

Organizational Health Literacy Resource Collection

A Collection to Reference, Share, and Use!

This collection is a living document.
We will continue to update and refine it together!

Conceived, Compiled, & Maintained by Lindsay E. Rosenfeld, LLC
Last updated July 31, 2026

In collaboration with The National Network of Public Health Institutes
Funded by The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Quick Start!

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[Submit New Resources](#) to the Collection!

Use this comment form to provide feedback or suggest a resource!

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Check out this document to see relevant updates and corrections submitted via the form above.

[Check out this Best Practice Brief](#) highlighting lessons learned.

This brief highlights the lessons learned with health departments about best practice organizational health literacy work which inspired this collection.

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Introduction to the Collection

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Who is this Collection for?

Does your work or sector expect “the public” (e.g., your audience) to find, understand, and use your information, processes, and/or services? If so, this collection of organizational health literacy (OHL) resources is for you. Here you will find annotated, best practice links focused on organizational and system change, including trainings, guides, assessments, toolkits, and conferences. Per [Healthy People 2030 \(U.S.\)](#), *organizational health literacy* is the “degree to which organizations enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.” Dr. Rima Rudd describes health literacy as an interaction. Her [Health Literacy in Action model](#) (see slide 27 at the link) posits this interaction as one between system *participants* (public, patients, professionals), *text* (words and meaning), *task* (activities), and *context* (structural facilitators and barriers).

What’s in this Collection?

For this collection, an “organizational health literacy resource” is defined broadly as a publicly available and free resource that helps organizations reduce structural barriers for their audience. These OHL resources can help to identify and alleviate barriers that make it hard for the public to find, understand, evaluate, navigate, and use information, processes and/or services. For a few, there are further aspects of the resource that cost money, but I limited their inclusion and only included such resources where the basic free option was still useful.

What was the Motivation for Creating this Best Practice Collection?

In working with grantees of the [OT21-2103 CDC COVID-19 health disparities grant](#) across the country, it became clear that for both ongoing and new work to flourish – a resource collection was required. Daily work does not often allow us to spend time deeply exploring a new approach. Thus, I found myself routinely wishing I could give them a collection like this and highlight suggestions of where to start based on their focus.

This work is necessary even as we are being told that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can make finding information easier. In many ways it has; indeed, I used AI to assist in the graphic design of this collection. Notably, its use allowed me to expand the collection beyond what I had originally envisioned in terms of content and design, given the project scope, budget, and duration. However, AI cannot replicate information that exists beyond generative AI, or the internet itself; the knowledge and experience we, our communities, and institutions possess is not incorporated. It does not know when information can be adapted or how guides and tools have been used on the ground. It does not understand resources that are useful for this work, even if they don’t explicitly mention health literacy or another common term. That human perspective and experience are not accessible to AI. It is a tool; it is not a substitute for our knowledge, experience, and critical thinking.

What Resources are Included?

Included OHL resources must explicitly focus on OHL, or a component of OHL, such as: participant/professional skills, text (written or oral information), task (activity to be done), and context (systems facilitators and barriers - whether procedural, physical, emotional, or otherwise).

The resources must theoretically be available to anyone with internet access, free (though they may refer to resources that cost money), and in English.

Keep Building the Collection with Us!:

This collection is sure to miss relevant and useful resources. We can keep it relevant by [submitting](#) and [posting](#) edits, updates, and comments.

I hope you will use this collection to support your work, to help others, and to interact with each other.

With gratitude for all the crucial and passionate work that is to come for our communities,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsay Rosenfeld". The script is cursive and fluid.

Lindsay Rosenfeld, ScD, ScM
Organizational Health Literacy Consultant
National Network of Public Health Institutes
July 2026

How to Use the Collection

You can use this collection in many ways. It's your choice how to begin!

You can select a starting point based on:

1) your experience in health literacy.

Section #1: New to Organizational Health Literacy Work? [Start Here for #1.](#)

Section #2: Want to Learn More about Organizational Health Literacy Work? [Start Here for #2.](#)

2) topics outlined in the table of contents.

3) a “control-F” search for a topic or resource of interest.

Note: Some resources may appear in more than one section.

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Part 1: Definitions - Health Literacy

Healthy People 2030: Health Literacy

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/health-literacy-healthy-people-2030>

Healthy People 2030 addresses both personal health literacy and organizational health literacy and provides the following definitions:

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** enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.

CDC: What Is Health Literacy?

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/about/index.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Communications.

Year: Last updated October 16, 2024.

Highlights: This CDC page explains the updated Healthy People 2030 definitions of personal and organizational health literacy and describes how the newer definitions shift attention toward people's ability to use health information, make well-informed decisions, and recognize organizational responsibility. It also links health literacy to trust, health equity, public health practice, plain language, preferred language and communication channels, culturally and linguistically appropriate language, and cross-sector action.

Health Literacy Fact Sheets

<https://www.chcs.org/resource/health-literacy-fact-sheets/>

Source: Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS)

Year: March 2024.

Highlights: This CHCS guide provides highlights for health literacy best practice, including why health literacy is important, how health literacy can advance health equity, and how to improve written and verbal communication.

History of Health Literacy Definitions in the U.S.

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/health-literacy-healthy-people-2030/history-health-literacy-definitions>

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Healthy People 2030 page explains how federal health literacy definitions evolved from an individual-capacity framing toward separate definitions for personal health literacy and organizational health literacy. It describes the Secretary's Advisory Committee's proposal and process to expand Healthy People's view of health literacy.

Part 2: Why is Organizational Health Literacy Important?

Health Literacy — A Bridge to Health Equity

<https://ihaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Health-Literacy-A-Bridge-to-Health-Equity-081225.pdf>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA).

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This IHA white paper explains how organizational health literacy can support health equity by helping people use health information, access care, and navigate services. It connects health literacy to Healthy People 2030, the CMS Framework for Health Equity, the social determinants of health, and the 10 attributes of health-literate organizations.

