



“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

Health Literacy





Program Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- ▶ Communicate clearly and effectively with patients.
- ▶ Explain the concept of health literacy.
- ▶ Describe the impact of low/limited health literacy.
- ▶ Identify ways to assess patients to better understand medical information



U.S. Adult Literacy Rates

- ▶ 32 million U.S. adults cannot read
- ▶ 50 percent of adults in U.S. read below an eighth-grade level
- ▶ 19 percent of high school graduates cannot read
- ▶ 15 percent of adults in the U.S. have reading disorders
- ▶ 46 percent of adults in the U.S. cannot understand prescription bottle labels



Definitions

Term	Definition
Basic (Functional) Literacy	The ability to read, write, speak and compute and solve problems at a basic level
Health Literacy	The ability to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions



Health Literacy Statistics

Older adults find it harder to:

- Use print materials – **71%**
- Use documents, such as forms or charts – **80%**
- Interpret numbers and do calculations – **68%**

Some groups have lower literacy on average:

- Men
- People who don't speak English as a first language
- Adults over 65
- Medicare and Medi-Cal recipients

Adults in California without Basic Literacy Skills

- ▶ 23% of CA population (26,0929,840) is lacking basic prose literacy skills

County	Population	Percentage
Los Angeles	7,206,479	33
Fresno	596,940	27
Orange	2,191,819	26
San Diego	2,144,799	21
San Bernardino	1,296,585	20
Riverside	1,280,162	20
Alameda	1,100,269	19
San Francisco	629,606	18
Santa Clara	1,263,883	16
Ventura	580,222	16
San Mateo	539,763	15
Sacramento	975,882	13
Contra Costa	751,262	12

Red text denotes SCAN counties eligible for Medi-Cal.

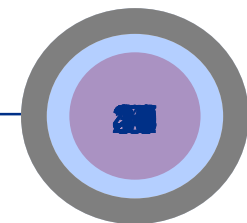


A Below-Basic Reader's View

GNINAECL – Ot erussa hgih ecnamrofrep,
yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw
uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nword-der edixo
selcitrapp. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi
lohocla. Eb erus on lohocla sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa
ti sdnnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a
pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos,
ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, lliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.



What It Looks Like



GNINAELC – Ot erussa hgih ecnamrofrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitrapp. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi lohocla. Eb erus on lohocla sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa ti sdnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos, ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, Iliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.



