

Health Literacy: Improvement Plan



Clear health communication
deltamo.org

1. Prepare for Practice Change

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
<p>Identify one person or person(s) in your agency to be a health literacy champion. This person will be the point of contact for health literacy updates, trainings, and education. She will be responsible to regularly reassess the agency’s health literacy environment and update this Improvement Plan. She should assure that staff complete training and should pass along information from trainings she attends.</p>					
<p>1.1 Our agency has a health literacy team that meets regularly.</p>					
<p>1.2 Our agency regularly reassesses our health literacy environment and updates our health literacy improvement goals.</p>					
<p>1.3 Our agency has a written Health Literacy Improvement Plan and collects data to see if objectives are being met.</p>					
<p>1.8 Our Health Literacy Team understands how to implement and test changes designed to improve performance.</p>					
<p>Hold a staff meeting to discuss health literacy. Use the Health Literacy Overview handout and the We are the 90 handout to explain basic concepts. Staff should understand that limited health literacy is common and can affect all people at one time or another.</p>					

Health Literacy: Improvement Plan

Agency: _____

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a discussion with staff to gather their input on health literacy. Use the “Health Literacy Video Questions for Discussion” handout as a guide. • Ask staff to sign a commitment statement agreeing to support agency-wide changes to improve health literacy. • Ask staff to complete the online CDC training “Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals”. 						
<p>1.5 All staff have completed Health Literacy training.</p>						
<p>1.6 All staff understand that limited health literacy is common and can affect all individuals at one time or another.</p>						
<p>1.7 All staff have agreed to support changes to make it easier for clients to access, understand and use health information and services.</p>						
<p>Present your Board of Directors or County Commission with a Health Literacy Policy and ask them to adopt it.</p>						
<p>1.4 Our agency has a Health Literacy policy that guides processes and practices and requires training for staff.</p>						

2. Improve Spoken Communication

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
<p>Encourage staff to ask clients their language preference and record it in their chart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available appropriate language interpretation services for non-English speaking clients. • Respond to phone calls in the language spoken by the client. • Ask staff to review the handout “Address Language Differences”. 					
<p>2.9 Staff assess clients' language preferences and record them in client charts.</p>					
<p>2.10 Staff always use appropriate language services with clients who do not speak English very well (e.g., trained medical interpreters, qualified telephone interpreters, materials in other languages).</p>					
<p>2.13 Our agency is able to respond to phone calls in the main languages spoken by our clients.</p>					
<p>Encourage staff to listen to clients without interrupting. Don't just listen to answer, listen to understand.</p>					
<p>2.2 All staff listen carefully to clients without interrupting.</p>					
<p>Encourage staff to offer all clients assistance filling out forms.</p>					
<p>2.14 Staff offer all clients help with filling out forms, regardless of the client's appearance.</p>					

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
<p>Encourage staff to use plain language when speaking to clients. That is to speak slowly and clearly, without using large words or jargon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post the “Key Communication Strategies” poster in staff work areas. • Ask staff to choose action oriented statements that answer “What should I <u>do</u>?”. • Explain numbers using real life items as visual aids (example: have the client hold a baseball to understand a serving size of one cup of fruit). • Ask staff to review tips on the tool “Communicate Clearly”. • Ask staff to evaluate themselves at least once a month using the “Communication Self-Assessment” tool. • Ask staff to evaluate one another at least once a month using the “Communication Observation” tool. • Ask at least 10 clients per month to evaluate your agency’s communication using the “Brief Patient Feedback” tool. 					
<p>2.1 All staff speak to clients clearly (e.g, use plain, everyday words and speak at a moderate pace).</p>					
<p>2.4 All staff use audio/visual materials and/or visual aids like models or images to promote better understanding.</p>					

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
<p>Encourage staff to use the Chunk and Check and Teach Back methods for explaining health information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use visual aids to help with understanding. • Use subheadings to navigate written documents. • Select three key points to focus on with each client and highlight and review those points clearly. • Check for understanding by using the Teach Back Method to ask the client to explain what they have heard you say. Training on the Teach Back Method can be found in this 5-minutes video format, this 45-minute online training module, or in the “Teach Back Method” handout. • Follow up with clients between visits as appropriate to ensure they understand information. Refer to the “Follow Up” tool for guidance. 					
<p>2.3 All staff limit themselves to providing clients with 3 key points and repeat those points for reinforcement.</p>					
<p>2.6 All staff talk with clients about any educational materials they receive during each visit and emphasize the important points.</p>					
<p>2.7 All staff ask clients to state key points in their own words (e.g., Teach-Back method) to assess clients' understanding of information.</p>					
<p>2.8 Staff contact clients between office visits to ensure understanding or to follow up on plans made during the visit.</p>					