Why Health Literacy Matters: The Data Behind Better Outcomes

<https://ihaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/IHA-White-Paper-Why-Health-Literacy-Matters.pdf>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA).

Year: 2026.

Highlights: This IHA white paper explains why health literacy matters for patient safety, health equity, health care quality, and system performance. It highlights that health literacy goes beyond individual reading skills and describes it as also shaped by how health care organizations design, explain, and deliver information. The paper connects clearer communication and system-level health literacy practices to fewer misunderstandings, fewer errors, better chronic disease management, safer transitions of care, and more efficient use of resources.

Health Literacy in the United States: Enhancing Assessments and Reducing Disparities

https://healthconfianza.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2024/07/Health_Literacy_United_States_Final_Report.pdf

Source: Milken Institute; authors: Claude Lopez, Bumyang Kim, and Katherine Sacks.

Year: 2022.

Highlights: This Milken Institute report provides an overview of the U.S. health literacy landscape, including definitions, measurement tools, population-level data, disparities, health literacy among adults and young people, digital health literacy, and initiatives at federal, local, K–12, and older-adult levels. It identifies health literacy as connected to health equity and social determinants of health, and recommends systematic population-wide assessment, user-friendly technology, and community-engaged approaches that involve the broader ecosystem around the populations being served.

The Roles of Trust and Health Literacy in Achieving Health Equity: A Workshop Series

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/projects/HMD-BPH-22-04/resources>

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Roundtable on Health Literacy.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: These National Academies publications are the product of a completed workshop series. They focus on how health literacy best practices may affect trust in health institutions and subsequently support health equity. The series focused on health literacy and trust in clinical settings, public health institutions, and community organizations.

Part 3: What Makes a Health Literate Organization?

Advancing Organizational Health Literacy: A Toolkit to Help Organizations in Suburban Cook County Build a Health Literate Public Health System

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Advancing-Organizational-Health-Literacy-April-2025.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), with authors from CCDPH and Literacy Works' Clear Language Lab.

Year: April 2025.

Highlights: This widely applicable toolkit was created to help organizations in suburban Cook County build a health-literate public health system by integrating organizational health literacy into everyday systems, services, communication, workforce development, partnerships, and community engagement. It offers practical strategies in six focus areas: leadership and organizational transformation, health-literate workforce development, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, accessibility of information and services, communication practices and standards, and community engagement and outreach.

Making Health Literacy Real: The Beginnings of My Organization's Plan for Action (cdc.gov) - Planning Template

https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/pdf/planning_template.pdf

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of the Associate Director for Communication.

Year: Not stated.

Highlights: This CDC template helps organizations begin developing a plan to change organizational and professional practices to improve health literacy. It guides users through key planning steps and emphasizes that improving health literacy requires changes in organizational and professional practices.

Ten Attributes of Health Literate Health Care Organizations

<https://nam.edu/perspectives-2012-ten-attributes-of-health-literate-health-care-organizations/>

Source: National Academy of Medicine; authors include Cindy Brach, Debra Keller, Lyla Hernandez, Cynthia Baur, Ruth Parker, and others.

Year: 2012.

Highlights: This paper describes the 10 attributes of health-literate health care organizations, which are organizations that make it easier for people to navigate, understand, and use information and services to care for their health. It is a foundational document in U.S. organizational health literacy work because it shifts the focus from individual patient skills to system-level demands.

Part 4: Connecting with a Health Literacy Community for Support & Information

Health Literacy Listserv – IHA Health Literacy Solutions Center (Institute for Healthcare Advancement)

Create a free account to connect with Health Literacy colleagues! Ask questions. Share and discover resources.

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/home>

Part 5: Assessment - Is my Organization Health Literate?

AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Year: 2024, 3rd edition. Original: 2010.

Highlights: The AHRQ Universal Precautions toolkit provides evidence-based guidance focused on health care providers. Through the tools, providers can make health information easier to understand and act on, make health care easier to navigate, and support patients of all health literacy levels. It contains 23 short tools across five areas: starting on the path to improvement, improving spoken communication, improving written communication, improving self-management and empowerment, and improving supportive systems.

CCDPH Organizational Health Literacy Assessment

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Organizational-Health-Literacy-Assessment.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH).

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This assessment is part of CCDPH's Advancing Organizational Health Literacy toolkit and helps teams examine how their organization supports systems that are easy to navigate, understand, and use. There are six focus areas: leadership and organizational transformation, health-literate workforce development, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, accessibility of information and services, communication practices and standards, and community engagement and outreach.

HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606503.pdf>

Source: Rima E. Rudd, Sandy Oelschlegel, Kelsey Leonard Grabeel, Emily Tester, and Eric Heidel; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Health Literacy Task Force of the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Year: 2019, 2nd edition. Original: 2007.

Highlights: The HLE2 is an assessment tool for identifying health literacy-related factors that facilitate or create barriers to accessing information, care, and services in hospitals and health centers. It helps

organizations examine policies, institutional practices, navigation, culture and language, and communication across print materials, forms, web postings, and patient portals.

Part 6: National Initiatives (U.S.)

Plain Language: History and Timeline Leading Up to the Plain Writing Act 2010

<https://digital.gov/resources/plain-language-history-and-timeline>

National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/develop-plan/national-action-plan.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communications; plan released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Year: Plan released May 2010.

Highlights: The National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy was a multi-sector effort released by HHS to engage organizations, professionals, policymakers, communities, individuals, and families in improving health literacy. The plan is grounded in two principles: 1) everyone has a right to health information that supports informed decisions and 2) health services should be delivered in ways that are understandable and beneficial to health, longevity, and quality of life.

U.S. Focus - Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/index.asp>

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education; [international study](#) conducted through the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

Year: 2023 data published in December 2024. Active Website, last review date not provided.

Highlights: The PIAAC, also known as the Survey of Adult Skills, is a large-scale international study of key adult cognitive and workplace skills. The NCES hub provides access to U.S. and international results, questionnaires, technical notes, data files, analyzing tools, state and county estimates, skills maps, and related resources on what PIAAC measures.

