Health Literacy: Making knowledge powerful

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2019 Maine Library Association Conference

Building Stronger

Health Literacy:
Making knowledge powerful

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Community Engagement Coordinator
All of Us Research Program
National Institutes of Health
Nation’s research agency
27 institutes and offices

National Library of Medicine
World’s largest biomedical library

National Network of Libraries of Medicine
Program of the NLM comprised of 8 Regional Libraries (RMLs) and 5 offices

New England Region (NNLM NER)
Serves Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Vermont
Course Objectives

**Improve**
Improve the knowledge of literacy as it pertains to health and wellness

**Develop**
Develop strategies to promote health information while advancing literacy skills.

**Demonstrate**
Demonstrate a more diverse understanding of NIH’s online resources to promote health and wellness
Health Literacy Description
The Healthy People 2010 and 2020 health literacy definition focuses on individual skills:

– Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Health Literacy Definition
Health literacy requires...

- Navigation with
  - Caring for ourselves and others
  - Prevention of disease
  - Understanding medical direction
patients with low HEALTH LITERACY...

- Are more likely to visit an EMERGENCY ROOM
- Have more HOSPITAL STAYS
- Are less likely to follow TREATMENT PLANS
- Have higher MORTALITY RATES

www.cdc.gov/phpr

CDC Infographic
Health Literacy Factors to Success
Health Literacy Social Factors

- Adults over the age of 65 years
- Racial and ethnic groups other than White
- Recent refugees and immigrants
- People with less than a high school degree or GED
- People with incomes at or below the poverty level
- Non-native speakers of English

Universal Precautions for Health Communication/Literacy

You can’t tell by looking.
Developing the plan

Readability, plain language, and health literacy are different

• Each is unique.
• Each is related.
• Each is important.

Each term means something different.
Readability *

• Readability is how easy (or not) something is to read. Readability formulas measure this by looking at the length of the words and sentences in a document. They can tell you what grade level your document is written for, and they’re everywhere—Microsoft Word even has one built in. Formulas don’t take into account plain language principles or the user’s context.

*We ❤ Health Literacy wehearthealthliteracy@communicatehealth.com
Readability and Plain Language and Health Literacy — Oh My!
Plain language*

- Plain language is writing that people can understand. It ensures that people can easily grasp your message the first time they read it.
- Plain language principles:
  - Using familiar terms not jargon, acronyms, or medical terms
  - Chunking information
  - Writing in a conversation form vs. academic or research
- But…. something written in plain language won’t improve health literacy if people don’t know what to do with the information.

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Health Literacy*

• It’s a complex concept that depends on the quality and clarity of the communication as well as the skills and experience of the user. On the communication side, plain language is important—but writing for health literacy also means making the content relatable and actionable for your audience.

The bottom line: Readability, plain language, and health literacy are all important—so it is important to understand what makes each unique.

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Readability and Plain Language and Health Literacy — Oh My!
Making Connections

• Assist a patron who needs information

• Identify where to get this information

• Find reliable, evidence-based information

Factors to increase literacy

- Using a PowerPoint - Keep the information to not more than four main points
- Check for understanding – Ask for the user to repeat or describe the information back to you
- Provide a varied amount of resources – consider graphic novels or videos
Tips to improve usability and increase understanding with materials

1. Provide plain language forms in multiple languages
2. Is the information recent and clear of any hidden agendas?
3. Offer professional development opportunities to learn about health and wellness resources
Health Literacy Resources for Libraries

Libraries

These resources will help you begin or expand your educational and community health literacy activities with libraries. Libraries of all types, including public and medical libraries, are important partners in community-based health literacy efforts. Many libraries support basic literacy programs for children and adults. Librarians provide health information to patrons through a variety of methods—including helping with public Internet access and searching, printing resources, referring patrons to local health services, and distributing and posting information. The resources on this page can help librarians and other information professionals recognize and respond to community members’ health information and communication needs. The resources may also help other individuals and organizations identify common interests and opportunities to work with libraries.

Health Information and Library Professionals

- [Find a Literacy Program](https://www.proliteracy.org) (ProLiteracy)
- [Health Literacy Missouri Library](https://www.healthliteracymissouri.org) (Health Literacy Missouri 2011)
- [Health Literacy Studies at the Harvard School of Public Health](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu) (Harvard School of Public Health 2011)
- [National Network of Libraries of Medicine Class on Promoting Health Literacy through Easy-to-Read Materials](https://nnlm.gov) (Refugee Health Information Network 2011)
PLA’s Project Outcome

Project Outcome helps libraries measure four key patron outcomes—knowledge, confidence, application, and awareness—in seven key library service areas:

- Civic/Community Engagement
- Digital Learning
- Economic Development
- Education/Lifelong Learning
- Early Childhood Literacy
- Job Skills
- Summer Reading

http://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/performancemeasurement
MedlinePlus

• Links to reliable, authoritative health websites
• Health Topics on children/teens, seniors
• Easy-to-read articles
• Lab test information
• Medical encyclopedia
• Recipes
• Links to local services
• Information in > 45 languages
• No advertisements or endorsements
Searching MedlinePlus by Health Topic
National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

Check out HerbList™—NCCIH’s app for research-based information about the safety and effectiveness of herbal products.

Learn more about HerbList.

