Identifying Environmental Barriers to Patient Health Literacy in a Comprehensive Mental Health Clinic

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Prevalence of Low Health Literacy in U.S.

2003: National Assessment of Adult Health Literacy

2012: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (U.S. Health Literacy results)

Percentage of Adults

Below Basic/Level 1: 14%
Basic/Level 2: 22%
Intermediate/Level 3: 53%
Proficient/Levels 4 & 5: 12%

National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Pacific Northwest Region
Health Literacy

Human Costs of Low Health Literacy

Enter the healthcare system when they are sicker

More likely to have chronic condition(s) which they cannot manage

Self-report poorer health

Higher hospital admissions, readmissions and use of emergency services – thus higher healthcare costs

Make errors trying to follow their treatment plan, e.g. medication

Do not make use of preventative health services

Seniors are at increased risk of mortality

People with Mental Health Symptoms or Illness

- More likely to have limited health literacy
- Double stigma
- Limited literacy as barrier to recovery & participation
- Higher mortality

A Systems Approach to Address Health Literacy

Structuring the delivery of care as if everyone may have limited health literacy

- You cannot tell by looking
- Higher literacy skills ≠ understanding
- Anxiety can reduce ability to comprehend & act upon health information
- Everyone benefits from a clinical practice that supports clear communications and has processes in place to enable and sustain it.

AHRQ. Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit. 2nd ed. 2015.
Field Tested and Expert Guidance

Enabling patient understanding/clear communication and enhance support for patients in navigating the clinic environment through deployment of:

• Health Literate Organization Principles (IOM)
• AHRQ’s Health Literacy Universal Precautions Approach
First Step: Self-Assessment

Primary Care Health Literacy Assessment*

Please select **one answer** that most accurately describes your practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing Well</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Not Doing</th>
<th>Not Sure OR N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our practice is doing this well</td>
<td>Our practice is doing this, but could do it better</td>
<td>Our practice is not doing this</td>
<td>I don’t know the answer to this question OR This is not applicable to our practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Prepare for Practice Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing Well</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Not Doing</th>
<th>Not Sure or N/A</th>
<th>Tools to Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Our health literacy team meets regularly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-Form Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Our practice regularly re-assesses our health literacy environment and updates our health literacy improvement goals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-Create a Health Literacy Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Our practice has a written Health Literacy Improvement Plan and collects data to see if objectives are being met.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2-Create a Health Literacy Improvement Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All staff members have received health literacy education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-Raise Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. All levels of practice staff have agreed to support changes to make it easier for patients to navigate, understand, and use health information and services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-Raise Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. All staff members understand that limited health literacy is common and can affect all individuals at one time or another.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3-Raise Awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope: PPCMHC Health Literacy Environmental Assessment

• Develop directional landmarks for patients trying to find the clinic; review on-campus signage to the clinic

• Assess clinic walls/bulletin board for clutter and readability.

• Assess patient-facing resources (print & social media) for support of the primary languages and literacy needs of the clinic populations being served.
Tools: Health Literacy
Environmental Assessment
Assessment Process

• Navigation: signs/landmarks & verbal instructions
• Clinic environment: entrance, waiting room, therapy rooms
• Assessed resources:
  o clinic website; FB page
  o patient brochures
Communication of Findings

Detailed written report

Shared via email with meeting invite

Meeting to discuss
Findings: Navigation
Recommendations

• Clearly worded directional scripts for staff from light rail line & parking lots
• Clinic name & location added to building directory
• Bilingual banner across the Clinic’s front desk with “Welcome & PPCHC.”
Findings: Bulletin Boards/ Clinic Doors & Walls

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Recommendations

• Weekly review to keep BB current and suggest organizing the bulletin board into categories: e.g. Special Events; Research Studies
• Limit signs on therapy room doors
• Consistently use bilingual signage throughout the clinic
Findings: Patient-Facing Resources

