

Text of the speech by M BETTON Joël representing UNAKAM France, member of the CFPSAA.

Introduction:

In France, we have only one profession which brings together masseurs and physiotherapists unlike other countries in Europe which have a profession of masseur and a profession of physiotherapist.

Since this profession was created in 1946, blind and partially sighted people have been able to do this training. Before that date there was a training called gymnast masseur for the visually impaired which had been created in 1906 at the Valentin Haüy association.

Currently the training for the visually impaired is done in specialized institutes, it is the same as that done in institutes for people who do not have sight problems.

Part of the training takes place at a university.

The duration of the training is 5 years with internships in hospitals, clinics, rehabilitation centers and in private practices.

The training is validated at the end of the course with a state diploma.

We have around 2,000 visually impaired masseurs-physiotherapists in activity, with 40% liberal and 60% salaried.

We have launched a survey with the European Blind Union to find out the difficulties encountered by visually impaired physiotherapists in the performance of their work.

This survey shows that our visually impaired colleagues encounter the same problems as with us.

DEVELOPMENT:

In recent years we have encountered more and more difficulties in exercising our profession.

In fact, the software used both as a freelance and as an employee is less and less accessible for our screen review tools (speech synthesis and braille displays).

Physiotherapy devices that were previously usable because they had buttons or knobs are being replaced by devices with touch screens that are not accessible to blind people.

We are also encountering difficulties in training ourselves because all the training offered since the pandemic is remote, the documents are not readable by our screen reviews, the videos are not commented on and our tools do not allow us to validate these trainings.

CONCLUSION:

If we do not find a solution to these problems encountered in a few years, we will no longer be able to do our job properly because we will be blocked by software or hardware that is not accessible.

I think we have to react at European level because these problems are common to all visually impaired people to practice this profession.

I believe in universal design in computing:

The philosophy of universal design involves "producer-client upstream of projects" actors, therefore the broadest and most inclusive vision of society is imposed. Whether it is software or hardware, the specifications are built on the basis of universal use. Several global companies have adopted the methods of universal design. For example: the APPLE company with these products such as iPhone, iPad ...