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Instructions for the use of your coloured overlay

Introduction

Some people have problems when they read for a long time. These problems include blurring, visual distortions, discomfort, and headaches or migraine. People with any of these problems should arrange to have a thorough eye examination with an optometrist. Their condition may require treatment with eye exercises or glasses. If the problems cannot be resolved by glasses or exercises, then they may be helped by reading through coloured overlays or glasses. You have been prescribed an overlay to see if it helps you.

How to use the overlay

When you are reading, simply place the sheet over the page. You may need to adjust the position of the page or the lighting to avoid reflections from the surface of the overlay.

When to use the overlay

Use the overlay as much as you like. Please do not feel that you have to use it if it does not help. The purpose of the overlay is to see if it helps, and the trial period with the overlay will not have been a "failure" if it tells us that coloured glasses do not work for you.

What to do if the overlay helps

If you feel that the overlay helps, this could be for two reasons. It could appear to help simply because it makes the page look different; or it could really be making the page easier to read. If the overlay is simply making the page look different then this effect will probably "wear off" and coloured glasses will not be useful.

We suggest that children should use the overlay for a few weeks before deciding whether it is worth prescribing coloured glasses. If your child loses interest in using the overlay, then it is probably not worthwhile progressing to coloured glasses.

If, after a few weeks, your child is still **voluntarily** using the overlay then they are likely to benefit from coloured glasses. It can be useful to ask your child to read out loud to you, reading a few lines with the overlay and then a few lines without. If the overlay is helping you will probably hear the improvement.

Other help and information

You may find using coloured paper that matches your overlay helpful when writing.

Coloured lenses are more convenient to use than an overlay. They can also help more than an overlay because the colour of the lenses is more accurately specified. The colour of the glasses is often different to the colour of the overlay.

A special instrument, the Intuitive Colorimeter, is used to select the colour of the lenses. With this equipment, and with precise tinting, we make glasses to optimally reduce the symptoms of visual stress.

Further information and useful downloads are available from:

www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/overlays/

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