Child & Family Services
Child and family therapists provide cognitive-behavioral and behavioral therapies. This type of therapy focuses on helping parents and children:
- Develop better coping skills
- Discover ways to handle problems
- Identify strategies for behavior management
- With parenting skills
- Navigate specialty care for transgender youth

Assessment & Testing Services
We offer comprehensive psycho-educational and neuropsychological assessments at a modest self-pay rate. Most of our assessments are available for English and Spanish speakers. We diagnose and provide feedback on a variety of academic, attention, medical and emotional difficulties, including:
- Learning disabilities
- Attention deficit (ADHD)
- Cognitive & emotional difficulties
- Memory difficulties
- Head injuries & other medically related cognitive difficulties
- Assisting with veteran's service connection evaluations
- Immigration evaluations

Therapy Groups
New groups are forming regularly and may include educational groups, skill-building groups and process groups for a variety of issues. See our website for a list of current offerings. Some frequently offered groups include:
- ADHD Skills for Adults
- Coping with Anxiety
- Dealing with Hoarding
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
- Yoga Therapy
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Transgender Teen Parent Support Group
- Chronic Pain Group

Please call for updated group information.

Servicios en Español | Hillsboro
La Clínica en Hillsboro es una clínica de entrenamiento del programa de psicología de la Universidad de Pacífic, y presta una gran variedad de servicios psicológicos, a precios accesibles para niños, adultos y familias. Ofrecemos las intervenciones más recientes y efectivas para tratar condiciones como depresión, ansiedad, trauma, y conflictos familiares e interpersonales.

La Clínica también conduce evaluaciones de personalidad, inteligencia, habilidades cognitivas, y para asuntos migratorios en español para adultos y niños.

BASE (Bienestar, Apoyo, Salud y Educación) es un grupo conducido en Español para adultos que quieren superar síntomas relacionados con la depresión, la ansiedad y el estrés.
Recommendations

• *All* communication/signage/patient-facing materials be bilingual

• Assess patient-facing materials for their literacy level and revise to meet the recommended 6th grade reading level for U.S. adults

• Keep webpage and social media sites up-to-date (assign staff member)
Child & Family Services
Child and family therapists help parents and children:
- Learn:
  - better coping skills
  - new ways to deal with problems
  - how to respond to your child’s actions
  - new parenting skills
- Find specialty care for transgender youth

Other Services
We test for and treat many types of mind and body concerns. These may be school and learning issues. They may also be medical or emotional issues, such as:
- Learning disabilities
- Attention deficit disorder or ADHD
- Problems with:
  - learning
  - thinking
  - memory from head injuries or other medical diagnoses
- Emotional concerns

Therapy Groups
We have groups to help you. Groups that meet often:
- ADHD Skills for Adults
- Coping with Anxiety
- Dealing with Hoarding
- Lowering Stress
- Yoga
- Transgender Teen Parent Support Group
- Coping with Pain Group

For a list of current groups, please call:
Hillsboro Clinic: 503-352-733
Portland Clinic: 503-352-2400
People underestimate their capacity for change. There is never a right time to do a difficult thing. –John Porter

Tip #1: Understand exercise: benefits and myths
Strenuous exercise can have immediate and also long-lasting positive impacts on people’s lives. It has been shown to immediately boost mood and reduce stress levels, to facilitate relaxation and restful sleep, and to improve job performance by enhancing creativity and productivity. It also contributes to longer lifespans with greater physical functioning; improves self-esteem and reduces social inhibition; and is used successfully to treat anxiety, depression, addictions, and other mental health problems.

Myths or misunderstandings about exercise are common and can make it difficult to initiate and maintain a lifestyle change. Some of these include:
- Myth: Focusing on changing the body is a good way to motivate exercise—Fact: It often gets people started, but does not sustain engagement.
- Myth: It is easier to maintain a program with less frequent and intense bouts of exercise—Fact: Greater frequency and intensity tend to increase confidence in ability to continue.
- Myth: Exercise is only helpful if done for at least an hour at a time—Fact: Strenuously exercising for as little as 10 minutes can produce many of the previously listed benefits (though 30 minutes is optimal).
- Myth: The type of exercise does not matter—Fact: Aerobic exercise tends to offer the most benefits; enjoyable forms of exercise are experienced as less difficult/tiring; and distraction during exercise (e.g., music, TV, conversation, etc.) tends to reduce fatigue and increase feelings of revitalization.
- Myth: Busy, hard-working people do not have the time, money, or energy for exercise—Fact: Exercise increases productivity and provides sustained energy, so that time is used more efficiently; moreover, exercise can be done well without a gym membership.

