



Family PACT

Planning • Access • Care • Treatment

OFFICE OF FAMILY PLANNING

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Helping Your Clients Understand:

**Improving
Health Communication
in your
Family PACT practice**





Accompanying Documents to This Module

- **All documents referenced in this module, including the module evaluation form are available for you to download from the familypact.org website.**
- **Prior to beginning the module, you can print the documents by clicking on the list located just below the actual module link.**





Navigation Tips

- **Close all other Internet windows and applications before starting the module.**
- **The module will advance automatically.**
- **If you need to interrupt the module and come back to it later, use the arrow keys on keyboard to manually advance or reverse slides.**





Objectives

1. Define health literacy.
2. Describe the importance of health literacy.
3. Identify ways you can improve health communication in your Family PACT practice.





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Health Literacy





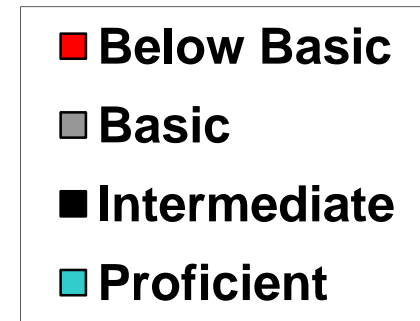
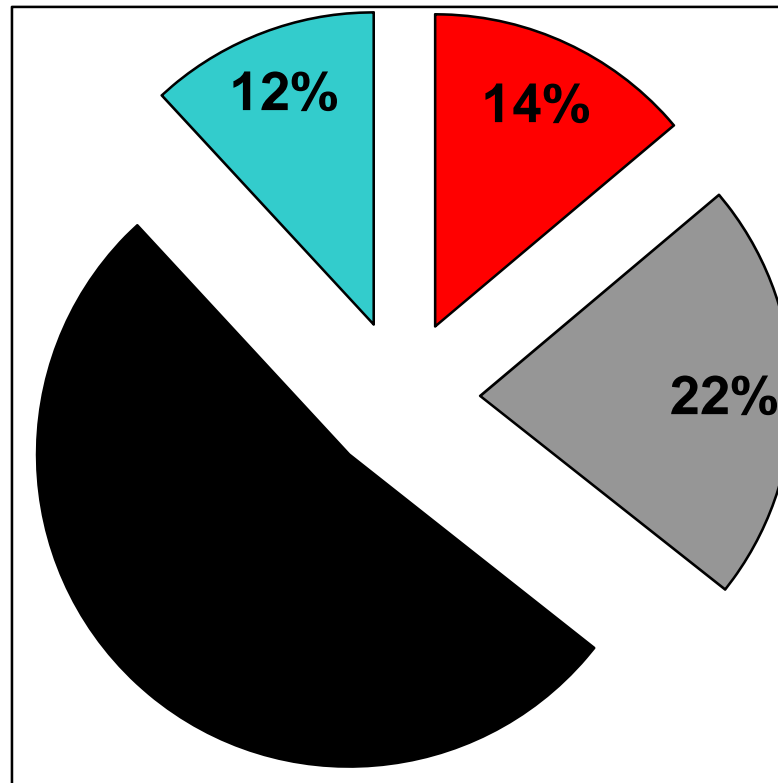
What is Health Literacy?

- A person's ability to read, understand, and use health care information to make good health care decisions and to safely follow instructions for care and treatment.
- A health care provider's ability to explain, write, and share health care information in a way that clients can truly understand and get the health care they need.





Health Literacy in the United States, 2003



Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., Boyle, B., Hsu, Y., and Dunleavy, E. (2007). *Literacy in Everyday Life: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy* (NCES 2007-480). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.





Literacy in the United States

- 20% read below 5th grade level.
- 30% read at the 5th – 8th grade level.





The “Mismatch”

- Most health care providers typically speak at a “college level.”
- Most health education materials are written at the 10th grade level or higher.
- Most informed consent documents are written at the 12th -17th grade level.





The Cost of Low Health Literacy

- Literacy is the single best predictor of health status.
- Literacy skills are a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than age, income, employment status, education level, and racial or ethnic group.