The Challenges

Patient

Paperwork

- Most difficult challenge for many patients

Poor Communication

- Language barriers
- Confusing medical terminology

Embarrassment

- Prevents patients from:
- Seeking information
 - Obtaining access to care

Provider

Awareness

- Providers are more aware of language issues than health literacy obstacles

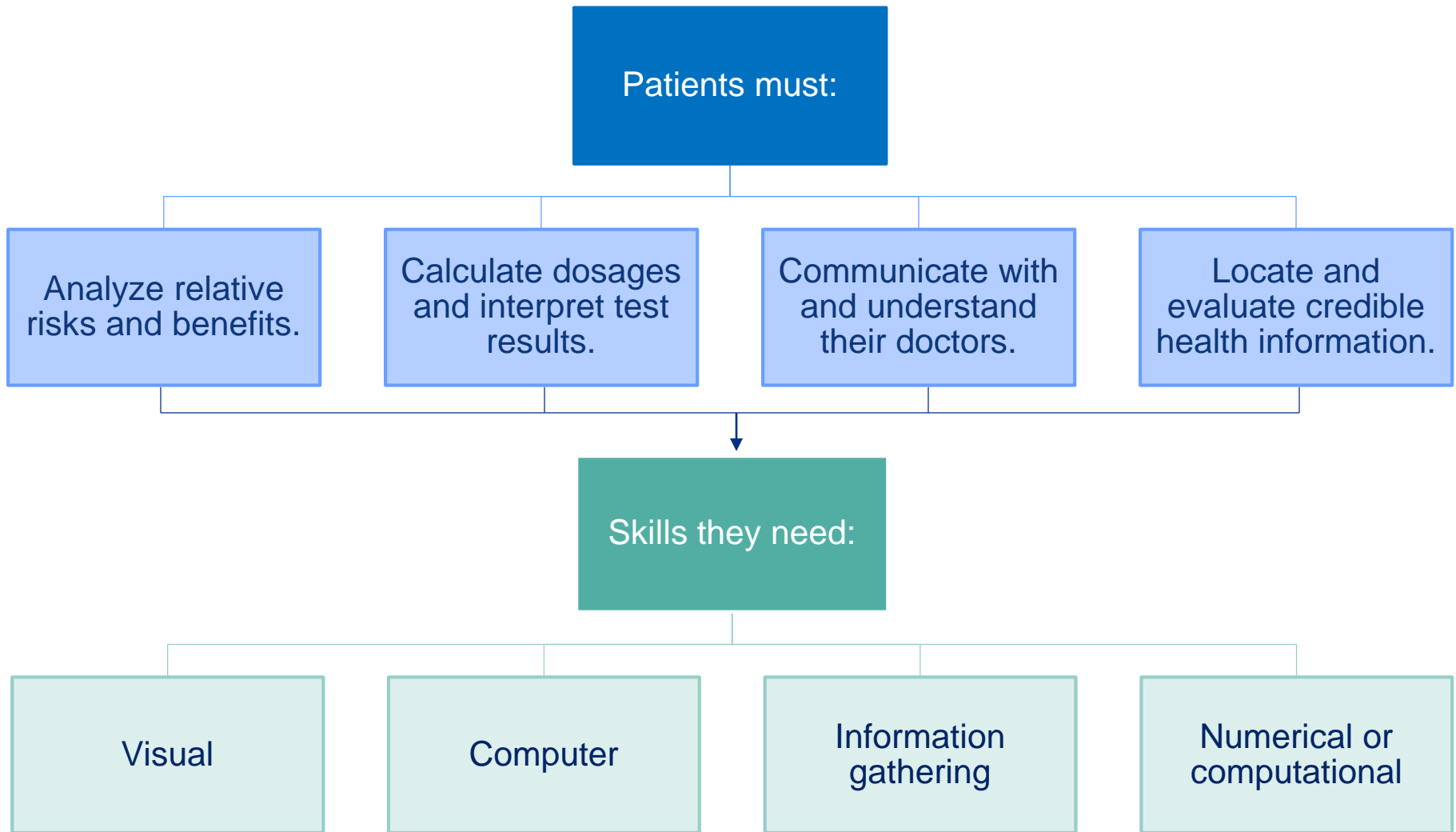
Awareness Without Training

- Providers aware of issues often aren't trained to deal with them
- Can lead to medical errors

Poor Communication

- Medical jargon, language barriers prevent shared decision making

Patients Need Complex Health Literacy Skills





Stigmas and Shame

What are you seeing?



