Promoting Health Literacy through Clear Communication: Implications for People Living with HIV

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Disclosures

Presenter(s) has no financial interest to disclose.

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, the participant will be able to:

1. Identify potential gaps in promoting health literacy.
2. Describe key elements of clear communication.
3. Explore best practices for promoting health literacy.
Obtaining CME/CE Credit

If you would like to receive continuing education credit for this activity, please visit:

http://ryanwhite.cds.pesgce.com
Health Literacy Defined

Health literacy is the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Source: Institute of Medicine 2004, Healthy People 2010
Health Literacy - Importance

- Health Literacy impacts our ability to:
  - Promote health
  - Protect health
  - Prevent disease
  - Access and utilize health care
  - Navigate the health care system

Source: Literacy and Health in America, ETS 2004

- Health care relies heavily on the written and spoken word to communicate information.

- Health care consumers must “read to do”.

93 million or 47% of U.S. adults perform at the lowest level of literacy \textit{(NAAL 2003)}

19% of US adults had skills at the lowest level of the Health Activity Literacy Scale \textit{(HALS 2003)}
- 1/3\textsuperscript{rd} of US adults have trouble reading and acting on health information
- Approximately ½ of those older than age 65 scored at the lowest levels

Health literacy decreases with age.
Health Literacy by Age (%)

## Health Insurance Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Scorers (0-4 Correct)</th>
<th>Moderate Scorers (5-6 Correct)</th>
<th>High Scorers (7-10 Correct)</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insurance Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insured - age 18-64</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninsured - age 18-64</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or less</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Literacy – Challenges

- Health materials are written at reading levels that far exceed the average reading skills of high school graduates.
- Health professionals often do not use language which is easy to understand.
- Words used may have multiple meanings and interpretations.
Low Health Literacy - Implications

- Decreased ability to:
  - navigate the health care system;
  - read/understand medication & other instructions, consent documents, health insurance rules, etc.;
  - understand rights, responsibilities, other key aspects related to health care;
  - care for self;
  - make informed decisions about treatment choices – medications, surgical & other interventions, etc.

- Others?
Effective Communication – a tool to improve health literacy
Effective Communication - Steps

- **Identify goals**
  - Improved knowledge and understanding?
  - Change in attitude?
  - Change in behavior?

- **Identify key messages**

- **Decide on communication method**
  - Written?
  - Verbal?
  - Both?
Effective Communication – Audience

- Learn about your audience
  - Needs and interests
  - Culture and diversity
  - Language preference
  - English proficiency

- Engage and get help from your audience

- Pilot test to assess whether messages
  - Resonate with, engage, and meet the needs of your audience
  - Communicate key information
  - Achieve the desired effect
Effective Communication- Verbal

- Create a safe and respectful environment
- Tailor to audience
- Explain context
- Categorize
- Illustrate and demonstrate
- Show empathy
  - Be respectful
  - Address embarrassment
  - Invite interaction
  - Promote self efficacy
  - Pay attention
  - Slow down
Effective Communication-Written

- **Message – ensure**
  - accuracy
  - suitability for audience
  - delivery focused and on point
  - communication of key points
  - start and end with most important
Effective Communication—Verbal

- Use plain language
  - logical order
  - clear
  - active voice
  - everyday language, common words
  - short words, short sentences
  - explain hard words
  - no jargon, fancy words

- Stay focused and on message
  - key points
  - begin/end with most important point

- Confirm understanding
  - teach back
  - invite questions
### Illustrate, Demonstrate

