Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit

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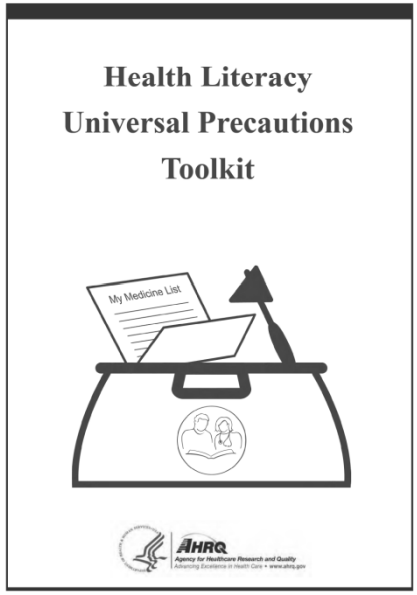
http://ahrq.gov/qual/literacy



Overview

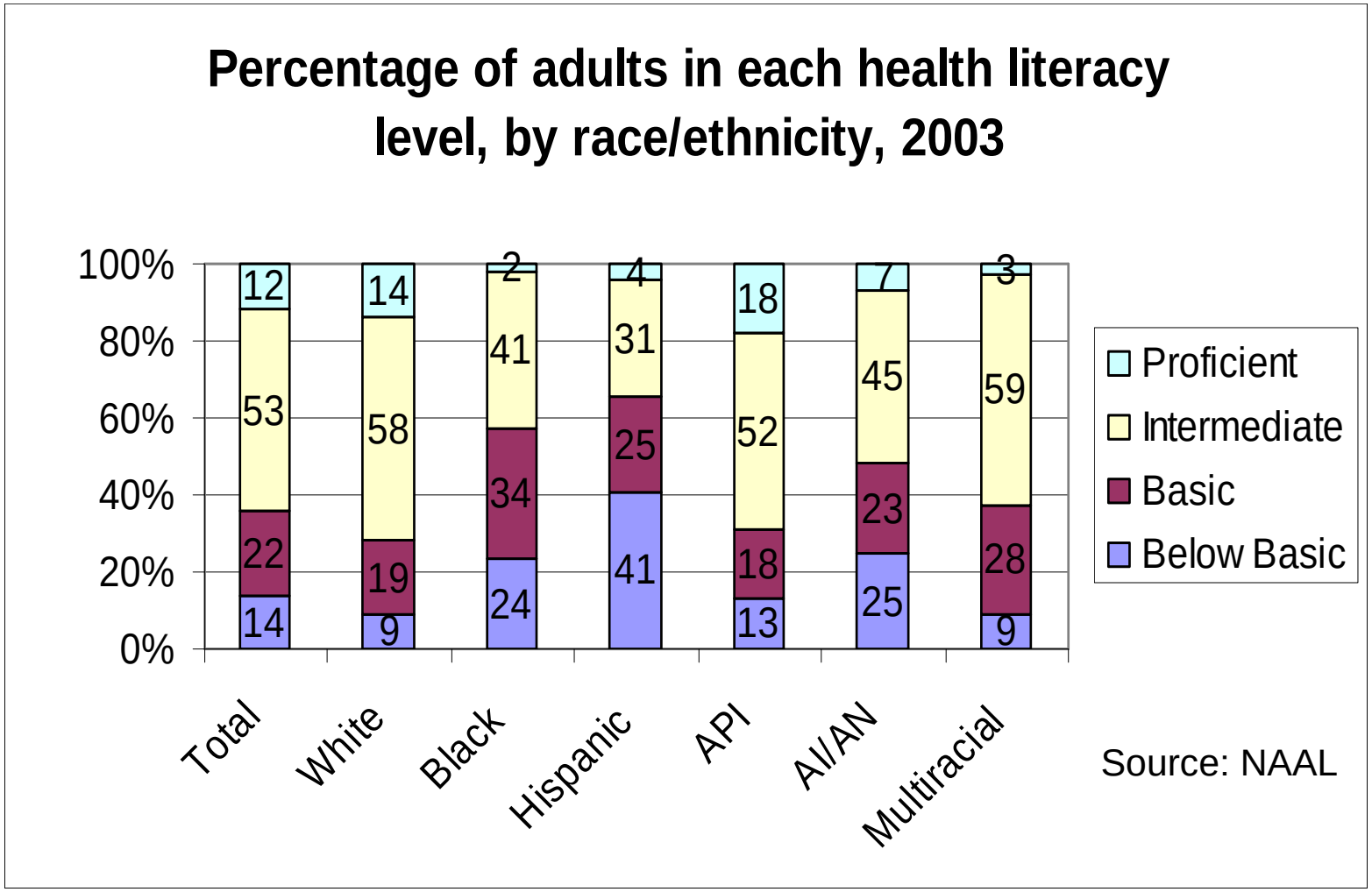
- Health literacy and universal precautions
- Developing the toolkit
- Experiences with tools
- Health Literacy Collaborative

Definition of Health Literacy

"The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions."

