


The Impact of Health Literacy on Underprivileged Communities



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Presenter

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C.A.N.H.I. Initiative

- The Central Alabama Neighborhood Health Initiative is a collaborative project.
- The target counties are Montgomery and Elmore. Some programming will also take place in Pike county.
- The target populations are the African American and Hispanic communities.
- The goals of the project are:
 - To increase health literacy
 - To improve patient-provider relationships
 - To increase COVID testing and vaccinations

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Grant Partners



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Collaborators









Dr. Michael Paasche-Orlow

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Overview

- Define Key Concepts of Health Literacy
- Discuss the influence of health literacy on Underserved Populations
- Discuss the impact of health literacy on disease management

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What is Health Literacy?

- Health literacy is “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information to make appropriate decisions” (HRSA, n.d.).
- It is more prevalent in:
 - Older adults
 - Minority populations
 - People who have a low socioeconomic status
 - Underserved populations

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The Importance of Health Literacy

- Complete paperwork
- Understand medical directions
- Navigate the health system
- Analyze the risks and benefits
- Organize health appointments
- Understand nutrition
- Improves adherence

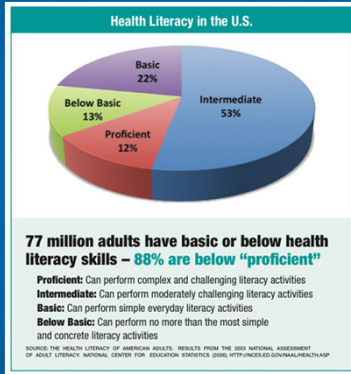
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What does the data say?

- People with low health literacy are more likely to report poor health.
- Low health literacy = increased negative health outcomes.
- Plain language is the preferred type of communication.
- Low health literacy increased health care costs in the billions.

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What Does the Data Say?



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Red Flags of Low Literacy

- Frequently missed appointments
- Incomplete registration forms
- Non-compliance with medications
- Unable to name medications or explain the purpose
- Identifies pills by descriptions
- Unable to give coherent history
- Ask fewer questions

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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



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Plain Language

- It is a form of clear writing that is easy to understand.
- It is “to the point” and helps improve communication.
- It saves times and money.
- It reduces barriers in communication.

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Examples of Plain Language

- Use every year instead of yearly or annually.
- Use high blood pressure instead of hypertension or heart instead of cardiac.
- Use prevention instead of pre-exposure prophylaxis.
- Use by mouth instead of oral.
- Use tired instead of fatigue.
- Use layman’s terms.

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Teach Back Method

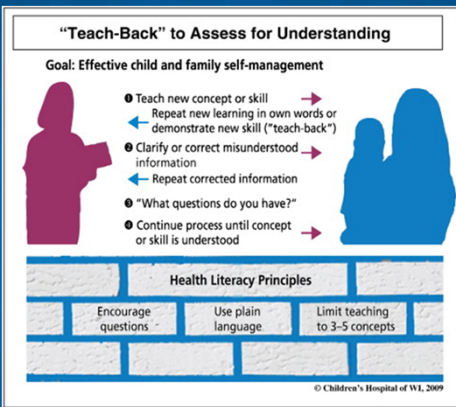
- A health literacy intervention that improved patient-provider communication.
- A way to make sure information is explained correctly.
- Ask them to repeat what was told to them to make sure they understand.
- Use appropriate and caring tone.

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Examples of Teach Back

- Ask the client or patient to explain in their own words.
- Re-explain if necessary.
- Use reader-friendly visuals and materials to help.
- Ask for help if you are unable to convey the information effectively.
- Maintain an environment of comfort and security.

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Health Outcomes

- Negative health consequences occur when a breakdown in communication occurs.
- Low quality health care and support staff can also lead to negative health outcomes.
- Receiving inaccurate health information or having symptoms ignored can be detrimental.
- Treating patients unkind and uncaring only adds to their health issues.
- Healthcare workers must be respectful and culturally competent.

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Cultural Competency

- Cultural Competency is defined as providers and organizations being able to effectively deliver health care services that meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of patients.

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Cultural Competency

- Racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately burdened by chronic illness.
- They have higher morbidity and mortality rates with chronic illness.
- African Americans are also more likely to be limited in physical activity, usually due to neighborhood safety and access, transportation, and chronic illness.
- As the US becomes more diverse and people live longer, the impact of chronic illness will increase.
- Access to care also contributes to prevention, diagnosis, treatment and management of chronic illnesses.

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Communication Barriers

- Out of 37 million adults in the US who are bilingual, 48% of them do not speak English very well.
- Language and communication barriers can affect the quality of care received.
- Health service may also be impacted by the availability of translation services.
- Communication barriers can also lead to poor comprehension and adherence and lower quality of care.
- Ethnic minorities tend to report less partnership with providers in medical decisions and have lower satisfaction of care.

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Moving Forward

- Adopt a supportive and unhurried manner to minimize patient anxiety.
- Use a health navigator or case manager to assist with communication and coordination.
- Record the health plan in the electronic health record.
- Always use the “teach back” method.
- Provide a “warm handoff” written or verbal report to the patient’s next provider or case worker.

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