Less Health Knowledge

Clients with low literacy skills:

- Are less aware of ways to prevent health problems.
- Have less knowledge about their medical condition and are less likely to manage it well.





Poorer Health Outcomes

People with low literacy skills:

- Have poorer health status than the rest of the population.
- Are more likely to be hospitalized.
- Have more emergency room visits.





Higher Healthcare Costs

- Economic costs of low health literacy are enormous – billions of dollars in increased health care costs and lost productivity.
- This is largely due to:
 - medication errors (Ex. 30mg v. 30 pills)
 - excessive hospitalizations
 - longer hospital stays
 - greater use of emergency room





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Improving Health Communication





Ways to Improve Communication with Clients

- Make your office client-friendly.
- Talk in an easy-to-understand way.
- Provide easy-to-read written materials.





Make Your Office Client-Friendly

- Make your clients feel welcome.
- Have a real person answer the phone.
- Help them prepare for their appointment.





Make Your Office Client-Friendly

- Use clear, easy-to-follow signage.
- Make sure your forms are easy to use.
- Go over any instructions you give.





Talk in an Easy-to-Understand Way

- Slow down.
- Encourage clients to ask questions.
- Use plain, non-medical language.





Medical Terms in Plain Language

- Contraception Birth Control
- Osteoporosis Soft, brittle bones
- Benign Not cancer
- Carcinoma Cancer
- Cardiac problem Heart problem
- Infertility Can't get pregnant
- Menopause Stopping periods





Talk in an Easy-to-Understand Way

- Show or draw simple pictures.
- Focus on the one or two most important things your client needs to know at that visit. Repeat it.
- Follow-up on the conversation.





Talk in an Easy-to-Understand Way

- Use the teach-back or show-me method.
- Encourage your clients to ask questions.





Talk in an Easy-to-Understand Way

- Be friendly and encouraging.
- Keep it simple and direct.
- Use language and words your client is familiar with.
- Focus on what the client should do.





Provide Easy-to-Read Written Materials

Easy to read materials should:

- Focus on what the client must know or do.
- Reflect the needs of your intended audience.
- Be personal and conversational. Use the “active” voice.





Provide Easy-to-Read Written Materials

- Use common, ordinary words.
- Make sure materials are written at the 5th grade level or below.





Evaluate Your Written Client Education Materials

- Assess the reading level of material.
- Evaluate for readability.





Reading Level

- Use a reading test such as Fry or SMOG to assess the reading level of the written material.
- You can find these handouts on this module's webpage.





Readability

- **Layout**
 - White space, organized, clear, logical
 - Margin aligned at the left only
- **Typography**
 - Large, not overly ornate or too simple
- **Graphic appeal**
 - Realistic, positive images





Evaluation Checklist

- Use the ***Checklist for Evaluating Health Education Materials*** to test for all these factors.
- You can find the handout on this module's webpage.





Evaluate Materials with Your Clients

- Did you find it easy to read?
- Did it answer your questions?
- Do you like the way it looks?
- Is this something you would share with your friends and family?





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Provide Easy-to-Read Written Materials

- As a Family PACT provider, you can get free, easy-to-read and culturally appropriate materials.
- Most materials available through **www.familypact.org** are written at a 6th grade level or below and have been field tested with diverse populations.





Provide Easy-to-Read Written Materials

- At **www.familypact.org** you can also download free information sheets in 6 different languages.
- To find all these materials, you can go to **www.familypact.org**, click on Providers, then click on Client Education.





In Summary

- Health literacy affects access, health outcomes, behaviors, costs and client-provider relationships.
- Providers can adapt their communication methods to make sure all clients can understand.





Resources

- *Family PACT Linguistic and Cultural Competency Toolkit*
- *Tips for Evaluating Written Health Education Materials*
- *Meeting the Linguistic and Cultural Needs of Family PACT Clients*

At **www.familypact.org**, click on Providers, then Cultural Competency





Resources

Helpful Assessment Tools

- *How to Use the Fry Graph*
- *How to Use the SMOG Formula*
- *Checklist for Evaluating Health Education Materials*





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Upon exiting this module, if you have not already done so, please download the Evaluation Form and email the completed form to:

familypact@cfhc.org

Or fax the completed form to:

(213) 368-4428

Thank You!

