Health Literacy & Cultural Competency Tools and Techniques

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What are the literacy demands in health and healthcare?

“Culture and health literacy both influence the content and outcome of health care encounters.”

“This intersection between culture and health literacy is recognized in the DHHS OMH National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health Care.”

Low Health Literacy is Linked to ...

- Under-utilization of services
- Increased medication errors
- Poor health knowledge
- Increased hospitalizations
- Poor health outcomes
- Increased healthcare costs


Who is at Risk?

Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy Level by Educational Attainment


Who is at Risk?

Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy Level by Age


Percentage of Adults in Each Health Literacy Level by Race/Ethnic Group

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)

- Principle Standard (Standard 1)
- Governance, Leadership and Workforce (Standards 2-4)
- Communication and Language Assistance (Standards 5-8)
- Engagement, Continuous Improvement and Accountability (Standards 9-15)


Ten Attributes of Health Literate Organizations

1. Leadership makes health literacy a priority
2. Integrated into planning, evaluation, safety and quality efforts
3. Prepare the workforce
4. Consumers included in design, implementation and evaluation
5. Shame-free environments meet wide range of client needs


Ten Attributes of Health Literate Organizations

6. Health literacy strategies used in interpersonal communication
7. Easy access, navigation support
8. Materials are easy to read, understand and act on
9. Health literacy is addressed at high risk points
10. Communicate health insurance and health costs clearly

Research-based Health Literacy Interventions

- Health literacy training
- Plain language
- Teach-back technique


Research-based Cultural Competency Interventions

- Cultural competency training
- Language access services
- Use of community health workers


Language Access Services

- Interpreting
- Translating

Avoid Medical Jargon | Use Living Room Language

| Diagnosis | Cause of your illness |
| Anti-inflammatory | Lowers fever and swelling |
| Nasal congestion | Stuffy nose |
| Lesion | Cut, wound, sore |
| Risk factor | Will increase your chance of getting... |

Teach-back

> Checking for understanding

Do you have any questions?

Tips for Working with Interpreters

> Work with a trained interpreter
> Clarify interpreter's role
> Note mode of interpretation
> Use triadic interview process
> Maintain transparency
> Use appropriate positioning
> Use first-person speech
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Video Demonstration

Video Clip: Working Effectively With an Interpreter


Health Professional Training

Module 1: Intro to Health Communication
Module 2: Health Literacy
Module 3: Cultural Competency
Module 4: Limited English Proficiency

http://www.hrsa.gov/publichealth/healthliteracy

Tips for Translating

Methods
- Single Translation
- Parallel Translation
- Trans-creation

Ensuring Quality
- Back Translation
- Field Testing


Birth control methods brochures in five languages. Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
RECOMMENDED REGARDING WRITING IN TERMS OF ITS RECEPTION

IT IS NOT INAPPROPRIATE, WHEN USING PRINT MEDIA TO IMPART MATERIAL OF A FACTUAL OR INTERPRETIVE NATURE WHICH HOLDS THE INTENTION OF CONVEYING CRITICAL INFORMATION TO AND/OR INCLUDING A CRITICAL ACTION BY ITS PROSPECTIVE RECIPIENTS, TO EMPLOY RELATIVELY NONCOMPLEX VERBIAGE SO AS TO MAXIMIZE COMPREHENSION IN THE AFOREMENTIONED POPULATION.

Source: Lessons in Plain Language 1992, PLAN, Inc.

Plain Language

▶ Lots of white space
▶ Serif font for text
▶ Non serif for headers
▶ Large type (12 pt or larger)
▶ Upper and lower case—not all caps

Plain Language

▶ Keep it simple
▶ Use active voice
▶ Use present tense
▶ Avoid jargon

Plain Language

▶ Short words, short sentences
▶ Everyday language
▶ Need to know information
▶ Make it actionable
▶ Define unfamiliar words and include pronunciation

Key Points

- Health literacy, culture and language are interrelated and affect health communication
- Health literacy and cultural competency interventions used together improve access
- Apply plain language principles to improve your messages and materials

Resources

- Culturally Sensitive Health Communication, April 30th
  www.une.edu/ahec
- Health Literacy Leadership Institute, June 13th
  www.go.tufts.edu/summerinstitute
- National Center for Cultural Competence
  http://nccc.georgetown.edu
- CDC Health Literacy - www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy
- Teach-back Toolkit - www.teachbacktraining.org
- CLAS - www.thinkculturehealth.hhs.gov