Section #2 Learn More about Organizational Health Literacy (OHL) Work? Start Here.

Improve your work and practice. Explore in order as the sections are presented **or** use the Table of Contents to find the section where you want to start. And of course - use “control-F” on the keyboard to find a specific topic, resource or tool!

Organizational Health Literacy Guides

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These guides specifically address organizational health literacy. They focus on the whole concept, rather than just a part, like plain language. This means they are examining how policy, structures, and processes can be changed to create an organization that is health literate, primarily through in-depth explanation of concepts and processes; they may also include tools. The focus is on the people, things, and activities of the organization. The aim is to reduce patient or participant burden as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: OHL Guides

#1 Rural Health Literacy Toolkit: Evaluation Measures and Tools for Health Literacy Programs

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-literacy/5/evaluation-measures>

Source: Rural Health Information Hub.

Year: Published 2022; last updated 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit module helps rural health literacy programs identify measures that align with their evaluation questions. It includes personal and organizational health literacy measures and points to tools such as AHRQ’s consensus organizational health literacy measures, CAHPS health literacy item sets, the CDC Clear Communication Index, and PEMAT.

#2 Advancing Organizational Health Literacy: A Toolkit to Help Organizations in Suburban Cook County Build a Health Literate Public Health System

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Advancing-Organizational-Health-Literacy-April-2025.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), with authors from CCDPH and Literacy Works’ Clear Language Lab.

Year: April 2025.

Highlights: This widely applicable toolkit was created to help organizations in suburban Cook County build a health-literate public health system by integrating organizational health literacy into everyday systems, services, communication, workforce development, partnerships, and community engagement. It offers practical strategies in six focus areas: leadership and organizational transformation, health-literate workforce development, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, accessibility of information and services, communication practices and standards, and community engagement and outreach.

More OHL Guides

Building Health Literate Organizations: A Guidebook to Achieving Organization Change, 2nd edition (create free IHA account)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/viewdocument/building-health-literate-organizati-2>

Source: Advancing Health Literacy, Franklin County. Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH; Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, MEd; Audrey Riffenburgh, PhD. Hosted by Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This guidebook is designed to help organizations that promote, restore, or maintain health become more health literate. It focuses on organizational health literacy and the intersection of health literacy and health equity. Best practice examples are presented in every chapter of the guide.

Guide to Organizational Health Literacy (specifically “non-health” organizations)

<https://livingwell.dc.gov/page/guide-organizational-health-literacy>

Source: DC Health / Living Well DC.

Year: Active website. 2023 copyright.

Highlights: This guide presents an Organizational Health Literacy Model for “non-health” organizations that want to improve health literacy and better serve their communities. It outlines four guiding principles: community engagement, data collection and evaluation, partnerships, and sustainability.

HeLLO Tas! Toolkit: Health Literacy Learning Organisations

<https://www.hellotas.org.au/>

<https://www.hellotas.org.au/sites/default/files/files/HeLLOtas%20Toolkit.pdf>

Source: Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS), developed collaboratively with Tasmanian community-sector health literacy pilot sites and supported by project partners including Primary Health Tasmania, Department of Health & Human Services/Public Health Services, University of Tasmania, 26TEN, and Tasmanian Health Service.

Year: July 2020.

Highlights: The HeLLO Tas! Toolkit helps community service organizations assess and improve organizational health literacy through a step-by-step self-assessment and action-planning process. It includes a self-assessment checklist, a Health Literacy Action Plan template, and tools for observing the service environment, reviewing consumer resources, surveying consumers, assessing listening skills, designing a health-literate website, and supporting consumer control.

Making Health Literacy Real: The Beginnings of My Organization’s Plan for Action (cdc.gov) - Planning Template

https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/pdf/planning_template.pdf

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of the Associate Director for Communication.

Year: Not stated.

Highlights: This CDC template helps organizations begin developing a plan to change organizational and professional practices to improve health literacy. It guides users through key planning steps and emphasizes that improving health literacy requires changes in organizational and professional practices.

Maryland Health Literacy Organizational Seal (guide with application directions and forms)

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy/consumer-health-information-hub/plain-language-and-clear-communication>

Source: Horowitz Center for Health Literacy and the Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub.

Year: July 22, 2026.

Highlights: This guide helps organizations create an action plan for meeting the Maryland requirements for earning a Health Literacy Organizational Seal; there are three Seal levels. It provides a multi-step process for making public information more accessible, understandable, and usable: assemble a team, train the team, design and update an inventory, create and revise public-facing materials, engage community members, implement the law, and monitor and report progress. Award of the Maryland Seal attests that an organization is health literate using standardized, evidence-based criteria; it is the only such process of its kind in the U.S.

Organizational Health Literacy Toolkit

<https://healthconfianza.org/tools-training/organizational-health-literacy-toolkit/>

Source: Health Confianza, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

Year: Not stated.

Highlights: This self-guided toolkit links organizations to tools and resources for improving the accessibility, understandability, and use of health information and services by patients, clients, or other end users. It organizes resources into practical areas such as readability, material design, organizational health literacy self-assessment, practice recommendations, and policy.

Toolkits, OHL-related

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These toolkits address elements of organizational health literacy. They generally do not focus on the whole picture, but rather on parts of the concept of OHL. On the whole, they provide tools an organization can use to help them focus on the people, things, and activities of the organization. The aim of these tools is to reduce patient or participant burden as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions. However, they are not explicitly comprehensive OHL toolkits.

Two to Start: Toolkits, OHL-related

#1 AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Year: 2024, 3rd edition. Original: 2010.

Highlights: The AHRQ Universal Precautions toolkit provides evidence-based guidance focused on health care providers. Through the tools, providers can make health information easier to understand and act on, make health care easier to navigate, and support patients of all health literacy levels. It

contains 23 short tools across five areas: starting on the path to improvement, improving spoken communication, improving written communication, improving self-management and empowerment, and improving supportive systems.