Stigmas and Shame

Feeling not smart enough

Fear of failure

Embarrassment and paralysis

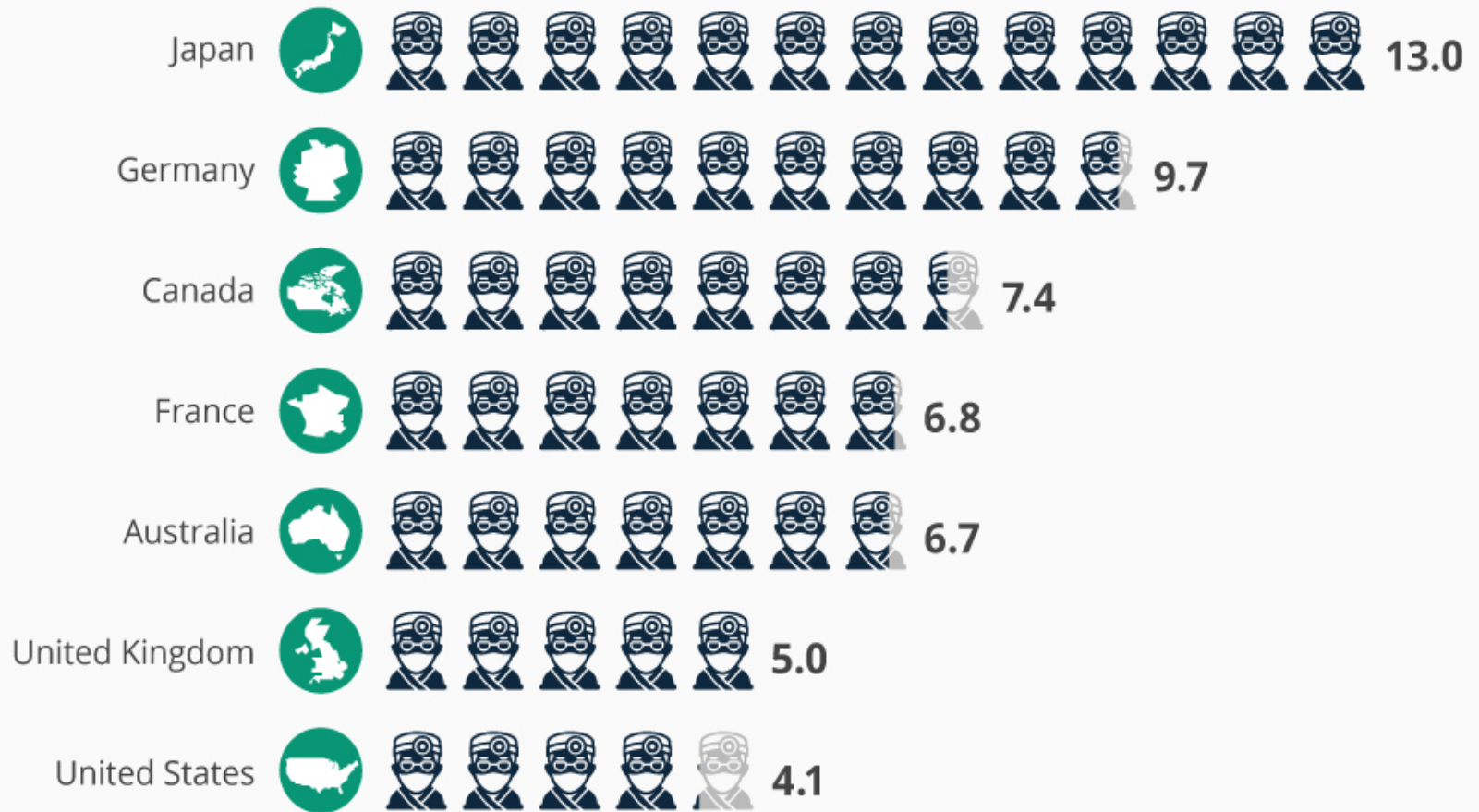
**Best kept secret from family,
friends and coworkers**

Common excuses:

