Key Takeaways Health Literacy

What is health literacy?

• Personal health literacy is the degree to which individuals can find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

• Organizational health literacy is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.¹

What does having low health literacy look like?

➢ Missed appointments
➢ Lack of follow through with additional testing, referrals, or follow-ups
➢ Incorrectly filling out medical forms or not at all
➢ Failure to pick up medication or medication taken incorrectly
➢ Not asking questions
➢ A patient who is not able to list the medications or describe their own treatments²

Strategies for Improving Organizational Health Literacy

• Assess health literacy within your organization
• Make health literacy part of your organization’s mission, structure, policies, operational structure, and strategy
• Train and support workforce to learn more about health literacy and incorporate cultural competency into care
  o Know your audience
  o Incorporate audience needs into the development and testing of oral or written educational materials
  o Be conscious of personal bias
  o Be prepared to meet patient and their family where they are at
Key Takeaways Health Literacy

Communication Strategies for Improving Health Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Non-Verbal</th>
<th>Cultural Relevant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep it Simple</td>
<td>Smile. Build Rapport.</td>
<td>Use preferred terminology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate Patient’s Words</td>
<td>Make sure the room is private and comfortable</td>
<td>Understand belief systems about health, disease, wellness</td>
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<td>Give most important information first</td>
<td>Use easy to understand visuals</td>
<td>Understand and respect cultural differences</td>
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<td>Avoid information overload</td>
<td>Look for active listening</td>
<td>Incorporate traditional healing</td>
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<td>Speak Slowly</td>
<td>Sit down (instead of standing)</td>
<td>Speak in native language or use a translator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use Teach Back</td>
<td>Demonstrate</td>
<td>Stay connected</td>
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Resources UIOs can use to Improve Health Literacy

- IHS Introduction to Health Literacy
- National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy
- The Plain Writing Act of 2010
- CDC Health Literacy Training & Resources
- The CDC Clear Communication Index
- Additional Health Literacy Trainings

Citations