#2 Digital Health Literacy Toolkit

<https://gdhp.health/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/00-GDHP-CHE-Digital-Health-Literacy-Toolkit-Full.pdf>

Source: Global Digital Health Partnership, Clinical and Human Engagement Work Stream.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit compiles international learning and practice to support public digital health literacy. It defines digital health literacy as the ability to find, understand, and apply health information and manage one's health using electronic tools and information sources such as apps, video conferencing platforms, online portals, and websites. It includes a glossary, survey findings, case examples from Australia, Canada, and Hong Kong, checklists for developing digital health literacy resources, and a collection of resources.

More OHL-Related Toolkits

AHRQ Pharmacy Health Literacy Center

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/pharmacy/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: Originally created July 2013; last reviewed January 2024.

Highlights: The AHRQ Pharmacy Health Literacy Center provides pharmacists, pharmacy staff, and pharmacy faculty with health literacy tools and resources to improve medication communication and pharmacy services. The page defines pharmacy health literacy as people's ability to obtain, process, and understand basic health and medication information and pharmacy services needed to make appropriate health decisions. It links to six AHRQ pharmacy health literacy tools, including a pharmacy assessment tool, staff communication training, medicine list guidance, standardized prescription instructions, post-discharge follow-up phone call guidance, medication therapy management communication tools, and curricular modules for pharmacy education.

Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit: Media and Resource Library

<https://teachbacktraining.org/media-library/>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement; updated by Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County through funding from the Office of Minority Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit Media and Resource Library provides quick access to resources, tools, videos, selected references, and archived materials that support teach-back implementation. It includes downloadable tools for educational and training use, such as the 10 elements of teach-back, coaching tools, communication planning resources, PDSA templates, observation tools, plain language supports, interpreter-related guidance, and policy-writing resources.

Community Engagement Toolkit, Washington State

<https://equity.wa.gov/resources/community-engagement-toolkit>

Source: Washington State Office of Equity.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This toolkit provides Washington state agency staff with guidance, tools, templates, and best practices for building meaningful, inclusive, and equitable partnerships with community members, especially people from underrepresented populations. It is organized around the full engagement process, including planning, recruitment, community compensation, accessibility and inclusivity, workgroup management, measuring impact, and putting the work together.

Community Tool Box, Center for Community Health and Development

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en>

Source: Center for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Community Tool Box is a free online resource hub that provides practical, step-by-step guidance for community building, community development, and collective action. The site helps users assess community needs and resources, address social determinants of health, engage stakeholders, plan action, build leadership, improve cultural competency, evaluate work, and sustain efforts over time.

Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit, Philadelphia

<https://engagement-toolkit.phila.gov/>

Source: City of Philadelphia; created by City of Philadelphia engagement practitioners and community members.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit provides guidance, stories, tools, and training to help City of Philadelphia practitioners center equity in community engagement. The toolkit is organized around common engagement challenges, including understanding community conditions, making engagement more accessible, planning engagement work, and supporting civic participation.

Harvard Catalyst Plain Language Recommendations Guide

<https://catalyst.harvard.edu/writing-communication-center/write-effectively/plain-language/>

Source: Harvard Catalyst Writing and Communication Center.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This guide explains how clear, concise communication makes scientific writing easier to understand for research participants, the public, and research colleagues. It defines plain language as communication an audience can understand the first time they hear or read it, and frames effective materials as understandable, actionable, and culturally relevant. It also points users to readability, usability, and accessibility resources.

Massachusetts How to Conduct a Plain Language Review

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/how-to-conduct-a-plain-language-review>

Source: mass.gov (Constituent Experience Center of Excellence)

Year: Website copyright 2026.

Highlights: This is a step-by-step toolkit that explains the plain language review process. In particular, five tests are recommended to explore: clear audience and message, structure, headings, clear ideas, and appropriate tone.

Oral Health Literacy Toolkit

<https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/oral-health-literacy-toolkit>

Source: California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center; developed by Health Research for Action Center, University of California, Berkeley, and the Office of Oral Health, California Department of Public Health.

Year: Webpage copyright 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit explains oral health literacy concepts and their benefits for providers and dental patients. It includes a guidebook, practice assessment checklist, teach-back booklet, patient brochure, and action plan. The core guidebook covers oral health literacy, practice assessment, change implementation, clear communication, patient empowerment, scripts, and templates.

PRISM Readability Toolkit

https://kpwashingtonresearch.org/application/files/6415/5500/0956/PRISM_readability_toolkit.pdf

Source: Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute.

Year: June 2010, 3rd edition, v6. Original: 2007.

Highlights: The PRISM Readability Toolkit is a plain language handbook for improving research consent forms and other materials for study participants. It includes plain language principles, a quick reference guide, an editing checklist, alternatives to complex terms, template language for consent forms and HIPAA authorizations, and readability resources.

Ten Attributes of Health Literate Health Care Organizations

<https://nam.edu/perspectives-2012-ten-attributes-of-health-literate-health-care-organizations/>

Source: National Academy of Medicine; authors include Cindy Brach, Debra Keller, Lyla Hernandez, Cynthia Baur, Ruth Parker, and others.

Year: 2012.

Highlights: This paper describes the 10 attributes of health-literate health care organizations, which are organizations that make it easier for people to navigate, understand, and use information and services to care for their health. It is a foundational document in U.S. organizational health literacy work because it shifts the focus from individual patient skills to system-level demands.

Guides, OHL-related

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These OHL-related guides address essential concepts within organizational health literacy. They are not explicitly comprehensive OHL guides. On the whole, they do not focus on the full concept, but rather on parts of OHL (e.g., professionals, text and information, activities, context, or systems). The focus is understanding certain people, things, and activities of the organization, primarily through in-depth explanation of concepts and processes; they may also include tools. The aim is to reduce patient or participant burden as people seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: OHL-related Guides

#1 Plain Language Guide Series

<https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language>

Source: Digital.gov, U.S. General Services Administration.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Digital.gov Plain Language Guide Series explains why plain language matters for public-facing government content and how to create content that readers can understand. It includes guidance on plain language principles, writing for understanding, designing for understanding, and testing for understanding.