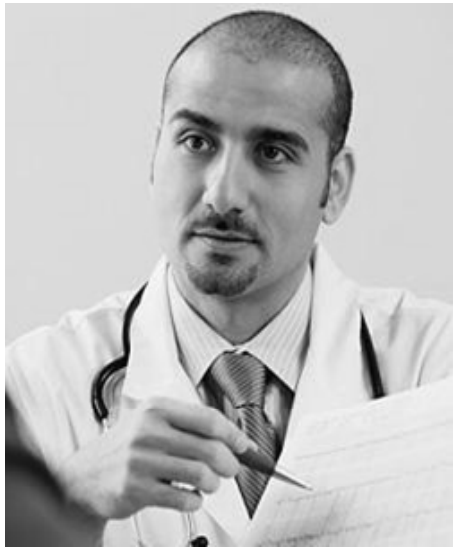
Healthy People 2010, Institute of Medicine (2004)

Prevalence & Disparities



Health Literacy Equation

X



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Skills/Abilities x Demand/Complexity = Health Literacy

Health Literacy Universal Precautions

Structuring the delivery of care in the practice as if every patient may have limited health literacy

Why Health Literacy Universal Precautions

- You can't tell by looking
- Even people with higher literacy skills have trouble understanding medical care
- No screening instrument can tell you if people will understand what they need to know
- Most interventions designed for people with low literacy help those with higher literacy

Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit

- Commissioned by AHRQ
- Developed by the University of North Carolina and the North Carolina Network Consortium
- Published April 2010
- Over 30,000 downloads from AHRQ site, and thousands more from UNC site

Process to Develop Toolkit

- Identify and review tools
- Identify and fill gaps
  - Practice assessment
  - Implementation guidance
  - Form templates
- Advisory Group review of individual tools and testing by practices
- Create “toolkit” as an organized approach
- Pilot test toolkit in practices

Structure of the Toolkit

- Overview and Rationale
- Path to Improvement (3 tools)
  - Form a Team
  - Assess Practice
  - Raise Awareness
- 4 key changes (17 tools)
  - Spoken communication
  - Written Communication
  - Self Management and Empowerment
  - Supportive Services

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Quick Start Guide

Quick Start Guide

1 Watch a short video

This 6 minute health literacy video is sponsored by the American College of Physicians (ACP) Foundation and has some vivid examples of why addressing health literacy is so important.

2 Pick a tool and try it

Link to one of these tools and review it. Pick a day and try it out on a few patients.

- I want to be confident my patients are taking their medications correctly. — Brown Bag Medication Review
- I want to be confident that I am speaking clearly to my patients. — Tips for Communicating Clearly
- I want to be confident that my patients understand what they need to do regarding their health when they get home. — The Teach Back Method

3 Assess your results

How did it go? Do you need to make some adjustments? Do you want to address another statement from the list above and try another tool? Or, you may want to take this to the next step by going to the Overview and learning about health literacy universal precautions and this toolkit.

Tool Structure

- Overview
- Purpose
- Action
- Track your progress

Health Literacy Assessment Questions

Please select **one answer** that most accurately describes your practice:

Done Well	Our practice is doing this well
Needs Improvement	Our practice is doing this, but could do it better
Not Done	Our practice is not doing this
Not Sure	I don't know the answer to this question
N/A	This is not applicable to our practice

Importance: * Beneficial ** More Beneficial *** Most Beneficial

1. Effective Spoken Communication

	Done Well	Needs Improvement	Not Done	Not Sure or N/A	Importance	Tools to Help
1. Staff members have received awareness and sensitivity training about health literacy issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	***	1-Form Team 3-Raise Awareness
2. All levels of practice staff have agreed to support changes to improve patient understanding.	☐	☐	☐	☐	***	1-Form Team 3-Raise Awareness
3. Staff offers everyone help regardless of appearance (e.g., filling out forms, giving directions).	☐	☐	☐	☐	***	3-Raise Awareness 11-Design Materials
4. Staff members who have patient contact can identify behaviors that may indicate literacy problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	*	3-Raise Awareness

Practical Experience Using the Assessment

The Teach Back Method

Overview

Studies have shown that 40-80% of the medical information patients receive is forgotten immediately[1] and nearly half of the information retained is incorrect.[2] One of the easiest ways to close the gap of communication between clinician and patient is to employ the "teach back" method, also known as the "show-me" method or "closing the loop."[3] **Teach back is a way to confirm that you have explained to the patient what they need to know in a manner that the patient understands.** Patient understanding is confirmed when they explain it back to you. It can also help the clinic staff members identify explanations and communication strategies that are most commonly understood by patients.

