Developing Easy-to-Read Patient Education Materials

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Training Objectives

By the end of this training, you will be able to:

• demonstrate an understanding of the literacy problem and its impact on health status
• identify the steps in planning effective brochures
• identify the steps in developing effective brochures
• communicate health literacy concepts to colleagues
What is Literacy?

“Using print and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

National Adult Literacy Survey

What is Health Literacy?

“The ability to read and comprehend prescription bottles, appointment slips, and other essential health-related materials required to successfully function as a patient.”

Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs
Health Literacy

National Adult Literacy Survey (1992)
- 90 million adults (47%) read at the lowest levels
- 75% of Welfare recipients read at the lowest levels

Health Literacy Research

- 42% are able to understand directions for taking medicine on an empty stomach
- 26% do not understand information regarding when a next appointment is scheduled
- 60% cannot understand an informed consent form
- 33% do not understand instructions for an upper GI tract x-ray written at a 4th grade level
Is there a match between our readers and our materials?

What is out there:
“Sometimes a sodium (salt) restricted diet is recommended...because reduction of salt may also help to lower blood pressure.”

What should be out there:
“If your blood pressure is high, eat less salt.”
Levels in the Reading Process

Oral Language and Other Pre-requisite Skills

Decoding
Can reader hear or read the words accurately?

Literal Comprehension
Can reader re-phrase in their own words?

Inference
Action - What + How

Critical Thinking
“Do I want to use this?”

Problem Solving
Information-Affective Response
The Purple Turtle

I don't know where in the world I'd be if I hadn't met the purple turtle. Would you like to find out why? It's quite a story.

I was sitting on our porch one morning thinking I'd have to dig some worms. I had finished the chores on my father's farm and now I wanted to go fishing.
Planning Your Brochure

Overview

• Identify resources
• Define the target audience
• Define goals and objectives
• Determine key concepts and messages
• Research the topic
• Develop an outline
• Involve the target audience and other experts
• Define the distribution plan
• Identify the look and design
Scenario: You need a pamphlet to educate patients about the use of Viagra for Male Erectile Dysfunction. This pamphlet will be handed out in conjunction with drug dispensary, however, it should also be something functional for a clinic waiting room area.

Your Job: Develop some form of printed patient education that will educate both patients using Viagra and those who may be thinking about using Viagra.

Resources: Printing Department
Colored Paper
$0
Personal Computer (w/Word Processing or Desktop Publishing)
Clip Art Books and Software
Planning Your Brochure
Identify Resources

• Who will write it?
• Who has overall responsibility for the development?
• Who will produce it?
• Who will edit it?
• Who will design it?
• What’s your timeline?
• How many brochures are needed?
Planning Your Brochure
Define the Target Audience

• Who are they-- Age, gender, culture?
• Reading level
• Needs, interests, and behaviors relevant to the audience
• Audience input
• Distribution locations
Planning Your Brochure
Define Goals & Objectives

• What is the purpose?
• Are we teaching new facts?
  If so, what facts?
• Are we changing attitudes?
  If so, what attitudes?
• Are we changing behaviors?
  If so, what behaviors?
Planning Your Brochure
Determine Key Concepts & Messages

• What information does the audience need to know?
• What concerns do you want to address?
• What misconceptions do you want to address?
Planning Your Brochure
Determine Key Concepts & Messages

• What are the key concepts and messages?
• Do we have too many concepts and messages? If so, can we delete some?
Planning Your Brochure
Research the Topic

• Do you know everything about the topic that needs to be included?
• Do you have the most current and accurate information?
• Is there an expert who is available to fact check it?
• Should you include Grady-specific info?
Planning Your Brochure

Develop an Outline
Planning Your Brochure

Involve the Target Audience and Other Experts

• Why do we want to involve our target audience?
• How can we learn more about our target audience, their knowledge, attitudes, practices, and opinions about our subject matter?
Planning Your Brochure
Define a Distribution Plan

• What distribution locations do members of the target audience visit?
• Where do they get health related information?
• Where can we display our brochures?
• How many do we need at each distribution point?
• How will we keep these points stocked?
Planning Your Brochure
Look & Design

- Size
- Font
- Paper color
- Paper weight, type
- Graphics
- Reproducibility
Content

Date
- Information is up-to-date

Purpose & Objectives
- Limited and focused

Relevancy
- Information is relevant and meaningful to the intended readers
- Involve the audience in the planning and writing of the materials to be sure

Culturally, gender, and age-appropriate

Clarity
- Clear and easy to understand
- No chance for misunderstanding
Content

Scope
- Limit the content to the “need to know” information
- Limit the number of concepts, points, or messages
- Focus on skills and how-to behaviors
- Make the information action-orientated, not just facts
- Repeat and summarize the main points
- Use concrete examples rather than abstract concepts
Content

Abstract vs. Concrete Concepts

Abstract:
Safe sex cuts your chances of getting an STD.

