

Health Literacy Checklist for Research Communication

WHY HEALTH LITERACY?

Health literacy is an important concept promoting understandable and person-centered health information. According to the U.S. Health Department, health literacy is the “degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions”.

Health literacy affects a potential participant’s ability to:

- Understand recruitment materials and become interested in a study
- Complete consent forms and other study documents
- Comprehend the study and what is being asked of them – this can also impact study compliance as a result

Health literacy is important to the recruitment, engagement, and retention of participants.

CHECKLIST

Health literacy encompasses many aspects. From the images used, to the words chosen, the tone conveyed and more. When creating materials, ask yourself “could a participant obtain, process, understand and make decisions from this material?”

- Writing at a 6th grade reading level to ensure the readability and comprehension of the material
- Clear and concise writing, with a limited number of messages/ideas for the reader to consume at once
- All medical and research terminology changed to lay or plain language
- People first language – putting the person before their disease or descriptor(s)
- Sensitive wording and phrasing to the person’s state of being, disease or condition

- Words that are culturally, spiritually or otherwise competent

OTHER KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Other considerations that add to health literacy:

- Images that are inclusive and representative of the populations you are trying to reach
- Using images, along with words, to visually represent what is being discussed
- Font size that is readable by people of all ages and vision capabilities
- Documents translated to the participant’s primary or preferred language(s)
- The overall layout and design is organized, readable and understandable

By having understandable, person-centered, health literate study materials, you are in a better position to reach and connect with your desired participant group.

RESOURCES

OHSU - Research Equity Accessibility Literacy (REAL)
<https://www.ohsu.edu/research-integrity/research-equity-accessibility-literacy-real>

The CDC - Health Literacy
https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/Simply_Put.pdf

The NIH - Health Literacy
<https://www.nih.gov/institutes-nih/nih-office-director/office-communications-public-liaison/clear-communication/health-literacy>

The U.S. Government - Plainlanguage.gov
<https://plainlanguage.gov/>

For more information, additional resources, and to request a complimentary recruitment consultation, please visit our [webpage](#) or email us at OCTRlrecruitment@ohsu.edu.