

The AV Clinic

EIKHOLT
AUDIO
VISUAL
CLINIC



EIKHOLT

Established in 1980, Eikholt is a national competence center that specializes in serving individuals with combined visual and hearing impairments, also known as deafblindness. Today, Eikholt serves as both a competence center and a course and mastery center with a focus on providing person-centered rehabilitation to those with deafblindness

Eikholt is a unique center that provides training, evaluation, and optimization of vision and hearing functions, knowledge development, research, and knowledge dissemination. As a nationwide resource center in the specialist health service, Eikholt is a part of the National Competence Service for the Deaf-Blind (NKDB).

We offer low-threshold services, meaning individuals with combined visual and hearing impairments can contact Eikholt directly. Professionals or proxies may also contact us on behalf of the person concerned. Eikholt will then assess whether our services are appropriate or provide guidance on alternative options.

Contact information is available at www.eikholt.no

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Why does Eikholt have an AV clinic?

Sight and hearing are our most important senses for perceiving the world around us. When one sense is impaired, we rely on the other to compensate.

However, when both senses are compromised, it can lead to difficulties in communication, information processing, orientation, and movement. These are essential functions for daily living and social interaction.

The AV Clinic, named after the initials for Audio and Visio, provides a unique opportunity to examine and map vision and hearing function in relation to the user's desired activities. The focus is on empowering the user to gain insight and knowledge about their sensory loss, enabling them to select the best solutions for daily challenges.

At the AV Clinic, we do not differentiate between congenital and acquired causes of impaired vision and hearing function, as we prioritize the individual's unique needs and prerequisites.





*"Satisfied with the course, for the first time I realized how the eye and the brain work together."
(Client at Eikholt)*

What happens in the AV clinic?

The AV Clinic's primary task is to optimize the functional conditions for individuals with combined sensory loss. To achieve this, we gather information about the individual's diagnosis, previous treatments, measures taken, and assistive devices in use.

Before the initial meeting at the AV Clinic, we hold discussions with the user and/or their close relatives to understand their overall life situation and identify their most pressing needs. We prioritize the user's perspective and believe that they are the expert on their own life.

The AV Clinic serves as a learning and mastery arena, which requires a significant investment of time to develop strong relationships. Professional staff are trained to facilitate conversations and adjust the environment to enhance communication. This creates a foundation for a secure relationship between the user/close person and the professional staff.



Mapping of needs

Mapping needs is a process that can be challenging, as the user may not always know what is possible and their needs may not be immediately apparent. Some activities may be resolved by others assisting or taking over tasks, while other important activities may have been abandoned due to a lack of knowledge about available solutions.

As the user's understanding of what is achievable becomes clearer, their "action horizon" changes, and their needs constantly evolve due to the development of their environment and themselves. Motivations and desires may also fluctuate over time, depending on their level of knowledge and insight into their own situation and combined visual and hearing impairment / deafblindness.

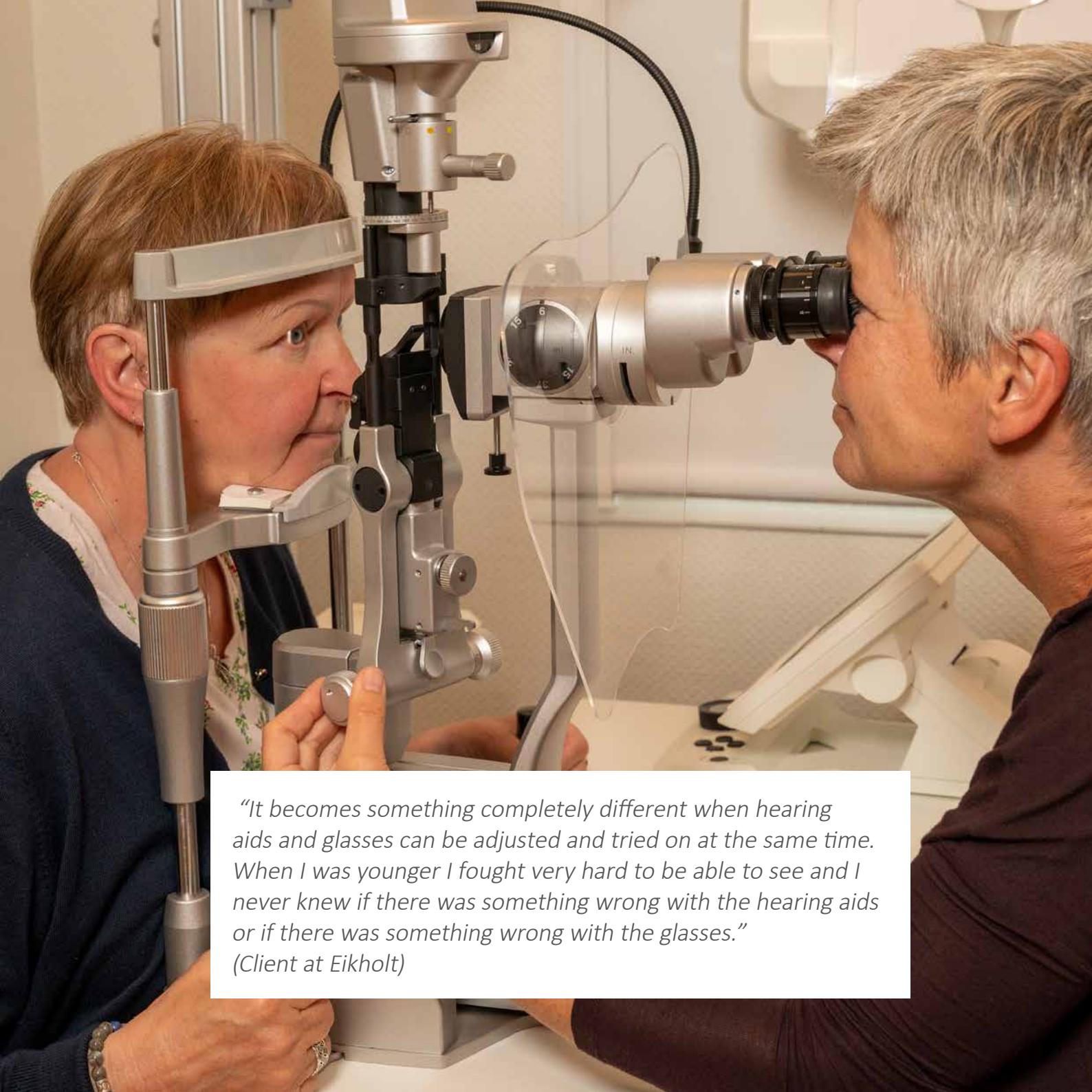
At Eikholt, we respect the user's self-assessment in the needs mapping process, as their needs, wishes, and goals provide important motivation and energy. By starting from these and engaging in a dialogue with the professional(s), we can build the user's understanding of what it will take to achieve their goals.