#2 Guide to Providing Effective Communication and Language Assistance Services, Think Cultural Health (hhs.gov)

<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/education/communication-guide>

Source: Think Cultural Health, Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Think Cultural Health communication guide is designed to help health care organizations communicate in ways that consider patients' cultural, health literacy, and language needs. The guide offers two tracks: one for health care administrators focused on organizational assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of communication and language assistance services, and one for providers focused on cross-cultural communication, verbal and written communication strategies, and notices about communication and language assistance services.

More OHL-Related Guides

Achieving Health Equity: A Guide for Health Care Organizations

<https://www.ihl.org/library/white-papers/achieving-health-equity-guide-health-care-organizations>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Year: 2016.

Highlights: This IHI white paper presents a framework to help health care organizations improve health equity in the communities they serve. It includes guidance for measuring health equity, a case study, and a self-assessment tool. The framework has five components: make health equity a strategic priority; build structures and processes to support health equity work; address multiple determinants of health that health care organizations can directly influence; decrease institutional racism; and develop partnerships with community organizations.

CDC's Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication

https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2023/pdf/23_0061.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-communication/php/toolkit/resources-style-guides.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: 2023/2024.

Highlights: This “how to” academic article and related resources and style guides provide information about the health equity guiding principles and practical ways to frame health equity and avoid stigmatizing language for the public so they are better able to access, understand, and use of information and services. The topics range from accessibility to community engagement to emergency response to global issues.

Community Engagement Guidance and Best Practices

<https://healthycommunitiesvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Community-Engagement-Guidance-and-Best-Practices.pdf>

Source: Developed by Equitable Cities LLC; funded in part by the Vermont Department of Health, the Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This guide distinguishes community engagement from outreach and emphasizes that engagement should happen early and often to support a community’s desired change. It offers practical guidance for readiness assessment, data-informed planning, defining engagement goals, identifying priority audiences and stakeholders, developing communication plans, choosing engagement methods, collecting feedback, taking action, communicating results, and evaluating the process.

Digital Accessibility Section508.gov

<https://www.section508.gov/>

Source: U.S. General Services Administration, Office of Government-wide Policy.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Section508.gov provides federal guidance and resources on digital accessibility for information and communication technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. The site includes resources on policy, acquisition, content creation, design and development, accessibility testing, training, tools, events, and a searchable content library.

FrameWorks Institute

<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/>

Source: FrameWorks Institute.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: FrameWorks studies public mindsets and narratives about social issues and works with storytellers, organizations, and coalitions to shift mindsets, change systems, and create a more just world. They help organizations convey complex social, health, equity, or policy issues in ways that support public understanding.

Health Communication Playbook: Resources to Help You Create Effective Materials

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting/docs/health-comm-playbook-508.pdf>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; National Center for Environmental Health.

Year: 2018.

Highlights: This playbook helps public health professionals create effective communication materials for environmental health topics, especially when audiences may face complex information, tight timelines, or confusion. It includes research-based tips, annotated examples, worksheets, and checklists for key messages, writing and design across multiple communication mechanisms.

Indian Health Services White Paper on Health Literacy

https://www.ihs.gov/sites/healthcommunications/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/ihshealthliteracywhitepaper2024.pdf

Source: Indian Health Service Health Literacy Workgroup.

Year: 2024; 2nd edition.

Highlights: This Indian Health Service white paper frames health literacy as a public health issue and focuses on the need to improve health literacy for American Indian and Alaska Native populations. It summarizes health literacy definitions and statistics, health care cost, cultural and language considerations, communication strategies, written materials guidance, and IHS strategic-plan connections.

Inclusive Language Guide

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/inclusive-language-guide-621487/>

Source: Oxfam.

Year: Active website. Copyright 2023.

Highlights: Oxfam's Inclusive Language Guide supports people who communicate in English to consider how their writing may subvert or reinforce intersecting forms of inequality. It draws language recommendations from specialist organizations, marginalized communities, and Oxfam staff and networks.

Inclusive Language Playbook: Writing About Disability

<https://communicatehealth.com/wp-content/uploads/ch-disability-playbook-508c.pdf>

Source: CommunicateHealth.

Year: No date on PDF.

Highlights: This playbook supports equity-centered health communication about disability and disabled people. It discusses person-first and identity-first language, word choices, neurodiversity, and the importance of learning from disabled people about their health information needs and preferences.

Inclusive Language Playbook: Writing for LGBTQ+ Communities

<https://communicatehealth.com/wp-content/uploads/ch-lgbtq-playbook.pdf>

Source: CommunicateHealth.

Year: No date on PDF.

Highlights: This playbook gives health communicators a starting point for using language that helps LGBTQ+ readers feel seen, included, and respected. It covers terminology, pronouns, sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, anatomy, and reconsidering common terms.

Making Content Usable for People with Cognitive and Learning Disabilities

<https://www.w3.org/TR/coga-usable/#persona>

Source: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Cognitive and Learning Disabilities Accessibility Task Force, Accessible Platform Architectures Working Group and Accessibility Guidelines Working Group.

Year: 2021.

Highlights: This W3C Working Group Note provides guidance for making web content and applications more usable for people with cognitive and learning disabilities. This includes learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, neurodiversity, and related cognitive disabilities.

Plain Language Guide: Why Plain Language Works in Healthcare

<https://ihaacademy.org/resources/plainlanguage-guide/>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement / IHA Academy.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This guide explains why plain language matters in health care and how clear, everyday language can improve understanding, support safer decisions, reduce costs, and help organizations operate more effectively.