Tip #2: Create a manageable nutrition plan
At least 50% of Americans have a chronic preventable illness. A majority of these illnesses can be prevented or managed through proper nutrition. Traditional western diets of processed meats are linked to increased rates of mental illness, unhealthy eating habits are linked to higher rates of physical disease, and unstable mood and risk of neurocognitive disorders can be traced to poor nutrition. Some tips to combat these risks are:
- Create an eating plan that is relatively easy to stick to.
- Portioning meals ahead of time or making 3 meals into 5.
- Add more color to your plate to increase nutrients.

Tip #3: Establish a manageable sleep routine
Sleep strengthens reaction time and concentration, and allows removal of toxins from the brain. The recommended amount of sleep is 7-9 hours, or 7-8 for adults over 65. It is estimated that around 10 million Americans have a sleep disorder, which can cause disturbance in mood, changes in behavior, and lead to possible symptoms of mental illness such as anxiety and depression. The longer you experience sleep disturbances the higher risk there is of developing depression and other illnesses. It is hypothesized that some ADHD symptoms are also caused by sleep disorders and may have been misdiagnosed, so a good step to manage ADHD symptoms is to look at existing sleep habits. Some tips for healthy sleep are:
- Reduce the amount of time spent looking at a phone or computer screen before bed.
- Exercise as little as 10 minutes a day a few hours before bed time.
- Go to bed and wake up at consistent times to train your body to be tired before bedtime.

Recommended Resources:
- cdc.gov/physicalactivity
- ChooseMyPlate.gov
- sleepfoundation.org/sleep-tools-tips/healthy-sleep-tips
Tip 1: Eat Well
Eating food that is good for you can help you feel better and stay healthy.

Tips for eating healthy:
- Make an eating plan that is easy to stick to.
- Eat smaller meals more often.
- Add more colorful foods like fruits and vegetables to your plate. Fruits and vegetables provide nutrients. Nutrients are the things in food that are good for your body.
- Eat less processed or packaged food like lunch meat or potato chips. These types of food may harm your health.

Tip 2: Be Active
Being more active can help you feel good now. It can also help you stay healthy over time. It can:
- Boost your mood
- Lower your stress
- Help you relax and sleep better
- Improve your ability to think clearly. This may help you do your job better.
- Help you feel better about yourself
- Help treat mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and addictions.

Tips for being more active:
- Make a plan and stick to it. Starting is the easy part. Find a reason to keep going.
- Some is better than none. Being active for as little as 10 minutes helps you feel good. If you can, try for more.
- Make it fun: Be active in a way that you enjoy, it may feel easier. You don’t have to go to a gym to get a good workout. Walk with a friend or listen to music while you run. Water your garden or go for a bike ride.
- Find time. It’s worth it. Being active can give you more energy and help you feel like you can do more with your time.

Tip 3: Sleep Better
Sleep can help you think, work and feel better.

Try to get 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Older adults may find they need less sleep.

Many people have sleeping problems. Poor sleep for a long time can cause:
- Bad moods
- Change in behavior
- Anxiety or depression

Tips for getting good sleep:
- Make your time before bed screen-free. Phone and computer screen light before bed can make it hard to fall asleep.
- Be active 1-2 hours before bedtime. Go for a short walk or stretch for 10 minutes.
- Make a sleep routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day. This trains your body to be tired before bedtime.

Recommended Resources:
cdc.gov/physicalactivity
choosemyplate.gov
medlineplus.gov/healthysleep.html
Thank you!

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