It's crucial to establish a dialogue between the user and the professional(s) to gain insight into their needs, wishes, priorities, expectations, and existential, psychosocial, cognitive, and practical prerequisites for a relevant rehabilitation process. This dialogue helps users become more aware of their situation, opportunities, values, wishes, priorities, and needs.

Mapping of vision and hearing function

At the AV clinic, we offer various opportunities to comprehensively map the functions and skills of people with sensory loss. Given the multifaceted nature of the sight and hearing function, which consists of numerous sub-functions, we utilize a range of standardized tests and equipment, as well as observational methods during activities to gain a better understanding of the visual and auditory function. Our personnel possess cutting-edge expertise and work collaboratively across interdisciplinary teams to map the visual and auditory function of users with diverse diagnoses, challenges, and age groups. At Eikholt, we strive to optimize speech comprehension, which is an “audiovisual phenomenon” that occurs as a result of the interaction between sight and hearing. The brain uses information from both senses to keep up in social situations, and rehabilitation is most effective when both sensory potentials can be fully utilized.

At Eikholt, we recognize that gaining insight and understanding of one’s own situation requires time and patience. Therefore, mapping the visual and auditory function may take several days to ensure that the user understands their own function and how it is affected in different situations. We place great importance on user insight and understanding, and it forms the basis for all choices in the user journey. As such, we prioritize setting aside adequate time for explanation and learning as part of the mapping process.



*"It becomes something completely different when hearing aids and glasses can be adjusted and tried on at the same time. When I was younger I fought very hard to be able to see and I never knew if there was something wrong with the hearing aids or if there was something wrong with the glasses."
(Client at Eikholt)*

Optimization

Optimizing vision and hearing function is always tailored to specific activities, as many people come to Eikholt to learn important everyday skills. This may include courses in using mobile phones, training in mobility, or practical cooking skills. An important aspect of this optimization process involves mapping out the necessary conditions for performing these activities, such as lighting, contrast, magnification, sound, and acoustics. This ensures optimal conditions for success and helps achieve the user's goals.

To optimize the senses, we often test and adapt hearing aids, special optics, or other specific aids to improve the user's possibilities of carrying out an activity. This optimization process is based on both sensory function mapping and knowledge of the specific requirements for each activity. When visual and hearing impairments co-occur, they reinforce each other. Therefore, taking a holistic approach contributes to a better understanding of the user's needs.

At the AV clinic, we value interdisciplinary work and close collaboration between experts in vision and hearing. This approach ensures that the user's needs are addressed comprehensively, and that the optimization process is effective and tailored to their specific needs.



