

Course Design

Health Literacy



Course Description

The Health Literacy Course introduces office staff to health literacy practice and skills. The course will develop the participants' understanding of how health literacy is both a barrier and an asset for health and how health literacy affects a wide range of outcomes.

Purpose

Health literacy is important for everyone because, at some point in our lives, we all need to be able to find, understand and use health information and services. The primary responsibility for improving health literacy lies with health professionals. By improving health literacy, we can positively impact patient health outcomes.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Communicate clearly and effectively with patients.
- Describe the impact of low-/limited-health literacy.
- Incorporate skills needed to identify a patients' health literacy into their practice
- Utilize common language/living room language when discussing the patient's condition or treatment
- Explain the concept of health literacy.
- Identify ways of assessing patients to better understand medical information.
- Offer options to seniors for achieving better outcomes through effective communications, teach-back techniques, tools, and patient education.

Target Audience

- Front and back office personnel
- Licensed vocational nurses
- Medical assistants
- Office managers
- Providers
- Registered nurses
- Social workers
- Other administrative personnel

Setup and Training

- Setup: 15 to 30 minutes
- Training: 60 minutes

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Health Literacy (Cont'd.)

Required Materials

- Class notes
- Evaluation form
- Handouts/tip sheets
- Interactive activities
- Sign-in sheet
- Slide deck

Discussion Prompts

Give examples in which written or verbal communications with patients can be misinterpreted. What is it that caused the misinterpretation?

Ask participants to share a personal or patient experience with misinterpretation of a medical diagnosis or treatment plan instructions without disclosing PHI.

Discuss barriers for patients who do not have health literacy and may be reluctant to reveal that information. What could you do to assist them without causing embarrassment?

Encourage participants to offer ideas and solutions on how they can improve their staffs' verbal and written communication skills to reduce misinterpretation of patient communications.

Interactive Techniques

Use the "What It Looks Like" slides to demonstrate to participants what it feels like to be functionally illiterate. You may give them a hint that the passage is written backwards and that the first word is "CLEANING."

Use the Practice Using Living Room Language handout to provide participants with the opportunity to think of and record substitute words that may be used instead of medical terms and jargon.

Use the Practice Situations handout and have breakout groups read through one or two situations. Come up with substitute words and phrasing that could be used to clarify what the doctor conveyed to the patient using the techniques discussed during the training session.