

Health Literacy for Older Adults

March 11, 2026

Indian Health Service

Taryn Watson

Emily Tahy-Ceballos, EdD, MPH

Megan Russell



Learning Objectives

1. Identify at least one strategy to improve health literacy.
2. Discuss how poor health literacy contributes to health disparities.
3. Explore and describe the principles of TAP-CV.

Outline

- Background
- Individual & Organizational Health Literacy
- Why Health Literacy
- Healthy People 2030 Health Literacy Objectives
- IHS Health Literacy Workgroup
- Introduction of TAP-CV



Background

- IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for Indian people.
- Provides comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 2.56 million of the nation's estimated 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

What is Health Literacy?



- **Personal health literacy** is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.
- **Organizational health literacy** is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.



Why is Health Literacy Important?

- Only 12 percent of adults have proficient health literacy, according to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy



- Nearly 9 of 10 adults have difficulty using everyday health information

Source: [2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy](#)

Impacts of Not Addressing Health Literacy

- More medication
- More tests and procedures
- Inability to manage self-care
- More health forms
- Delayed specialized care
- Poor management of chronic disease
- Increased complication of medical issues
- Delayed decision making
- Lower confidence in navigating the health care system
- May lead to shame and fear
- Raised anxiety and stress
- Higher health care costs
- Incorrect medication dosage
- Limited understanding of health insurance coverage



Impacts of Addressing Health Literacy

- Better self-management of chronic conditions/diseases
- Patients living longer
- Patients clearly understand diagnosis, test results, and care plans
- Health information is easier to process, remember, and act on
- Patients feel more comfortable asking questions and clarifying concerns
- Improved medication adherence from patients
- Better quality of life and health outcomes
- Lower rates of hospitalizations and ER visits
- Increased confidence in navigating the health care system
- Increased use of preventative services (screenings, vaccines)
- Lower readmission rates
- Lower health care costs
- Improved patient satisfaction
- Stronger sense of control over personal health
- Understanding medical health care coverage

Mentimeter: Please scan the following QR code
Share your efforts in supporting health literacy



IHS Health Literacy Workgroup

Reconvened in 2017, consisting of a multidisciplinary team.

- Developed a health literacy work plan that aligns with the National Health Literacy Plan
- Participation in monthly HHS Health Literacy Workgroup meetings
- Developed a 20-minute basic health literacy and plain language training video
- Developed a “Let’s TALK” poster and video
- Developed "Holding Healthy Conversations" handout
- White Paper that consists of a “Call to Action” to advance health literacy

Let's **TALK** for your best health!

Tell us what is going on.
Ask what you can do about it.
Learn where to get more information.
Keep healthy by taking action.

Watch the Let's Talk video here!

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IHS Health Literacy Workgroup (Continue)

- Promote “documentation of patient comprehension in the Electronic Health Record (EHR).”
- Encourage patients to set behavioral health goals, document, and reassess at the next visit.
- Established Annual Health Literacy Award Categories (individual and team).
- Promote health literacy at meetings, workshops, conferences, and regional meetings.
- Host webinars on best and promising practices.
- Hosted health literacy training for IHS and Tribal programs.

TAP-CV

A Mnemonic for AHRQ Universal Health
Literacy Precautions Toolkit

T - Teach-Back

- ✓ Make sure the patient truly understands by asking them to explain what you said back to you in their own words.

"Do you understand how to take your medication?"

"Can you tell me how you'll take your medication at home?"



A - Adapt Language

- ✓ Practice using word list tools to turn complex health language into clear, plain language.

Text 1

It's important to adhere to your antihypertensive regimen to maintain optimal blood pressure and reduce the risk of myocardial infarction.

Text 2

Take your high blood pressure medicine every day. This will reduce your chances of having a heart attack.

Take Action to Improve Communication & Understanding

✓ Promote universal precaution

✓ Use plain language

✓ Use everyday words

- Annually → Yearly or every year
- Arthritis → Pain in joints
- Cardiovascular → Having to do with the heart
- Dermatologist → Skin doctor
- Diabetes → Elevated sugar in the blood
- Hypertension → High blood pressure

P - Pictures & Multimodal Communication

- ✓ Use visuals, demonstrations, and videos alongside written and verbal instructions.