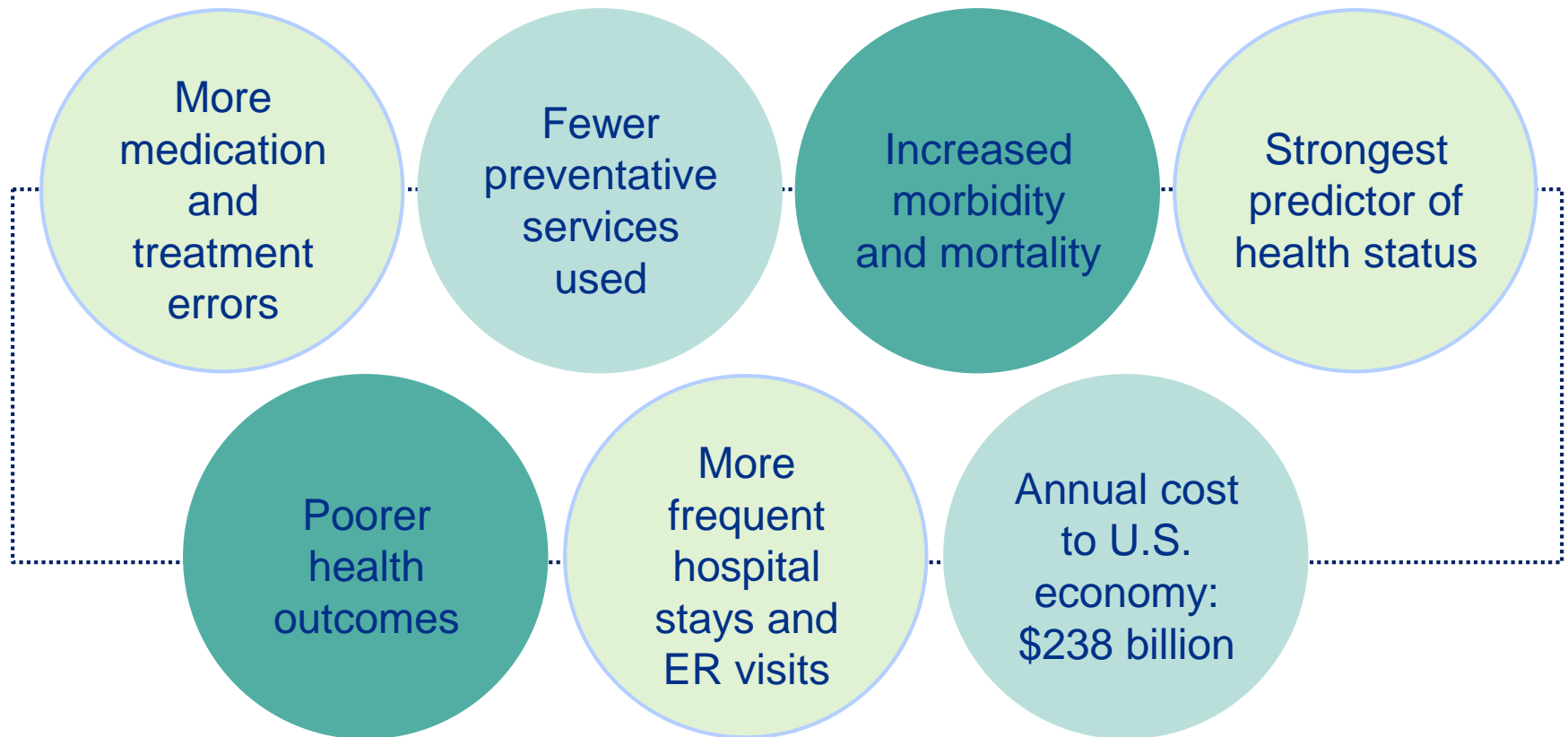
- I forgot my glasses.
- I'll read it at home.
- I want to show it to my spouse.

A World of Difference

Annual average doctor visits per person in selected countries



Impact of Limited Health Literacy



Steps to Improve Health Literacy





Choose Your Words Carefully

What We Say

- Medication
- Originate
- Adverse
- Immunization
- At this point in time
- In the event of
- On a daily basis
- Each and every one
- Close proximity

What We Should Say

- Drug, pill, medicine
- Start, begin
- Bad
- Shot
- Now, today
- When
- Daily, everyday
- Each, all, everyone
- Near, close

Activity





“Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”

