

Resource List

Health Plan Organizational Assessment of Health Literacy Activities

Many questions in the organization assessment inquired about the use of guidelines. To help health plans implement and use guidelines in the future, each guideline topic covered in the assessment is listed below. The guidelines and suggestions listed are resources that have been developed and may be used or built upon to improve existing health literacy initiatives.

Please Note- All page numbers listed refer to the page of the actual document as indicated in the lower right or left corner. The page numbers may or may not correspond to individual pdf file page numbers.

Reading level goals and testing

- ***Simply Put-*** CDC communication guide. It includes directions for completing a Frye Readability Test for written material (Pages 23-28). <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/simpput.pdf>

Font/Size

- ***The Health Literacy Style Manual-*** This manual provides font and size guidelines and examples of proper use (Pages 40-43).
http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health_literacy/common/pdf/tools/hlsmchapter4.pdf
- ***Simply Put-*** CDC communication guide. It gives font and size suggestions (Page 9).
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/simpput.pdf>

Clear/Plain Language

- ***Clear & Simple: Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers-*** Provided by the National Cancer Institute, this is a great resource for creating clear and simple print materials (primarily focuses on disease specific information). It gives the basic steps to develop materials as well as appendices detailing style, layout, visuals etc.
<http://www.nci.nih.gov/aboutnci/oc/clear-and-simple/allpages>
- ***Checklist for use of plain language-***
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/checklist.cfm>
- ***Simply Put-*** CDC communication guide. Page 29 provides a checklist for written materials.
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/simpput.pdf>
- ***Plain Language Thesaurus*** http://www.nphic.org/files/editor/file/thesaurus_1007.pdf
- ***Merck manuals-*** The Merck manuals are often used as examples of good written health information on a variety of health conditions and diseases. Some examples:
Diabetes: <http://www.merck.com/mmhe/sec13/ch165/ch165a.html?qt=Diabetes&alt=sh>
High Blood Pressure: <http://www.merck.com/mmhe/sec03/ch022/ch022a.html#sec03-ch022-ch022a-176>

Web specific

- ***Guidelines for Health Plan User-Friendly Development and Design-*** AHIP guidelines
<http://www.ahip.org/content/default.aspx?docid=22867>
- ***Checklist for Evaluating Health Plan Websites for User-Friendliness-*** AHIP guidelines
<http://www.ahip.org/content/default.aspx?docid=22865>
- ***Document Checklist of Plain Language on the Web-*** This webpage provides some brief guidelines for writing information specifically for web viewing.
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/quickreference/weblst.cfm>

Identification of medical/scientific jargon to avoid

- ***Plain Language Thesaurus-*** includes medical terminology
http://www.nphic.org/files/editor/file/thesaurus_1007.pdf

White space

- ***The Health Literacy Style Manual-*** Suggestions and guidelines for spacing and the proper use of “white space”. Includes examples (Page 47)
http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health_literacy/common/pdf/tools/hlsmchapter4.pdf
- ***Simply Put-*** CDC Communication Guide. Brief layout and design guidelines(Page 17)
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/simpput.pdf>

Graphics/Illustrations

- ***Simply Put-*** CDC Communication Guide. Discusses the use of graphics/illustrations generally as well as putting some focus on cultural appropriateness (Pages 11-16).
<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/simpput.pdf>

Verbal Communication (strategies for good communication as well as indications for difficulty understanding)

- ***Quick Guide to Health Literacy-*** Includes information on teachback and examples of the use of this technique (Page 4.5).
<http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/Quickguide.pdf>

Identification of organizational words and phrases

- ***Simple Words and Phrases-***
<http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>
- ***Plain Language Thesaurus-*** http://www.nphic.org/files/editor/file/thesaurus_1007.pdf

Regulation of acronyms or nicknames

- ***Keep it Jargon-Free***- Lists suggestions for regulating the use of acronyms/abbreviations at the bottom of the page. <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/jargonfree.cfm>

Development of forms

- ***The Health Literacy Style Manual***- This manual provides many “good” and “bad” examples of forms, identifying appropriate layout and development techniques. http://www.idph.state.ia.us/health_literacy/common/pdf/tools/hlsmchapter4.pdf
- ***Simple Words and Phrases***- Word suggestions- much of this is the type of language that would be used in forms <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm>
- ***Quick Guide to Health Literacy***- Includes a very brief tip list for form improvement (Page 5.2) <http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/quickguide/Quickguide.pdf>

Training Resources

- ***PlainTrain***, the Plain Language Online Training Program- free online training for clear writing and material development. <http://www.web.net/~plain/PlainTrain/index.html>
- ***Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency***- An online course for public health professionals to communicate better with patients with poor English skills and limited health literacy. <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm>

The resources listed above provide basic guidance for the use of health literacy guidelines in your health plan. If you are looking for more in depth, additional, or specific information, there is a comprehensive guide to available resources on Health Literacy available for download at <http://www.healthliteracyinnovations.com/home>.