Teaching Health Literacy to Health Professionals, Patients and the Community

Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, M.Ed., Assistant Professor
Tufts University School of Medicine
Disclosure Statement

The presenter [Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi] has no relevant financial relationships with any commercial interests to disclose.
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

• Recognize the need to improve the health literacy of health professionals and patients

• Access available health literacy curricula and teaching tools

• Discuss proposed health literacy competencies for health professionals
National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

- 14% Below Basic (30 million)
- 29% Basic (63 million)
- 44% Intermediate (95 million)
- 13% Proficient (23 million)

What are the Literacy Demands in Health and Healthcare?
What is Health Literacy?

- The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (IOM, 2004)

- A wide range of skills used by the public and health professionals to find, understand, evaluate, communicate, and use health information to enable people to live healthier lives (Calgary Charter, 2009)
... a fairly recent movement gaining momentum

• Prescription to End Confusion (IOM 2004); Evidence Report (AHRQ 2004)

• National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy (DHHS 2010); Plain Language Act (2010); Affordable Care Act (2010)

• Ten Attributes of Health Literate Organizations (IOM Roundtable 2012)
• Navigating the health system demands reading, writing, and numeracy skills that exceed the health literacy skills of most U.S. adults

• Health material are written at reading levels that far exceed the average reading ability of U.S. adults

• Competing sources of health information intensify the need for improved health literacy skills for all U.S. adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Health Literate Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has Leadership that makes health literacy integral to its mission structure and operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Integrates health literacy into planning, evaluation, patient safety and quality improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prepares the workforce to be health literate and monitors progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Includes populations served in the design, implementation and evaluation of health information and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Meets need of populations with a range of health literacy skills while avoiding stigmatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Uses health literacy strategies in interpersonal communication and confirms understanding at all points of contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Provide easy access to health information and services and navigation assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Designs and distributes print, audiovisual, and social media content that is easy to understand and act on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Addresses health literacy in high-risk situations, including care transitions and communications about medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communicates clearly what health plans cover and what individuals with have to pay for services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institute of Medicine Roundtable on Health Literacy. Attributes of a Health Literate Organization
http://iom.edu/~media/Files/Perspectives-Files/2012/Discussion-Papers/BPH_Ten_HLit_Attributes.pdf
Health Literacy Framework

Improving Health Literacy Through Teaching and Training

- Three Examples
  - Health professions degree program
  - Public health workforce development training
  - Curriculum to improve community skills
Health Professions Degree Program

• Health Literacy Seminar
  – Tufts School of Medicine health professions students
  – 24 contact hours
  – Communication skills

Students present “research to practice” assignment
Public Health Workforce Development Training

• Health Literacy & Cultural Competency
  – Public health professionals
  – Half-day or full-day training
  – Culture, language and literacy

Translating Materials
Curriculum to Improve Patient / Community Skills

- **Who Can You Trust?**
  Health Literacy and the Internet
  - Youth and young adults; seniors
  - Three, one-hour lessons; intergenerational
  - Accurate and reliable health information

Recommended Resources:
Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals
http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/
Recommended Resources:
Health Literacy and Cultural Competency

https://sph.umd.edu/department/epib/cchc/cultural-competence-health-literacy-primer
Welcome to 480.645 Health Literacy, Language and Culture

Welcome to 480.645 Health Literacy, Language and Culture. This is a skills oriented course which I believe you will find useful to your work, engaging, and fun! Announcement on the Home Page where you will give you an overview of expectations and assignments for the week. Working at your own pace, you have the complete course work which includes Lecture, Readings, Web Research, Multi-media, Discussions, and Assignments. If you experience any technical difficulties, contact Blackboard Help. If you have any questions about the course content and expectations, go to the class menu and click on Discussions and then Ask the Professor.

I look forward to working with you.

Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi
Health Literacy Competencies for Health Professionals

- Describe the influence culture, language, and literacy have on access to health information, health care quality, and health outcomes. (K)
- Expresses the attitude that it is the responsibility of the health care sector to address barriers to communication. (A)
- Demonstrate the ability to create easy-to-read and understand written health information using plain language principles. (S)
- Demonstrate the effective use of ‘teach-back’ technique to assess understanding. (S)
- Express a non-judgmental, non-shaming attitude towards individuals with limited literacy or health literacy skills. (A)
- Consider the application of scientific, theoretical, and empirical health literacy research to a variety of contexts in practice. (K)

Teaching Health Literacy
Discussion Questions

• Who are your students?
• Which competencies do you teach?
• What teaching tools do you find most useful?
• How do you assess learning?
Thank You

Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, M.Ed., Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health and Community Medicine, Tufts University School of Medicine
APTR Health Literacy Teaching Awardee
sabrina.kurtz-rossi@tufts.edu

Health Literacy Leadership Institute
June 13 – 17, 2016
http://go.tufts.edu/summerinstitute/