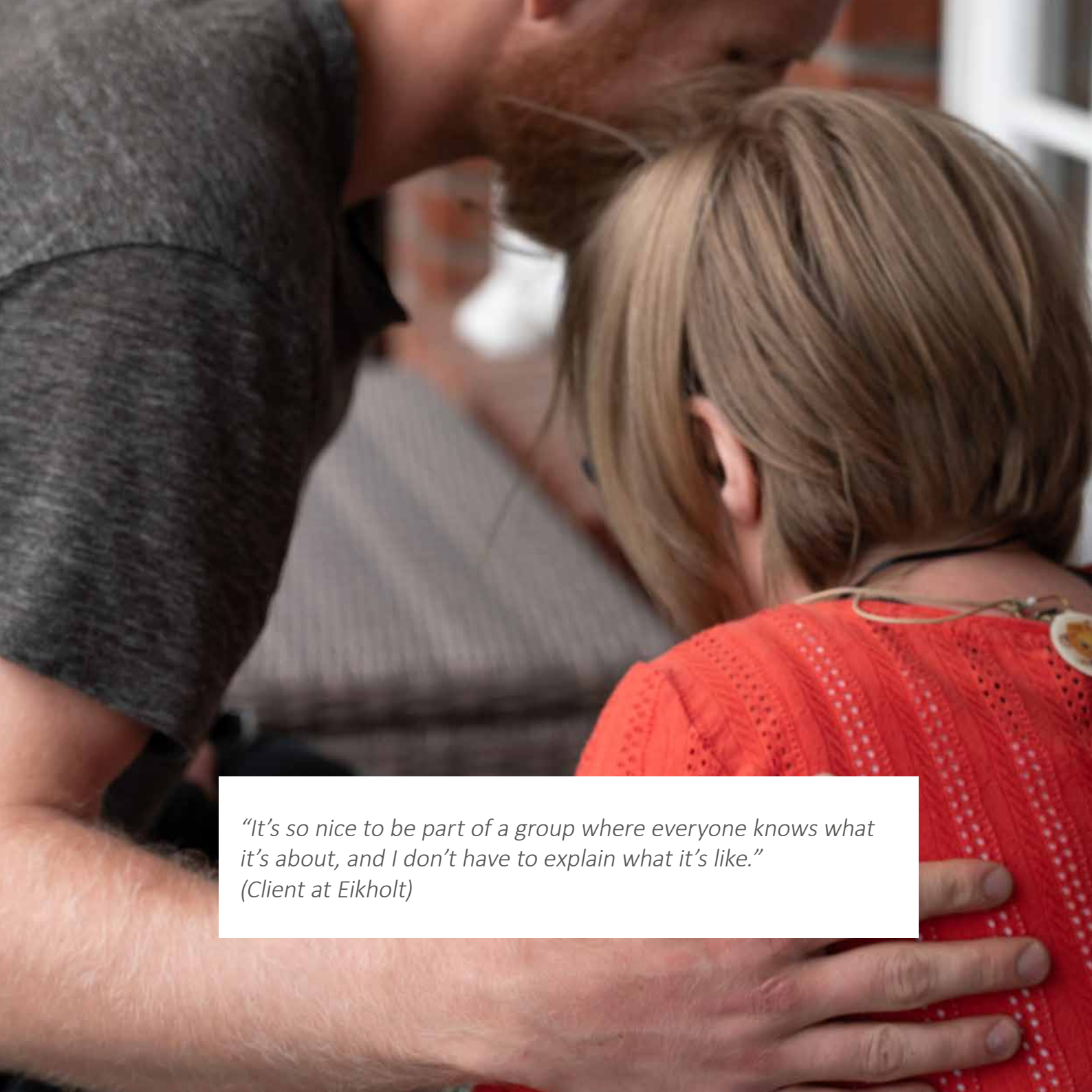
*"I feel understood about the reactions I have, now I understand that they are normal."
(Client at Eikholt)*

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s Bonnet

The AV clinic at Eikholt emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in understanding the needs of its users, who are whole human beings with different skills, emotions, and consciousness. To achieve this, the clinic works closely with other professionals in psychosocial, communication, and ICT. The clinic also provides practical exercises for assessment and optimization of vision and hearing functions, which help both users and their loved ones learn more about how sight and hearing work together in different situations. Communication arrangements, such as interpreters, sign language staff, and technical solutions, are also made to ensure effective communication.

The activities in the AV clinic are often integrated with the course activities at Eikholt, where users alternate between participating in their courses and receiving adjustments to their visual and hearing aids in the clinic. The goal is to provide users with the best possible conditions for success in their course work. Overall, the AV clinic at Eikholt takes a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and meeting the diverse needs of its users, with a focus on optimizing their vision and hearing function in relation to specific activities.



A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and a woman with blonde hair. The man is wearing a dark grey t-shirt and has his arms around the woman. The woman is wearing a red, textured, short-sleeved top. They are both looking down, and the man is leaning in towards the woman, suggesting a moment of emotional connection or support.

*“It’s so nice to be part of a group where everyone knows what it’s about, and I don’t have to explain what it’s like.”
(Client at Eikholt)*

Recommendations and implementation of measures

This collaboration between Eikholt and local services is important for ensuring that users have continued support after their stay at Eikholt. It also helps to ensure that users can access the services and resources they need in their local community. The plan created with goals and sub-goals is regularly evaluated to ensure that the measures put in place are effective and adjusted as needed. The professionals at Eikholt also provide education and training to loved ones and caregivers to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to support the user in their daily life. Eikholt's ultimate goal is to help users achieve greater independence, better quality of life, and increased participation in their communities.

Follow-up of people with combined impaired vision and hearing function must be seen in a life course perspective.



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for people with visual impairments.
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