibility?

Grant followed up with the attached suggestions when blind or low vision members present at meetings. See attached.

We also asked if Braille was becoming obsolete? The Access checklist doesn’t speak as much about blind low vision access.

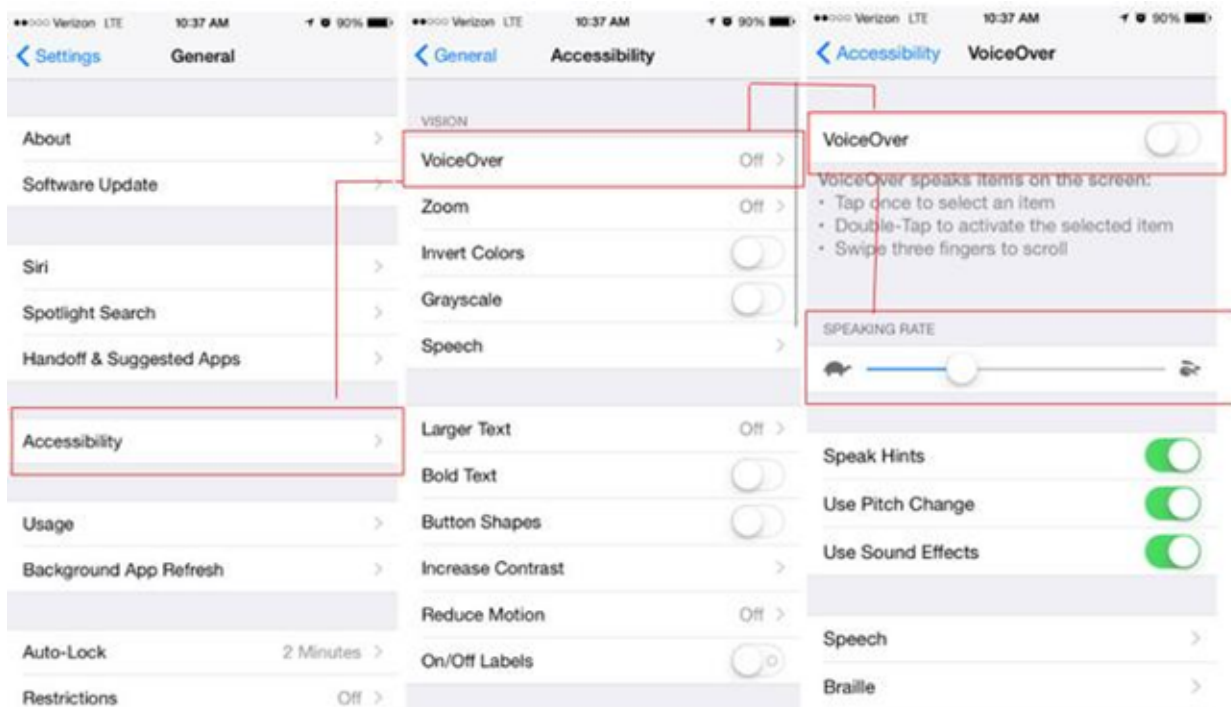
Kathi later did an internet search and found one source:

<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/notetoself/episodes/braille-obsolete>

"If you rely too much on technology instead of braille, then you get people who are functionally illiterate," says Chris Danielsen, spokesman for the [National Federation of the Blind](#). "I have personally seen people with advanced degrees that are very bad at spelling, punctuation, structuring proper grammatical syntax... simply because they've never really read anything. They've never had to put their hands on words and sentences and find out how they're spelled and constructed."

Not everyone agrees. We've got all the sides — and more from the students — on our show this week (click "play" in the media player above).

**And you can test the accessibility options using your own Apple products...**



To set up VoiceOver on an iOS phone, go to "General" --> "Accessibility" --> "VoiceOver" (New Tech City)

**Other apps mentioned in this episode:**

### [LookTel Money Identifier](#)

*Recognizes currency and speaks the denomination, to help people recognize bills.*

### [KNFB Reader App](#)

*Reads text from a digital photograph.*

**Thanks to everyone who contributed!**

### **Suggestions for AA meeting attendees who are blind or low vision**

(Important note: Many people who are legally blind have some degree of usable vision.)

- ☐ Speak directly to the person, not to someone who may have brought them into the room. Since you cannot make eye contact, touch their arm or do something to let them know you are speaking to them and not to somebody else.
- ☐ Welcome the blind person as you would any other newcomer.
- ☐ Ask how you can help, and know that the blind person bears some responsibility for making their needs known and for setting you at ease about their disability
- ☐ If the person has a guide dog, DO Not interact with it, do not touch it, do not talk to it, do not offer it a cracker. It's not a pet, and no matter how much you love dogs, you should ignore it unless the blind person invites you to interact with it. If it's a hot day, you might ask the person if they would like a bowl of water for their dog
- ☐ Let the person know what refreshments are available and offer to get something for them
- ☐ Encourage others to make the newcomer feel welcome.
- ☐ Treat the blind person exactly as you would wish to be treated
- ☐ Especially if the person is a newcomer, offer them your phone number and give them some encouragement. If they cannot write your number down, give them your card and they will get somebody to read it to them; if they have a phone, they may prefer to put your number into it
- ☐ Don't hesitate to use words like see and look; most blind folks use those words too
- ☐ To show a blind person to a chair, just let them take your arm and walk with you. Do not take their arm. When you reach the chair, just place their hand on the back of it and they will do the rest

- ☐ Offer to help them find a rest room; you don't have to go in with them. They'll figure things out once they are inside. Wait outside the door for them if they would like you too
- ☐ Before or after the meeting, encourage other participants to introduce themselves and talk to the blind person. Most of us are friendly, but it's difficult to make the initial contact with people because we can't see where they are
- ☐ If you want to know if the person has usable vision, ask them.
- ☐ Let them know about services such as the audio Grapevine, online services, and braille AA literature if they happen to be a braille user
- ☐ Have fun getting to know the person; they may be blind, but both of you are alcoholics, so you have a lot in common
- ☐ As members of Alcoholics Anonymous, each of us is responsible for making newcomers feel welcome, even if they happen to be blind or have some other disability.