**WebMD Portion Size Guide**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BASIC GUIDELINES</th>
<th>GRAINS</th>
<th>DAIRY &amp; CHEESE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup = baseball</td>
<td>1 cup of cereal flakes = baseball</td>
<td>1 1/2 oz cheese = 3 stacked dice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup = lightbulb</td>
<td>1 pancake = compact disc</td>
<td>1 cup yogurt = baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 oz or 2 tbsp = golf ball</td>
<td>1/2 cup cooked rice = lightbulb</td>
<td>1/2 cup of frozen yogurt = lightbulb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tbsp = poker chip</td>
<td>1/2 cup cooked pasta = lightbulb</td>
<td>1/2 cup of ice cream = lightbulb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz chicken or meat = deck of cards</td>
<td>1 slice bread = cassette tape</td>
<td>FATS &amp; OILS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 oz fish = checkbook</td>
<td>1 bagel = 6 oz can of tuna</td>
<td>1 tbsp butter or spread = poker chip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 cups popcorn = 3 baseballs</td>
<td>1 tbsp salad dressing = poker chip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRUITS &amp; VEGETABLES</th>
<th>MEATS, FISH &amp; NUTS</th>
<th>MIXED DISHES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 medium fruit = baseball</td>
<td>3 oz lean meat = deck of cards</td>
<td>1 hamburger (without bun) = deck of cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup grapes = about 16 grapes</td>
<td>3 oz fish = checkbook</td>
<td>1 cup fries = about 10 fries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup strawberries = about 12 berries</td>
<td>3 oz tofu = deck of cards</td>
<td>4 oz nachos = about 7 chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup of salad greens = baseball</td>
<td>2 tbsp peanut butter = golf ball</td>
<td>2 tbsp hummus = golf ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup carrots = about 12 baby carrots</td>
<td>1/2 cup almonds = 23 almonds</td>
<td>3 oz meatloaf = deck of cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup cooked vegetables = baseball</td>
<td>1/4 cup pistachios = 24 pistachios</td>
<td>1 cup chili = baseball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 baked potato = computer mouse</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 sub sandwich = about 6 inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 burrito = about 6 inches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Communication-Written

- Organization, format, appearance – ensure
  - content is categorized and in logical order
  - background color promotes readability and white space is sufficient
  - print – font type, size and color promotes readability
  - suitability for audience

AIDS Arms, Inc.
Effective Communication-Written

- Clarity and readability – use:
  - plain language – no fancy words, jargon
  - active voice
  - everyday language, common words
  - short words, short sentences
- Explain hard words
- Check readability score
  - preferably below 6th grade level
- Check effectiveness
  - assessment by review panel
Effective Communication
- tailor your message
Effective Communication - tailor your message

Icons to Measure the Severity of Side Effects

Source: http://www.vizhealth.org/gallery/assets/75/
Effective Communication
- tailor your message

Source: http://www.vizhealth.org/gallery/assets/75
Effective Communication
- tailor your message
Effective Communication
- tailor your message

**Strategies**

**Individual Support**
Provide ongoing support for people living with HIV to address retention in care, treatment adherence and other concerns.

**Group Programs**
Educate about HIV and how to engage in health care.

**Community Outreach**
Provide HIV/STI messaging and information to encourage people to get tested for HIV and sexually transmitted infections regularly.

**Did you know...**
- Dallas County Latinos represent 25% of new HIV/AIDS diagnoses and 22% of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- 1 in 5 of all new HIV diagnoses among women occurred among Latinas.
- Youth aged 13 to 24 accounted for approximately 1 of every 4 new HIV infections in the U.S. in 2010.

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Para la salud y el bienestar de nuestra comunidad

2016 NATIONAL RYAN WHITE CONFERENCE ON HIV CARE & TREATMENT
Effective Communication - tailor your message

Are you at risk for HIV or STDs?
Sexually active? Ever used drugs? Ever had an STD?
More than one sexual partner? Worried your partner has an STD?
Answered yes to one or more questions? Come in for a free HIV and Syphilis test.

Know Your Status

AIDS Arms, Inc.
219 Sunset Ave.
Suite 116-A
Dallas, TX 75208
214.521.5191
Health Communication – how effective is it?
Group Think
Subject to Interpretation?

- Common guidance given by health care providers:
  - Practice safe sex
  - Use protection
  - Drink plenty of water
  - Eat a low sodium diet
  - Eat plenty of fiber
  - Get plenty of exercise
  - It may have adverse effects
  - Take on an empty stomach
  - Take as needed
Subject to Interpretation?

MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS
ALCOHOL COULD INTENSIFY THIS EFFECT
USE CAUTION WHEN OPERATING A CAR
OR DANGEROUS MACHINERY.

THIS MEDICINE MAY
BE TAKEN WITH OR
WITHOUT FOOD.

TAKE IN THE
EVENING

TAKE 1 TABLET BY MOUTH AT
NIGHT
Subject to Interpretation?

TAKE WITH FOOD.

AVOID PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO DIRECT AND/OR ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT.

IMPORTANT: FINISH ALL THIS MEDICATION UNLESS OTHERWISE DIRECTED BY DOCTOR.
Subject to Interpretation?

TAKE THIS MEDICATION WITH PLENTY OF WATER.

DO NOT LIE DOWN FOR AT LEAST 10 MINUTES AFTER TAKING THIS MEDICATION.
DO NOT CHEW OR CRUSH BEFORE SWALLOWING.

