

**Patient Empowerment:
Gnitacinnoc with Steitap
Using Plain Egaugnal**

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Purpose of Session

The goal of this webinar is to increase participants' ability to communicate with patients using plain language principles.

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Objectives

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

- Define health literacy and plain language;
- Describe the benefits of using plain language to communicate with patients; and
- List at least 4 strategies to communicate better with patients.

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Health Literacy

What is Health Literacy?

The degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand the basic health information and services they need to make appropriate health decisions.

(Institute of Medicine 2004)

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Health Literacy in America

- 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy
- 19,000 adults (ages 16 and older)
- Literacy measured directly through tasks completed by adults

Source: Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, Paulsen C. The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Publication No. 2006-483; September 2006.

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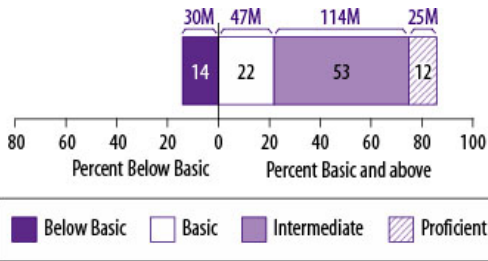
Health Literacy in America

- Tasks on the assessment were distributed across three domains:
 - Clinical
 - Prevention
 - Navigation of the health system
- Assessment results were reported using four levels:
 - Below basic
 - Basic
 - Intermediate
 - Proficient

Source: Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, Paulsen C. The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Publication No. 2006-483, September 2006.

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The Results...



Source: Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, Paulsen C. The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Publication No. 2006-483, September 2006.

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The Results...

- Adults in the oldest age group—age 65 and older—had lower average health literacy scores than adults in the younger age groups.
- Adults living below the poverty level had lower average health literacy than adults living above the poverty threshold.
- Adults who received Medicare or Medicaid and adults who had no health insurance had lower average health literacy than adults who were covered by other types of insurance.

Source: Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, Paulsen C. The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Publication No. 2006-483, September 2006.

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The Results...

- White and Asian/Pacific Islander adults had higher average health literacy than Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Multiracial adults.
- Hispanic adults had lower average health literacy than adults in any other racial/ethnic group.

Source: Kutner M, Greenberg E, Jin Y, Paulsen C. The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy. US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Publication No. 2006-483; September 2006.

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Impact on Health

Those with limited health literacy skills:

- More likely to be hospitalized
- More likely to use emergency services
- Report poorer overall health
- Less likely to be screened
- More likely to be diagnosed at a later stage
- Less likely to control chronic conditions
 - Diabetes
 - Hypertension
 - Chronic Kidney Disease

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Plain Language

What is Plain Language?

- Presenting information so it makes sense to most people.
- Straightforward, concrete, familiar words.
- Matches the needs of the reader with your needs as a writer—effective and efficient communication.

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Plain Language is Not...

- “Talking down”
- “Dumbing down”
- “Baby talk”
- Patronizing
- Simplistic

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What Are the Benefits?

Medical Professional:

- Materials more likely to be read
- Increased understanding of content
- Instructions more likely to be followed
- Fewer questions
- Quicker responses to patient questions
- Increased patient satisfaction
- **Increased adherence → better outcomes**

Patient:

- Needed information more understandable and user-friendly
- More likely to follow the instructions they were given
- More positive views of the facility
- Better overall experience
- **Better overall outcomes**

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Time is Money...

- Time Savings:
 - UK Passport Office - saved 370,000 hours of administration a year
 - FCC - eliminated 5 FTEs answering questions
- Cost Savings:
 - VA – savings from one letter totaled \$40,000 per year
 - VBA – expects to save \$8 million from one letter

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Audience-Centered Communication

Plain language begins with the needs of the audience:

- What you communicate is determined by your purpose for communicating.
- How you communicate should be determined by your audience's reasons for listening and their comprehension skills.

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Plain Language Basics

Verbal Communication

Medical Professional Says...

“So Mr. Johnson I understand your ESRD was caused by your IDDM and by the looks of your A₁C levels you have not been controlled very well for awhile. I see your BP is high and based on your Hgb I am wondering if that might not explain your fatigue and labile mood. In addition you have fluid around your lungs and heart which might be CHF and also might explain why your SOB.”

Source: Slide provided by Mark Meier, LICSW, MSW "Patient Empowerment: Moving Patients to Self-Management" Webinar

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Patient Hears...

“Mr. Johnson, blah, blah, blah, fluid, yada-yada, lungs, yada-yada, heart, SOB!”

Source: Slide provided by Mark Meier, LICSW, MSW "Patient Empowerment: Moving Patients to Self-Management" Webinar

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Keys to Verbal Communication

- Slow down
- Use plain, nonmedical language
- Show or draw pictures

Weiss B. Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand (Manual for clinicians). American Medical Association Foundation, 2007.

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Keys to Verbal Communication

- Limit the amount of information provided—and repeat it.
- Use the “teach-back” technique
- Create a shame-free environment: Encourage questions

Weiss B. Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand (Manual for clinicians). American Medical Association Foundation, 2007.

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Keys to Verbal Communication

- Sit rather than stand
- Listen rather than speak

Weiss B. Health literacy and patient safety: Help patients understand (Manual for clinicians). American Medical Association Foundation, 2007.

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Your Turn...

Medical Term:

- Hypertension
- Renal
- Nephrologist
- Myocardial infarction (MI)
- Osteodystrophy
- Fatigue

Plain Language:

- High blood pressure
- Kidney
- Kidney doctor
- Heart attack
- Bone disease
- Tired

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What About This...

"So Mr. Johnson I understand your ESRD was caused by your IDDM and by the looks of your A₁C levels you have not been controlled very well for awhile. I see your BP is high and based on your Hgb I am wondering if that might not explain your fatigue and labile mood. In addition you have fluid around your lungs and heart which might be CHF and also might explain why your SOB."

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Suggestion...

"Mr. Johnson, I understand that your kidney failure was caused by diabetes. What have you been doing to control your diabetes?"

<patient answers and conversation continues>

Your blood pressure is high and I am also concerned that your body is not making enough healthy red blood cells. If you do not have enough red blood cells, your organs and tissues may not get enough oxygen. This may be what is making you feel weak and tired.

Our tests also show that you have fluid around your lungs and heart. This could be congestive heart failure, which means that your heart isn't able to pump blood to the body's other organs very well. This can also make you feel tired and may be why you are having trouble breathing.

Let's talk about what we can do together address some of these things..."

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Questions?

Resources

- National Assessment of Adult Literacy
<http://nces.ed.gov/naal>
- American Medical Association
www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/8115.html
- American College of Physicians Foundation
www.acpfoundation.org/hl/hlresources.htm
- Government Plain Language Web site
www.plainlanguage.gov
- Online Readability Calculator
www.editcentral.com

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