Purpose

To provide your practice with examples and helpful advice on performing the teach back method.

Action

1. **Learn the teach back method**
   - Teach Back Video: View a 5 minute video which gives 2 examples of using teach back with medication changes.

Testimonial

"I decided to do teach back on 5 patients. With one mother and her child, I concluded the visit by saying 'So tell me what you are going to do when you get home.' The mother just looked at me without a reply. She could not tell me what instructions I had just given her. I explained the instructions again and then she was able to teach them back to me. The most amazing thing about this "ah ha" moment was that I had no idea she did not understand until I asked her to teach it back to me. I was so wrapped up in delivering the message that I did not realize that it wasn't being received."

-Resident Physician, pediatric office

Practical Experience Using the Teach Back Tool

Encourage Questions

Overview

An essential part of achieving good health outcomes is helping patients to understand that their role in their health care is important. But, patients can sometimes be ashamed to ask questions, fearing that they will seem foolish. In some cultures, deference to authority figures stifles questions. Creating a shame-free environment that encourages patients to ask questions, and gives them the confidence to take ownership of their health, is crucial in this effort.

There are several strategies designed to change the dynamic of the patient/ clinician interaction. These approaches, when used over time, are aimed at teaching patient to become more involved, but they will also help a practice

- Decrease the number of call backs or questions after a patient leaves.
- Increase patient satisfaction.
- Increase patient safety.

Purpose

To give strategies for eliciting questions from patients.

Practical Experience Using the Encourage Questions Tool

Make Action Plans

Overview

Many patients have trouble taking the actions they need to maintain their health and manage their health conditions. An action plan, created by the patient and clinician, outlines a step the patient can take to attain a larger health goal such as quitting smoking or losing weight. Action plans help patients integrate these steps or health behavior changes into their daily lives to achieve the goal and they allow for patients to be actively involved in their own care. Research has shown that such plans are instrumental in bringing about behavior changes in patients. In a recent study of more than 200 patients, 53% reported a behavior change in a follow-up phone call three weeks after their visit with a physician when an action plan was made.[1]

Purpose

To guide clinicians through the process of creating and using action plans in their practice.

Tips

Opportunities to use Action Plans

- Making diet changes
- Smoking cessation
- Increasing physical activity
- Reducing stress
- Improving sleep habits

- **Action plan forms**
  - Below are two options for action plan forms
    - Action Plan Project by the UCSF Department of Family and Community Medicine has action plans in English, Spanish and Chinese.
    - The Action Plan Form in this toolkit can be modified to fit your needs.

- **Create action plans with patients**
  - **Motivation:** If a patient does not express the motivation to change, then the patient is not ready for an action plan. The goal must be important to the patient for the plan to be successful.
  - **Created by the patient:** The patient must determine the goal with the provider's guidance.
  - **Small and realistic:** Brainstorm small, specific, and realistic steps the patient can take to achieve the goal that can be re-revaluated over a short time period like a week.
  - **One step at a time:** Have the patient pick one specific step that he or she is likely to implement.
  - **Fill out the form:** Outline what, how much, when, and how often

Practical Experience Using the Action Plan Tool

Carolinas Healthcare System Health Literacy Collaborative

- Executive Sponsor : Executive VP/CMO
- Participants: Health System Facilities
- Goals and Measures
  - Team measures
  - Collaborative measures
- Meetings and Conference Calls

Monthly Data Collection Form

CHS Health Literacy Collaborative
Monthly Data Collection Sheet **Month:**

Goals 1 - 3				Tally or enter total numbers here				
Teach Back	In the past 30 days, how many of the observed staff members successfully demonstrated "Teach Back"?	numerator						
	How many staff members were selected for "Teach Back" observation?	denominator						
Ask Me3	In the past 30 days, how many staff members successfully demonstrated use of strategies that encourage patients to ask questions, e.g. Ask Me 3?	numerator						
	How many staff members were selected for observation of strategies that encourage patients to ask questions, e.g. Ask Me 3?	denominator						
Education Module	In the past 30 days, how many staff members in your unit have completed their Health Literacy education module?	numerator						
	How many staff members are part of your unit? (*This number should remain relatively the same every month*)	denominator						
	Indicate number of patients surveyed this month							
Goal 6		N/a	No response	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Patient Satisfaction/ Feedback	How well did your doctor explain medical information in a way that made sense to you?							
	How well did your nurse and other healthcare providers explain medical information in a way that made sense to you?							
		No response		Yes	No			
	Did staff encourage you to ask questions about your care?							
	Did you feel comfortable asking questions about your care?							

Reflections on Enterprise-wide Spread

- How to measure (e.g., who does the teach-back observation?)
- The power of their own data
- Centralized expertise (e.g., creation of easy-to-understand materials)
- Takes time!