Mark Twain

Age and Understanding

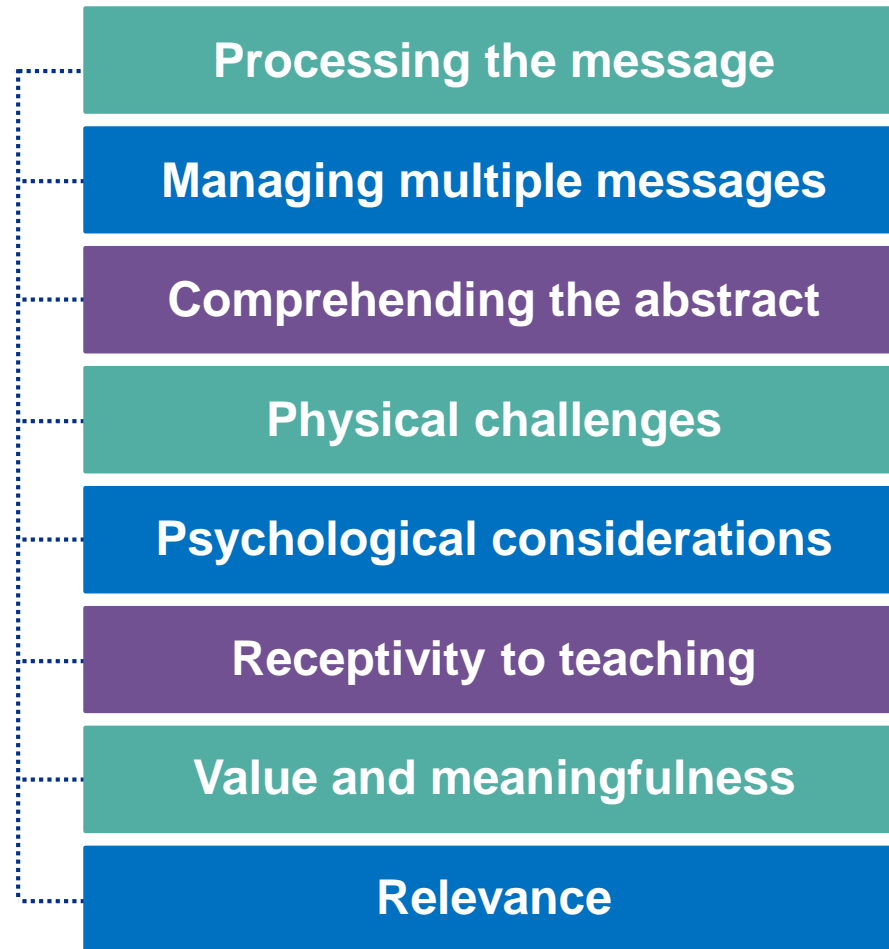


“I never understand what the doctor says when I’m in his office. It’s like he’s speaking another language. I try to follow what he’s saying, but he talks too fast and uses words that mean nothing to me. I don’t want him to think I’m stupid...I’m not stupid. I may be old and slow, but I’m not stupid.”



Assessing the Elderly Learner Challenges

Assessing the Elderly Learner





Clear Communication Is...

...using familiar concepts, words, numbers and images presented in ways that make sense to the people who need the information

Plain Writing Act of 2010

- Plain writing is clear, concise, well-organized and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject and intended audience.
- CMS requirement (eighth-grade)
- DHCS requirement (sixth-grade)