Plain Language for Public Health Guide

<https://publichealthcollaborative.org/communication-tools/plain-language-for-public-health/>

Source: The Public Health Communications Collaborative

Year: 2026

Highlights: The Public Health Communications Collaborative has created a Plain Language for Public Health guide to support public health communicators in creating messaging to advance health literacy, build trust in your organization as a source of information, and promote overall community health. In this guide, there are plain language principles, simple techniques that can make your communications more accessible, and resources to learn more about plain language to help build your communications skills.

Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills (Doak, Doak, and Root, 1996)

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy/consumer-health-information-hub/plain-language-and-clear-communication>

Once you click the link, scroll down to the “Readability section”, click the + sign, download.

Source: Doak, Doak, and Root, 1996, hosted by the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub

Year: 1996 (original text)

Highlights: This is a classic text in health literacy. The book covers a wide range of topics that are the basis for many of today’s most-used tools and concepts. It covers educational theories, tests for individual literacy skills, the SAM and discussion and examples of understandable visuals.

Test for Understanding

<https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language/test>

Source: Digital.gov, U.S. General Services Administration.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Digital.gov guide explains how to test whether content is understandable before it is finalized. It emphasizes testing early, revising based on feedback, and testing again as part of the writing and planning process.

Testing Messages and Materials

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/develop-materials/testing-messages-materials.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Communications.

Year: October 16, 2024.

Highlights: This CDC webpage explains why messages and materials should be tested throughout development, especially to learn what audiences find appealing, understandable, and useful. It offers health literacy-specific considerations for audience testing.

Understanding Inclusive Language: A Framework

<https://haas.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/Understanding-IL-Playbook-3.pdf>

Source: Center for Equity, Gender & Leadership, Berkeley Haas.

Year: Not stated on PDF.

Highlights: This guide presents inclusive language as an ongoing process rather than a fixed list of “good” and “bad” words. It offers guiding principles and questions to help users evaluate terms in context.

Visual Guide to Plain Language

<https://plainlii.com/visual-guide/>

Source: Plain Language International Inc. / Plainlii; Romina Marazzato Sparano.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This unique visual guide presents plain language as a strategic tool for helping readers find, understand, and use information with confidence.

Resource Lists, OHL and OHL-related

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There are *many* resource lists that highlight organizational health literacy and related resources across the internet. These lists vary in length, topic, and by the organization which created them. Here are a handful that include tools, explainers, webinars, and best practice recommendations in plain language, translation/interpretation, and trauma-informed services.

Two to Start: OHL and OHL-Related Resource Lists

#1 Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals Resources: Planning and Assessment Tools (cdc.gov)

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/resources/health-literacy-resources.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: Page dated June 21, 2024.

Highlights: This CDC web page supports CDC’s online course, Health Literacy for Public Health Professionals. The planning and assessment resources include tools for developing organizational action plans, assessing health literacy environments, and identifying barriers to clearer communication and service use.

#2 Resources for Health Literacy Guide

https://nalhd.org/file_download/inline/c8a41e92-2e92-43e1-97cd-d7e3e89c6e81

Source: National Association of Local Health Departments; compiled and reviewed by Tiffany Burns.

Year: Last updated May 2018.

Highlights: This resource guide compiles tools and references for applying health literacy, plain language, teach-back, readability, audience analysis, usability, and web design practices. The guide is designed as a starting point for locating practical tools and best practices for writing and designing public health materials.

More OHL and OHL- Related Resource Lists

Advancing Organizational Health Literacy: A Toolkit to Help Organizations in Suburban Cook County Build a Health Literate Public Health System

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Advancing-Organizational-Health-Literacy-April-2025.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), with authors from CCDPH and Literacy Works' Clear Language Lab.

Year: April 2025.

Highlights: This widely applicable toolkit was created to help organizations in suburban Cook County build a health-literate public health system by integrating organizational health literacy into everyday systems, services, communication, workforce development, partnerships, and community engagement. It offers practical strategies in six focus areas: leadership and organizational transformation, health-literate workforce development, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, accessibility of information and services, communication practices and standards, and community engagement and outreach. Each focus area has excellent resource lists.

Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit: Media and Resource Library

<https://teachbacktraining.org/media-library/>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement; updated by Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County through funding from the Office of Minority Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This toolkit library provides quick access to teach-back resources, tools, videos, references, and archived materials. This includes resources for training, coaching, communication planning, observation, plain language, interpreter use, policy writing, and organization-wide implementation.

Building Health Literate Organizations: A Guidebook to Achieving Organization Change, 2nd edition (*create free account*)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/viewdocument/building-health-literate-organizati-2>

Source: Advancing Health Literacy, Franklin County. Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH; Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, MEd; Audrey Riffenburgh, PhD. Hosted by Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This guidebook is designed to help organizations that promote, restore, or maintain health become more health literate. It focuses on organizational health literacy and the intersection of health literacy and health equity. Best practice examples are presented in every chapter of the guide.

Campbell Systematic Reviews

<https://journals.sagepub.com/home/cama>

Source: Cochrane, Sage.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Campbell Collaboration, part of Sage, synthesizes evidence across the whole of social policy and the social sciences. Their research work is led by 11 coordinating groups.

CDC Visual Communication Resources

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/develop-materials/visual-communication.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communications.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This page highlights information about visuals such as pictures, drawings, charts, graphs, and diagrams. It describes how to communicate health information, make complex information easier to understand, and reinforce written or spoken messages.

Clear Communication Resources for Creators of Social Media Content

<https://hsph.harvard.edu/research/health-communication/creator-program/creator-resources/>

Source: Center for Health Communication, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Creator Program resource library provides toolkits and briefings for social media creators who want to share evidence-based health information with their audiences.

Cochrane Plain Language Summaries of Health Evidence

<https://www.cochrane.org/evidence>

Source: Cochrane.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Cochrane's evidence page provides access to plain language summaries based on Cochrane systematic reviews. It explains that plain language summaries help people who are not health experts understand and interpret research findings so they can make informed health choices.