TAKE WITH OR IMMEDIATELY AFTER FOOD.

TAKE OR USE THIS EXACTLY AS DIRECTED. DO NOT SKIP DOSES OR DISCONTINUE.
Subject to Interpretation?

Limit alcohol use while taking this drug. Daily alcohol use is risky.

Avoid prolonged exposure to direct and/or artificial sunlight.
WHY START HIV TREATMENT EARLY?

A major international randomized clinical trial (START) funded by the National Institutes of Health and its partners has found that people with HIV have a lower risk of developing AIDS if they start HIV treatment sooner.

That means people with HIV should start treatment sooner rather than later while their CD4+ count is higher, instead of waiting for it to drop.

Partner with your healthcare provider to determine when to start HIV treatment.

1. NIAID.nih.gov National Institutes of Health Web site.
Visuals

Simple words
Short sentences
Light background
Dark lettering
Sufficient white space
Legible lettering
Visuals

- Simple words
- Short sentences
- Light background
- Dark lettering
- Sufficient white space
- Legible lettering
Possible to simplify?

Treatment for HIV includes anti-retroviral therapy (ART) which is medication people living with HIV take to stay healthy. These medications reduce the amount of virus in the body which keeps the immune system functioning and prevents illness. Another benefit of reducing the amount of virus in the body is that it helps prevent transmission to others through sex, needle sharing, and from mother-to-child during pregnancy and birth. This is sometimes referred to as “ART as prevention” or “treatment as prevention”.

Source: CDC; HIV Treatment as Prevention; downloaded August 16, 2016
Better?

You should start medical care and begin HIV treatment as soon as you are diagnosed with HIV. Taking medicine to treat HIV, called antiretroviral therapy or ART, is recommended for all people with HIV. Taking medicine to treat HIV slows the progression of HIV and helps protect your immune system. The medicine can keep you healthy for many years and greatly reduces your chance of transmitting HIV to sex partners if taken the right way, every day.

If you’re taking medicine to treat HIV, visit your health care provider regularly and always take your medicine as directed to keep your viral load (the amount of HIV in the blood and elsewhere in the body) as low as possible.

Source: CDC; Living with HIV, Staying Healthy; downloaded August 16, 2016
Health Literacy – Key to Achieving Updated NHAS goals

- Reducing new HIV infections
- Increasing access to care and improving health outcomes for people living with HIV
- Reducing HIV related disparities and health inequities
Everyone Must Step Up

Source: Health Literacy - A Prescription to End Confusion, Institute of Medicine, 2004
We Must All Work Toward:

- Making current, accurate and usable health information available for all audiences.
- Helping health professionals to be effective communicators.
- Helping everyone develop and maintain health literacy skills to learn, understand and do what is necessary to be healthy and safe.
- Evaluating communication effectiveness related to promoting health literacy regularly.
Clear Communication is critical to successful heath care.

Harvey Fineberg

Use Available Resources

Keep Yourself Healthy And Protect Others If You Are Living With HIV

- Find HIV care. It can keep you healthy and greatly reduce your chance of transmitting HIV.
- Take your medicines the right way every day.
- Stay in HIV care.
- Tell your sex or drug-using partners that you are living with HIV. Use condoms the right way every time you have sex, and talk to your partners about PrEP.
- Get tested and treated for other STDs.

For more information please visit www.cdc.gov/hiv

National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention
Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
Use Available Resources
Use Available Resources

• It is not necessary to re-invent the wheel
• Leverage available resources:
  • references
  • consumers
  • yourself
Helpful Resources

- Readability Assessment Tools

• Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level and Flesch Reading Ease Score: Analyzes readability based on number of syllables/word and words/sentence plus other measures.

• FOG: Assigns grade level based on sentence length, number of words, and number of polysyllabic (>3) words.

• Fry Readability Formula: Measures readability of small documents using sample sizes of 100 words. Identifies more difficult words or sentences.

• SMOG: Analyzes reading level of prose in sentence and paragraph format.

• SAM: Measures readability based on content, literacy demand, graphics, layout, learning stimulation, and cultural appropriateness. Can also measure audio-visual materials.

• PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula: Assigns a grade-level to charts, tables and other non-prose documents.
Helpful Resources


CDC Clear Communication Index; www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html


Helpful Resources


Helpful Resources


**Multimedia**
Questions, Comments?
The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

- George Bernard Shaw
Thank you!