Concrete:
Use a condom when you have sex.

Abstract:
Dirt, hair, and other debris can contaminate food.

Concrete:
Wear a hairnet whenever you are in the kitchen.

Abstract:
Get organized before you make a recipe.

Concrete:
______________________________
Content

Tone & Appeal
Present information in a truthful, sincere, positive manner; no biases, prejudices, nor misleading concepts

Recognition & Contact Information
Use your logo with a phone number or address for more information

Grady Health System®

Office of Health Promotion
(404) 616-7554
Literacy Demand

Reading Level
• Use a readability test
• Aim for 6th grade or less

Vocabulary/Use of Language
Things to avoid:
• Words with more than 2 syllables
• Medical jargon
• Technical words
• Abbreviations or unfamiliar acronyms
• Statistics
• Concept words
• Value-judgment words
• Negative words
• Contractions
Literacy Demand

Sentences & Paragraphs
• Use conversational style and active voice
• Break long sentences into shorter ones
  (no more than 12-15 words long)

Spelling
Organization

Context
Set the stage before giving new information
State “if” before “then”

Example:
Broccoli, carrots, sweet potatoes, peas, spinach, and squash have many nutrients.

Better: These foods have many nutrients: broccoli, carrots, sweet potatoes, peas, spinach, and squash.
How to use your metered-dose inhaler:

1. First, make sure your inhaler has medicine in it.
2. Take off the cap and hold the inhaler upright.
3. Shake the can for 3 seconds.
4. Tilt your head back and breathe out.
5. ...
Organization

Grouping ("Chunking")
• Put related information together
• Use bullets instead of paragraphs

Headings
• Organize info under headings
• Use short explanatory headings instead of single words
Format Layout

How the Eye Reads a Page

Word Breaks
• Do not hyphenate

Sentence Breaks
• Only at natural pauses
• Do not wrap around pictures

White Space
• The more, the better

Justification
• Left justify, leave right ragged

You can see how wrapping text around a picture or makes it difficult for a person with poor reading skills to follow.
Format
Typography

Font Size
Use at least 12 point

Font Face
When in doubt, use a serif font

This is Serif Font – Times New Roman
This is San Serif Font – Arial
Format
Typography

Case
- Use mixed case
- Do not use drop caps

Add Highlights & Emphasis

ALL CAPS ARE NOT EASY TO READ
Fancy fonts (like italics and script) are not easy to read
Drop caps are not easy to read
D_d y__ _ kn_w th_t y__ c_n r__ d prtty w_ll w_th th_ v_w_l l_tt_r_s l_ft ___t?

_u_ _oo_ _a_ _a_ e__
__e_ _e_ o_o_o_a__
a_e _e__ ou_!
Graphics

A picture is worth a thousand words...
...2 thousand if your audience can’t read.

Graphics on a Budget

- Microsoft Publisher; www.dgl.microsoft.com
- Clip art: books, software, on-line
- Coloring books
- Magazines (w/artist/photographer’s credit)
- Photographs (w/patient’s signed consent, Grady PR release form)
- GHS Patient Education Committee
Graphics

✓ Relevant
✓ Basic line drawings; little detail
✓ Familiar and easily recognized by the audience
✓ No diagrams, graphs, technical tables
✓ Attention-getting cover
✓ Action graphics; show desired behavior
✓ Graphics with captions
✓ Even placement throughout
Graphics
Avoid showing the wrong behavior
Graphics
Don’t show body parts out of context
Graphics

Good graphics speak for themselves
Getting your readers “involved” encourages them to:
✓ keep the brochure—not throw it away
✓ communicate with their providers
✓ share information with friends and family
✓ maintain mini-records of their health
1. Questions

Write down the name of your medicine?
______________________

What was your blood pressure today?
____ / ____  Date:_____  

2. Problem Solving

This is what I will do when I crave a cigarette:

1. ____________________
2. ____________________
3. ____________________
3. Word-Picture Association

Circle what you will do to get more aerobic exercise:

![Exercise images]

4. Personalization

This is your diet record. Write your name here:

____________________
### Fry Graph for Estimating Readability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th># of Syllables</th>
<th># of Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st 100 words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd 100 words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd 100 words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals** = Average # syllables, Average # sentences \( \frac{3}{3} \)
## Estimating Readability Using Word Processing Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Commands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WordPerfect 9</td>
<td>Tools → Grammatik → Options → Analysis → Readability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Word</td>
<td>Tools → Spelling &amp; Grammar (or press F7) → Options → (Check box) “show readability statistics” → OK → (Resume spell check; make corrections as needed. When done, readability statistics pop up on screen)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>