Conducting Health Literacy Audits

Session 1
Introduction to Health Literacy Audits
C. Parvanta and J. Frempong
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**Health Literacy
Plain Language
Cross Cultural Communications**

Presenting and Training

Assessing Materials and Audiences

Communicating Across Cultures

Producing Multimedia

Consulting and Coaching

- Wondering how you might get your organization started on the road to plain language?

- Need coaching to revise or enhance easy-to-read materials, forms, and letters?

We can provide the consulting or coaching you need to accomplish your goals effectively and cost efficiently. We will work with you on a project or hourly basis. We travel and also work by phone, fax, and email. Right up front, we'll help clearly define your needs and the most efficient way we can address them with you.

Consulting or coaching could help you:

- Conduct a health literacy audit to analyze communications (e.g., printed materials, signs, voice mail, etc.) and identify needed changes

- Create a plan to move your organization into using plain language

**Our
Members**

Jann Keenan

Wendy Mettger

Janet Ohene-Frempong

Audrey Riffenburgh

Sarah Furnas

Sue Stableford

Ask Me 3?

Perform an <u>audit</u> of the points of contact – written, visual and verbal – that your practice has with its patients both inside and outside of the practice environment. The more you learn about health literacy, the better equipped your practice will be to determine if these communications are easy for patients to understand. For example, if all of your written materials are in English, but 1/3 of your patient base speaks Spanish, it's possible that these materials are unclear to some of your patients.

- o Create an audit that reflects the specific needs of your practice and its patients. Some of the areas you may want to examine include:
    - How information is provided to patients
    - The reading level of the written materials you provide, such as medication instructions
    - Your protocols for patient follow-up and questions

2. Improve the Usability of Health Services

- Improve the usability of health forms and instructions.

- Improve the accessibility of the physical environment.

- Establish a patient navigator program.

Health Forms and Instructions

Healthcare and public health settings rely heavily on forms and printed instructions:

- Medical history forms
- Insurance forms
- Informed consent forms
- Child immunization records for school
- Test results
- Directions to the lab or pharmacy
- Hospital discharge and home care instructions
- Clinical research protocols and announcements

Improve the Usability of Health Forms and Instructions

- Revise forms to ensure clarity and simplicity.

- Test forms with intended users and revise as needed.

- Provide forms in multiple languages.

- Offer assistance with completing forms and scheduling followup care.

Improve the Physical Environment

Settings with lots of signs and postings have a high literacy demand:

- Include universal symbols and clear signage in multiple languages.
- Promote easy flow through healthcare facilities.
- Create a respectful and shame-free environment.

Establish a Patient Navigator Program

- *Patient navigators* are health professionals or community health workers who help patients:
  - Evaluate their treatment options.
  - Obtain referrals.
  - Find clinical trials.
  - Apply for financial assistance.

- Congress recently passed the Patient Navigator Outreach and Chronic Disease Prevention Act of 2005.

3. Build Knowledge to Improve Decisionmaking

- Improve access to accurate and appropriate health information.

- Facilitate healthy decisionmaking.

- Partner with educators to improve health curricula.

Improve Access to Accurate and Appropriate Health Information

- Create new mechanisms for sharing and distributing understandable health education materials:
  - Create audience or language-specific databases.
  - Partner with adult educators.

- Identify new methods for information dissemination:
  - Cell phones, palm pilots, personalized and interactive content, information kiosks, talking prescription bottles, etc.

THE HEALTH LITERACY
ENVIRONMENT OF HOSPITALS AND HEALTH CENTERS

Rima E. Rudd • Jennie E. Anderson

INSURANCE
MEMBER
SERVICES

PLEASE FORM
LINE **AHEAD**
TO **LEFT**
BEHIND
DIVIDER

Partners for Action:
Making Your
Healthcare Facility
Literacy-Friendly

Improve Access to Accurate and Appropriate Health Information

- Form partnerships with civic and faith-based organizations trusted in the community.

- Work with the media to increase awareness of health literacy issues.

- Work with providers to ensure that the health information they share is accurate, current, and reliable.
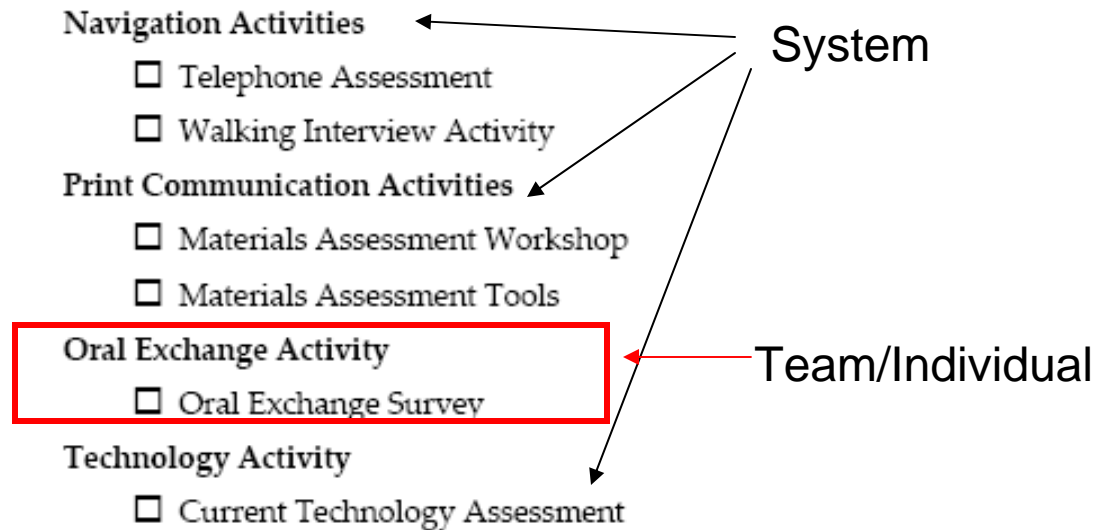
Contents

Appendix II:
Needs Assessment Tools

The needs assessment activities in this section are designed to offer insight into literacy-related demands and barriers. These activities can set the foundation for the *Health Literacy Environment Review:*

Navigation Activities ← System
- ☐ Telephone Assessment
- ☐ Walking Interview Activity

Print Communication Activities
- ☐ Materials Assessment Workshop
- ☐ Materials Assessment Tools

Oral Exchange Activity ← Team/Individual
- ☐ Oral Exchange Survey

Technology Activity
- ☐ Current Technology Assessment

Is Our Pharmacy Meeting Patients' Needs? A Pharmacy Health Literacy Assessment Tool User's Guide

AHRQ-Pharmacy

Appendix 2: Health Literacy Assessment Tour Guide

Auditor:_____   Pharmacy: _____
                                       Date:_____

Health Literacy Assessment Tour Guide

A. Promotion of Services

This section asks questions about how well the pharmacy tells patients about its services and also how "user-friendly" the physical environment of the pharmacy is, especially for patients with limited literacy.

Please check the ONE response that most accurately describes the pharmacy today, using the following rating scale:

1.   This is something the pharmacy does not appear to be doing.

2.   The pharmacy is doing this but could make some improvements.

Websites for resources

- http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/environ_review.pdf
- http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/