Download the app today from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.
Genetics Home Reference

Programming Resources

- Community Engagement Network Public Library health and wellness program toolkits
- NNLM training opportunities (in person and online)
- ALA Programming for Librarians
Free Training Sessions

Review the current Consumer Health Classes that
are being offered across the network:

- MedlinePlus for Public Librarians
- Substance Use Disorder Celebrity Webinar Series
- Getting the Right Information to Patients Using MedlinePlus Connect
- Trusted Health Resources for Parents and Caregivers
- Graphic Medicine: Beyond the Books

CEN Program Kits!

Need programming ideas for your library? Check out our Program kits!

Learn More

https://nnlm.gov/all-of-us
Beyond an Apple a Day: Providing Consumer Health Information at Your Library

This hands-on class will cover the health information seeking behavior of consumers and the role of the librarian in the provision of health information for the public. Come learn about the evolution of consumer health, health literacy and the e-patient. Participants will leave equipped with knowledge of top consumer health sites. We will discuss creative ideas for health information outreach. The class will wrap up with an opportunity to explore effective marketing approaches and develop an elevator speech.

Objectives: This class teaches you the basics of providing consumer health information at your library. We will cover:
- Challenges of providing consumer health information
- Planning a consumer health service
- Consumer health on the Internet
- The reference interview
- Ethics
- Outreach
- Project development / marketing

https://nnlm.gov/classes/apple
Stand Up For Health: Health and Wellness Services for Your Community for Public Libraries

Are you interested in engaging with other public librarians and staff members to improve your knowledge and comfort with health and wellness-related reference and services? This course for public library staff has you covered. Stand Up For Health and Wellness Services for Your Community is a free online course developed in cooperation with WebJunction, PLA, and public libraries to create a cohort learning experience.

Registration is limited to public library staff.

During the course, we will explore consumer health, health reference in a public library environment, free health resources for library staff and patrons, and developing health and wellness-related programming. The course has four sections:

- Introduction to Consumer Health for Public Libraries
- Health Reference in a Public Library Environment
- Health Resources for Public Library Staff
- Health and Wellness Programming and Outreach for Public Libraries

Stand Up for Health is taught as a 4-week online course or an in-person 5-hour course with pre and post-work.

Online
Online the course takes place over four weeks, new content is released each week and consists of assigned readings, discussion with your fellow cohort members, and an assignment, all of which should take about three hours. This class is intended to be completed as a cohort for public library staff that involves discussion with your fellow students. There are no set hours to be online each week, but it is important that you complete the discussion and assignment for each week in a timely fashion. New content will be released each Monday.

In Person
In-person the course is taught over eight hours and involves lecture, discussions, and role-playing. Attendees are required to complete both a pre and post-assessment to receive CE credit.

CE and CHIS
The course provides 12 continuing education (CE) hours from the Medical Library Association (MLA) and covers the five competencies required for Consumer Health Information Specialization (CHIS) level 1 from MLA. You will leave the class with an action plan for how to use your newfound knowledge and expertise in reference services and programming. In addition to better serving your community, you’ll develop skills to take with you, if and when you

https://nnlm.gov/classes/stand-up-for-health
Activate, Collaborate, and Educate: Health Outreach and Programming in Your Community

This course will provide an overview of ideas to conduct health outreach and create health programs for libraries and community/faith based organizations. Participants will learn how to integrate resources from the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and other reputable agencies to introduce community members to NLM resources in fun and engaging ways. Examples of programs for children, teens, adults and seniors using NLM and other National Institutes of Health center and office resources will be shared.

Additional Materials:

Health Outreach and Programming Class Guide

Objectives:
This presentation provides an overview of planning health programs for organizations incorporating resources from the National Library of Medicine. By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Locate county level information on health needs within their community
- Locate relevant NLM consumer health resources for specific target populations
- Identify organizations for health outreach partnerships
- Outline a potential health outreach or health program for their organization

Course Materials: ACE Slides March 2019
Resource List
Resource List
Logic Model Class Exercise
Establishing Partnerships Class Exercise
ACE Emergency Preparedness Sample Program (Rev Dec 2018)

Class Length:
60 minutes, 2 hours, 3 hours. Variable credit class. The number of CE credits is tied to how much time and effort is expected of the learner to complete the class. A higher credit class goes deeper into the content.

Course Owner(s):
Michael Balkenhol, MLIS, Health Programming Coordinator
Programming Librarian
Health Literacy!

- Achieve self-empowerment
- Feel understood
- Be well-informed
- Be happy and able to talk to medical staff
- Be able to access the right information
- Be able to make the right decisions

Photo from: http://compare-phc.unsw.edu.au/content/compare-phc-health-literacy-symposium-2016
Please feel free to contact me

Catherine Martin.umassmed.edu
508-856-5992
References

• American Library Association: Healthier Communities article
  (http://www.ala.org/advocacy/sites/ala.org.advocacy/files/content/pdfs/May2019ALAPolicyPerspectivesHealthLiteracy.pdf)

• Quick Guide to Health Literacy Fact Sheet
  (https://health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/factsbasic.htm)

• National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy
  (https://health.gov/communication/initiatives/health-literacy-action-plan.asp)

• https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/education-support/libraries.html

• http://www.ala.org/pla/education/onlinelearning/webinars/ondemand/literacy