Clear Communication Index

- Everyday words for public health communication



Assisting the Elderly Learner Solutions



What We Can Do

Outreach Strategies

- Innovative multimedia methods
- Peer educators

Educate

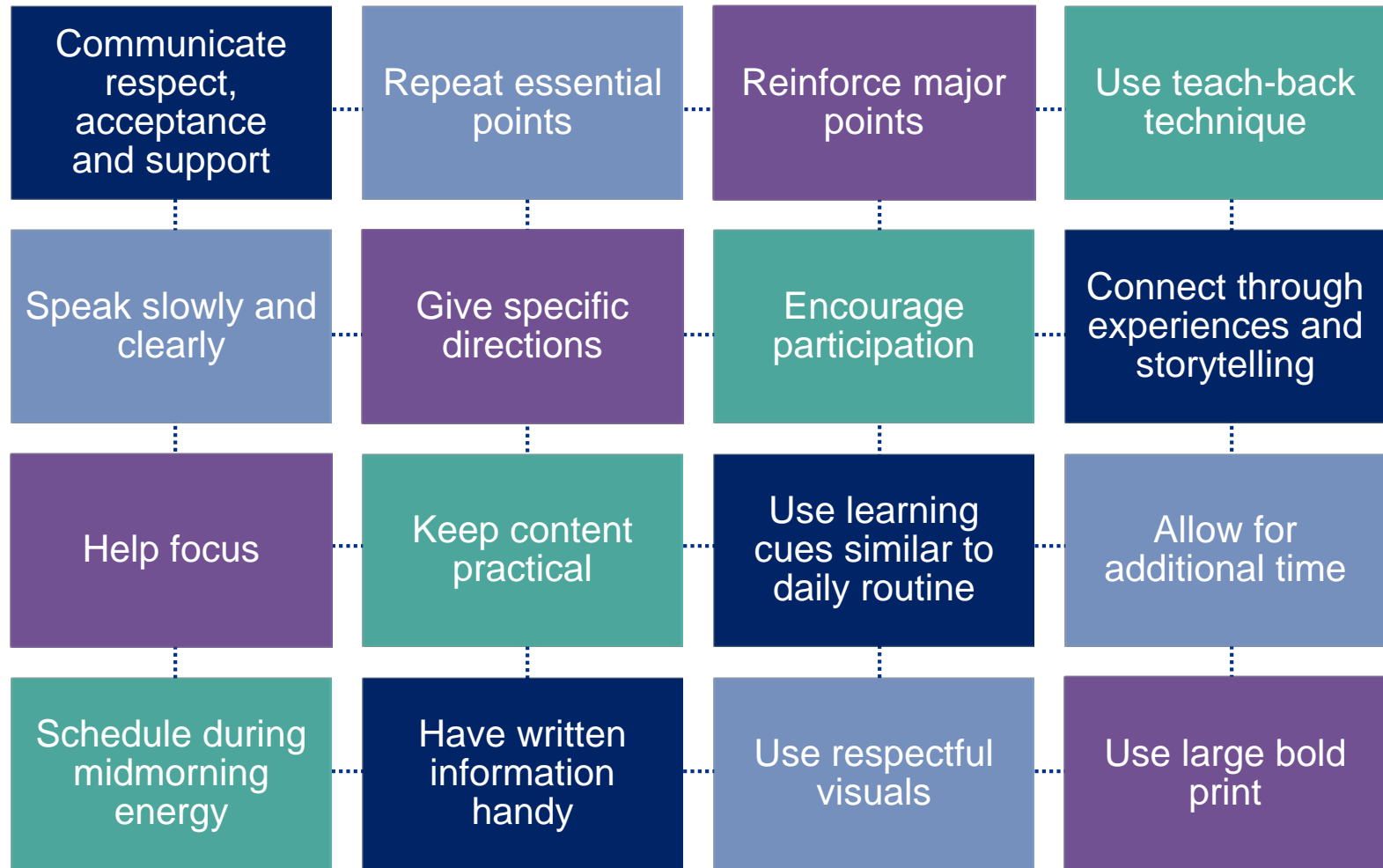
- Health literacy trainings
- Adult health literacy education

Coaching

- Speak and write in “living room” language
- Use teach-back techniques
- Do the math
- Help our members prepare



Educating the Older Patient



Preparing for a Doctor's Visit

Encourage members to:

- ✓ Make a list of questions.
- ✓ Bring an updated list of all medications.
- ✓ Bring copies of recent test results or reports.
- ✓ Ask family or a friend to go along to help if needed.
- ✓ Report all symptoms and concerns.
- ✓ Ask the doctor to repeat instructions at the end of the visit
- ✓ Fill out the SCAN "My Doctor's Visit" form available on the SCAN website.
- ✓ Use SCAN Interpreter Services if English is not the member's preferred language.



Adult Health Literacy Education

Los Angeles Library Programs

- ▶ Adult literacy—Free one-on-one tutor, minimum of six months
- ▶ Limited English Proficiency—Self-guided
- ▶ Walk-In Tutoring
- ▶ Spanish Literacy

Riverside Library Program


- ▶ One-on-One Literacy Tutoring
- ▶ English as a Second Language (ESL)

San Bernardino Program

- ▶ Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- ▶ ESL

Orange County Programs (OC Read)

- ▶ Walk-in Tutoring
- ▶ Adult Basic Literacy Education
- ▶ Orange Literacy—ABE and ESL



Many locations include
computer and
technology skills
courses!