Take your pills every 12 hours



Example

Keep it Simple Use the simplest image that makes the point

- Limit each image to a main idea; avoid extra details that distract
- Use simple line drawings over photographs
- Use simple colors if any at all
- Avoid abstract symbols; use realistic, recognizable images



Wash your hands



Activity: Do's and Don'ts

Proper handwashing to remove germs requires five key steps: wetting hands, applying soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds (including back of hands, between fingers, and under nails), rinsing thoroughly, and drying with a clean towel. Use a towel to turn off the faucet to avoid re-contamination.

Key times to wash hands

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage



Handwashing with soap and water is one of the best ways to stop the spread of germs.



Culture & Trauma-Informed Care



- ✓ Create a welcoming, inclusive environment, acknowledge past trauma and respect the patient's cultural background and experiences.

"Stop eating frybread and other unhealthy foods."

"Let's look for ways to adjust the recipe for frybread for you."

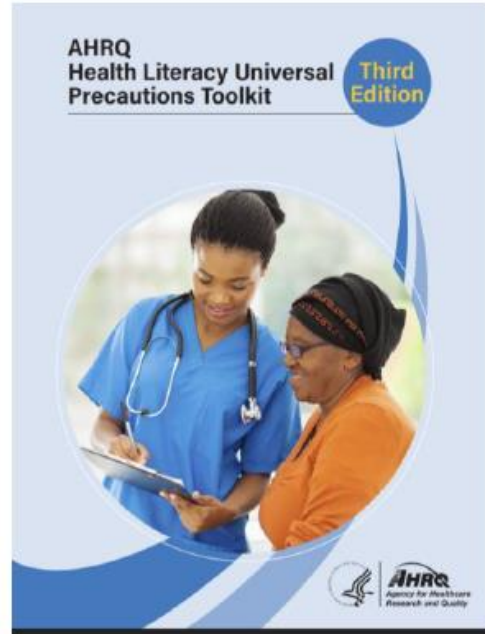
Validate Patient Navigation & Support Needs

- Create a judgment-free space
- Encourage patients to ask questions
- Present information in order of priority
- Present information in small chunks
- Connect patients to available health navigation resources



TAP-CV is a mnemonic to make it easy to remember and implement the best practices.

A Mnemonic for AHRQ Universal Health Literacy Precautions Toolkit



216 PAGES -----> 1 PAGE


Teach-Back

- T** Make sure the patient truly understands by asking them to explain what you said back to you in their own words.
- ✗ "Do you understand how take your medication?" ✓ "Can you tell me how you'll take your medication at home?"

Adapt Language

- A** Use plain, simple and everyday words and avoid medical jargon.
- ✗ "You have hypertension" ✓ "You have high blood pressure."

Pictures & Multimodal Communication

- P** Use visuals, demonstrations and videos alongside written and verbal instructions
- ✗ "Take your pills every 12 hours" ✓ 

Culture & Trauma-Informed Care

- C** Create a welcoming, inclusive environment, acknowledge past trauma and respect the patient's cultural background and experiences
- ✗ "Stop eating frybread and other unhealthy foods" ✓ "Let's explore ways to adjust the recipe for frybread for you"

Validate Patient Navigation & Support Needs

- V** Create a judgment-free space | Encourage patients to ask questions | Present information in order of priority | Present information in small chunks | Connect patients to available health navigation resources.

Next Steps



- Propose integration of standard language on using clear written, and oral language that is intended for an appropriate audience.
- Develop additional training videos to post at the Learning Management System and IHS website
- Host regional health literacy trainings for IHS, Tribal and Urban Programs



Tools and Resources



- [CDC Clear Communication](#)
- [NIH Clear Communication](#)
- [Everyday Words for Public Health Communication](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9jGZ-smwDM>
- https://www.ihs.gov/sites/healthcommunications/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/ihshealthliteracywhitepaper2024.pdf
- https://www.cdc.gov/still-going-strong/campaign-resources/index.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- https://www.ihs.gov/sites/healthcommunications/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/ihshealthliteracywhitepaper2024.pdf
- [Health Communication - Healthy People 2030 | odphp.health.gov](#)



Questions?

Assessment