Consumer Health Information Hub — Maryland, Plain Language and Clear Communication Resources

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy/consumer-health-information-hub/plain-language-and-clear-communication>

Source: University of Maryland School of Public Health, Horowitz Center for Health Literacy.

Year: 2026.

Highlights: This page gathers plain language and clear communication tools, including the Maryland Plain Language Checklist, Web Content Review Tool, the Plain Language Action Planning Guide, Health Literacy Organizational Seal, and criteria for media campaigns, grants, and contracts. It emphasizes planning, assessing, and revising communications using science-based and best-practice approaches.

Digital.gov Guides

<https://digital.gov/guides>

Source: Digital.gov, U.S. General Services Administration.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: These guides help teams build better digital services and experiences. It includes expert-level guides on human-centered design, plain language, user research, mobile-friendliness, accessibility, public participation, analytics, site search, and related digital service topics.

Health Literacy Resource Links (odphp.health.gov)

<https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/national-health-initiatives/health-literacy/resources>

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Last updated November 19, 2025.

Highlights: This ODPHP page provides a curated list of trusted resources for learning more about health literacy and communication. It organizes links into health communication, health literacy, cultural competence, health information technology, and usability.

Health Literacy Tool Shed

<https://www.tuftsmedicine.org/research-clinical-trials/research-institutes-research-specialty/center-health-literacy-research-and-practice/health-literacy-tool-shed>

Source: Center for Health Literacy Research & Practice, Tufts Medical Center; developed in collaboration with CommunicateHealth, Boston University, and RTI International; funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Health Literacy Tool Shed is a searchable database of health literacy measures, including information about psychometric properties drawn from peer-reviewed literature. It includes tools that measure an individual's health literacy or an organization's ability to facilitate health literacy.

Making Numbers Meaningful

<http://www.makingnumbersmeaningful.org/resources.php>

Source: makingnumbersmeaningful.org

Year: Website copyright 2026.

Highlights: This Making Numbers Meaningful resource page covers development tools and assessment tools that address numeracy in some way.

Organizational Health Literacy (M-POHL)

<https://m-pohl.net/OHL>

Source: M-POHL — WHO Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy.

Year: Active website. Last review date/copyright not provided.

Highlights: This M-POHL page explains organizational health literacy as part of a comprehensive, relational understanding of health literacy. It links to information about OHL projects, design and methods, results and publications, and English and German toolkits, guides, and other useful resources.

Plain Language Materials & Resources (cdc.gov)

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/develop-materials/plain-language.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communications.

Year: July 21, 2025.

Highlights: This CDC page explains how plain language makes health information easier to understand and use. It gathers plain language resources, CDC examples, and a short checklist for organizing content around audience needs, choosing familiar words, and making information easy to find.

Public Health Communications Collaborative, Resources from Insights to Practice: A Conference to Inspire Public Health Communications (2026)

<https://publichealthcollaborative.org/2026-insights-to-practice/>

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative.

Year: 2026.

Highlights: This page provides resources from a 2026 Public Health Communications Collaborative Conference. It has the full conference recording, downloadable slides and transcript, speaker information, and related resources from speakers and the live chat.

Racial Equity Tools Collection

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/>

Source: Racial Equity Tools; brought to users by Equity In the Center.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Racial Equity Tools is a large online library of racial equity resources for people working to deepen their understanding and advance racial justice in systems, organizations, communities, and culture. The site organizes more than 5,000 resources into areas such as fundamentals, planning, action, evaluation, connection, and curricula, with topics ranging from systems thinking to data to organizational change to communication.

Resources and Style Guides for Framing Health Equity & Avoiding Stigmatizing Language

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-communication/php/toolkit/resources-style-guides.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This “how to” academic article and related resources and style guides provide information about the health equity guiding principles and practical ways to frame health equity and avoid stigmatizing language for the public so they are better able to access, understand, and use of information and services. The topics range from accessibility to community engagement to emergency response to global issues.

Resources for Health Literacy Guide

https://nalhd.org/file_download/inline/c8a41e92-2e92-43e1-97cd-d7e3e89c6e81

Source: National Association of Local Health Departments; compiled and reviewed by Tiffany Burns.

Year: Last updated May 2018.

Highlights: This resource guide compiles tools and references for applying health literacy, plain language, teach-back, readability, audience analysis, usability, and web design practices. The guide is designed as a starting point for locating practical tools and best practices for writing and designing public health materials.

Rudd Health Literacy Resources Center

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy/health-literacy-projects/rudd-health-literacy-resources-center>

Source: Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This online resource center offers a curated collection of Dr. Rima Rudd's original health literacy resources, along with the full text of *Teaching Patients with Low Literacy Skills* by Doak, Doak, and Root (now out-of-print). It includes organizational health literacy tools, materials assessment tools, and foundational adult literacy and health literacy resources.

Think Cultural Health (hhs.gov), Resource Library

<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/resources>

Source: Think Cultural Health, CLAS Standards (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services), Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Think Cultural Health resource page lists articles and educational materials about culturally and linguistically appropriate services and the National CLAS Standards. It links to a searchable resource library and to video-based educational units that use clinical case studies to show culturally and linguistically appropriate encounters in daily work.

Toolbox Toolbox

<https://www.toolboxtoolbox.com/>

Source: Toolbox Toolbox; curated by Jenny Theolin.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Toolbox Toolbox is a curated list of business, design, facilitation, and organizational change toolboxes developed by companies, institutions, and individual thinkers. The site includes toolboxes for brainstorming, strategic design, systems thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, facilitation, social innovation, hybrid work, change leadership, participatory workshops, and citizen sensing.

Walking Interview Methods

<https://researchmethodstoolkit.com/more-approaches/walking-interviews-cloned/>

Source: Research Methods for Society and Mental Health; author Vanessa May.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This guide introduces walking interviews as a mobile qualitative research method in which researchers accompany participants through familiar environments to understand their relationships to place. It explains that walking interviews can help capture what people do and where, how they feel about places, how they interact with others, and sensory aspects of experience such as sights, sounds, and smells.