Effect of Improved Health Literacy

The Missing Aim



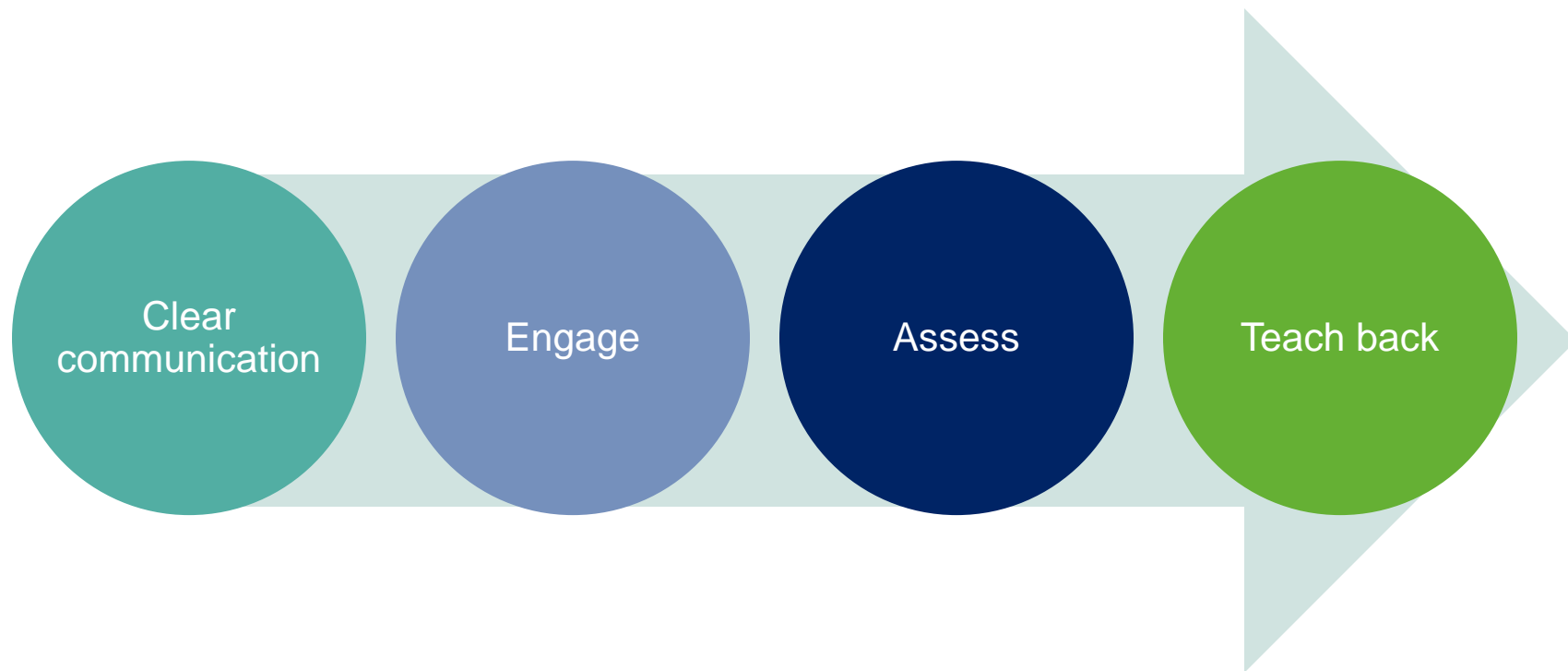
Adapted from graphic by Cardiac Interventions Today

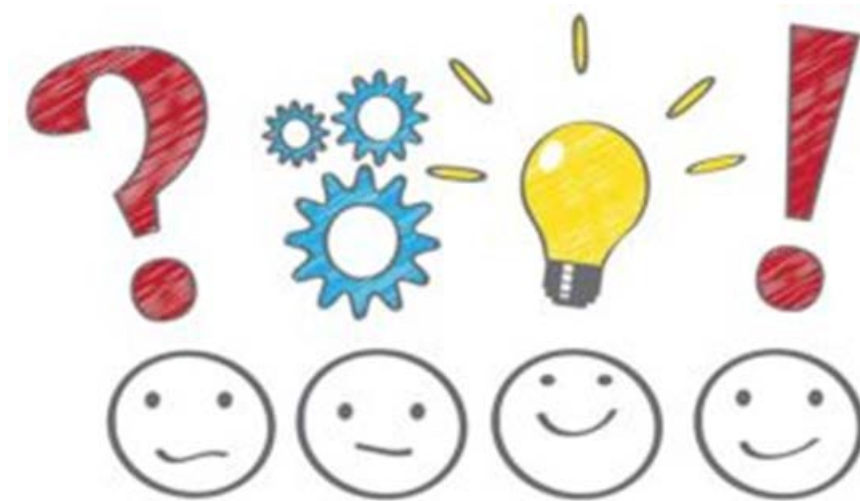
Activity





Summary





THOUGHTS?