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
<p>Ensure clients have access to equipment for recommended Internet resources or audio/visual resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an Internet station in your facility or work with local partners to provide off-site access to the Internet. • Provide clear, written and verbal instructions on how to access resources. 					
<p>2.5 All staff ensure clients have access to equipment and the ability and understanding to use recommended audio/visual materials and Internet resources.</p>					
<p>Ensure your agency’s telephone recording has an option to speak with a person.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the “Improve Telephone Access” tool. • Use local landmarks and public transportation routes when providing directions to your facility. 					
<p>2.11 When staff provide directions to our office, they refer to familiar landmarks and public transportation routes as appropriate.</p>					
<p>2.12 On our agency's automated phone system, one option is to speak with a person.</p>					

3. Improve Written Communication

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
Ensure written materials are easy to read and understand. One staff member should complete training in order to understand how to assess written materials for understandability.					
3.1 At least one staff member knows how to assess, prepare, and simplify written materials so they are easier to understand.					
Assess materials and forms for understandability and re-write them, if necessary, in a format that is easy to understand. Ask clients for feedback.					
3.2 Our agency requests patient feedback on written materials.					
3.3 Our agency assesses whether written materials are easy to understand.					
3.4 Our agency's health education materials are concise, use plain language, and are organized and formatted to make them easy to read and understand.					
3.6 Our agency's forms are easy to understand and fill out, and collect only necessary information.					
Offer written materials in languages other than English.					
3.5 Our health education materials are available in languages other than English.					

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
Ensure indoor and outdoor signage is clear, understandable, and effective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the “Health Literacy Environment Activity Packet” to conduct a self-assessment of your facility, OR • Request an environmental assessment of your facility by an outside person, such as a local community member or the Health Literacy Project Manager. 					
3.7 Our agency name is clearly displayed on the outside of the building.					
3.8 Signs are clearly posted inside our agency directing clients to appropriate locations (e.g., restrooms, entrance, check-in, check-out, exit).					
3.10 Office signs use large, clearly visible lettering and plain, everyday words.					
3.11 Office signs are written in English and in the primary languages of the populations being served.					
Ensure printed materials on bulletin boards or displays are organized and easy to access and read.					
3.9 The walls and bulletin boards are not covered with too many printed notices. It is easy for anyone to pick out important information.					

4. Improve Self-Management and Empowerment

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
Encourage staff to consider clients’ personal beliefs, customs, and culture in order to create an environment that encourages clients to ask questions and get involved in their own care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask staff to review the tool “Consider Culture, Customs and Beliefs”. • Ask staff to complete online Cultural Competency training. 					
4.1 Our agency creates an environment that encourages our clients to ask questions (e.g., by asking "What questions do you have?" instead of "Do you have any questions?").					
4.2 Our agency creates an environment that encourages our clients to get involved with their own care.					
4.4 Staff consider clients' religion, culture, and ethnic customs when providing referrals and care options.					
Encourage staff to help clients set health improvement goals for themselves.					
4.3 Staff help clients choose health improvement goals and develop action plans to take manageable steps towards goals.					
Encourage staff to follow up with clients as appropriate to determine if they are meeting their goals, and to gather their feedback.					
4.5 Staff follow up with clients to determine if their action plan goals have been met.					
4.6 Our agency requests feedback from clients.					

5. Improve Support Systems

ACTION STEPS	STAFF	DUE DATE	COMPLETED	NOTES	OUTCOMES
Maintain a current list of community resources in order to make referrals. Update the list at least annually.					
5.3 Our agency maintains an up-to-date list of community resources and refers clients as needed.					
<p>Encourage staff to talk to clients about any barriers. Ask them if they need assistance and provide referrals as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist clients with processes such as making an appointment with referred agency, as appropriate. • Follow up with them to confirm they followed through with the referral. 					
5.1 Staff assess clients' non-medical barriers and take initiative to address them and provide appropriate referrals or extra support as needed.					
5.2 Staff ask clients if they would like assistance with reading or understanding and using numbers.					
5.5 Staff offer clients assistance with referrals, such as making an appointment.					
5.6 Staff confirm client follow through after a referral is made.					
Encourage staff to share important referral information directly with other service providers following HIPAA, and confirm client follow through after referral is made.					
5.4 Our agency shares important referral information directly with other service providers following HIPAA guidelines.					
5.6 Staff confirm client follow through after referral is made.					