Note: See health literacy-focused Walking Interview:

<https://healthconfianza.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2024/07/activitypacket.pdf>

Organizational Health Literacy Assessments

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These assessments specifically examine organizational health literacy. They focus on the whole concept, rather than just a part, like plain language. This means they are evaluating how policy, structures, and processes meet, or do not meet, best-practice criteria. Such assessments also reveal specific change ideas across multiple levels, i.e., how to act on what the organization is not doing according to the assessment. The focus is on the people, things, and activities of the organization. The aim is to determine whether your organization is health literate and then make changes so it can meet the organizational health literacy criteria. The assessment can help an organization figure out how to reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: OHL Assessments

#1 CCDPH Organizational Health Literacy Assessment

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Organizational-Health-Literacy-Assessment.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH).

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This assessment is part of CCDPH's Advancing Organizational Health Literacy toolkit and helps teams examine how their organization supports systems that are easy to navigate, understand, and use. There are six focus areas: leadership and organizational transformation, health-literate workforce development, partnerships and intersectoral collaboration, accessibility of information and services, communication practices and standards, and community engagement and outreach.

#2 International Organizational Health Literacy Self-Assessment Tools: OHL-Hos and OHL-PHC (quantitative)

<https://m-pohl.net/Activities>

Source: WHO Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy (M-POHL).

Year: OHL-Hos version reviewed above is 2019; current M-POHL project timeline and OHL-PHC materials should be confirmed from the specific M-POHL toolkit page.

Highlights: OHL-Hos and OHL-PH are two of the OHL self-assessment tools for hospitals and primary health care or integrated services, designed by M-POHL. M-POHL is a WHO Action Network focused on measuring population and organizational health literacy and supporting evidence-informed policy and practice.

More OHL Assessments

Building Health Literate Organizations: A Guidebook to Achieving Organization Change, 2nd edition (*create free account*) (includes quantitative and qualitative measurement)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/viewdocument/building-health-literate-organizati-2>

Source: Advancing Health Literacy, Franklin County. Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH; Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, MEd; Audrey Riffenburgh, PhD. Hosted by Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This guidebook is designed to help organizations that promote, restore, or maintain health become more health literate. It focuses on organizational health literacy and the intersection of health literacy and health equity. Assessment examples are offered throughout the guide.

CAHPS Health Literacy Item Sets (quantitative)

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/surveys-guidance/item-sets/literacy/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems Program.

Year: Page originally created June 2012; last reviewed December 2022.

Highlights:

The CAHPS Health Literacy Item Sets are supplemental survey items that ask patients about providers' efforts to support and improve health literacy. They help organizations assess patient perspectives on communication, self-management, test results, and forms. The item sets can guide quality improvement focused on clear, respectful, and actionable health communication.

Consensus Organizational Health Literacy Quality Improvement Measures (quantitative)

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/organizational.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: Page originally created June 2019; last reviewed September 2020.

Highlights: AHRQ recommends 22 expert-consensus quality improvement measures that health care organizations can use to monitor organizational health literacy efforts without relying on patient reports alone. The measures address domains such as organizational structure, policy and leadership, communication, navigation, patient engagement and self-management. AHRQ notes that many measures were developed for hospitals but may be useful in other settings.

HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606503.pdf>

Source: Rima E. Rudd, Sandy Oelschlegel, Kelsey Leonard Grabeel, Emily Tester, and Eric Heidel; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Health Literacy Task Force of the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Year: 2019, 2nd edition. Original: 2007.

Highlights: The HLE2 is an assessment tool for identifying health literacy-related factors that facilitate or create barriers to accessing information, care, and services in hospitals and health centers. It helps organizations examine policies, institutional practices, navigation, culture and language, and communication across print materials, forms, web postings, and patient portals.

How to Measure Organizational Health Literacy? (chapter)

<https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/82421>

Source: Osman Hayran and Seyda Dundar Ege; IntechOpen.

Year: Published July 4, 2022.

Highlights: This chapter reviews concepts and methods for measuring organizational health literacy in health care organizations. It defines organizational health literacy as the ability of health organizations to provide information and services that are easy to find, understand, and use, support decision-making, and remove barriers for people seeking services. The chapter summarizes major OHL measurement approaches, including the Ten Attributes of Health Literate Health Care Organizations, V-HLO, OHL Self-AsseT, Org-HLR, HeLLO Tas!, HLE2, consensus quality improvement measures, and other tools.

International Self-Assessment Tool for Organizational Health Literacy Responsiveness of Hospitals (quantitative)

<https://www.hphnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/health-literacy-organizational-hospitals-health-services.pdf>

Source: International Working Group Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Literate Healthcare Organizations; WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion in Hospitals and Healthcare.

Year: December 2019.

Highlights: This self-assessment tool helps hospitals and health care organizations assess and improve organizational health literacy responsiveness. It is designed to help organizations identify literacy-related barriers, reflect on current structures and practices, and select improvement priorities. The tool includes 8 standards and 23 sub-standards covering organizational structures and processes, participatory development of documents and services, staff training, navigation and access, communication with patients, support after discharge, staff health literacy, and contributions to health literacy in the surrounding region.

OHL Self-AsseT (Organizational Health Literacy Self-Assessment Tool for Primary Care, Switzerland) (quantitative)

<https://www.tuftsmedicine.org/research-clinical-trails/research-institutes-research-specialty/center-health-literacy-research-and-practice/health-literacy-tool-shed/ohl-self-asset>

Source: Original Article: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7765861>

Year: 2020.

Highlights: Allows primary care organizations to assess their level of organizational health literacy and make plans for improvement. Consists of a manual, self-assessment checklist, and handbook with resources to spur improvement.

Rural Health Literacy Toolkit: Evaluation Measures and Tools for Health Literacy Programs

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-literacy/5/evaluation-measures>

Source: Rural Health Information Hub.

Year: Published 2022; last updated 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit module helps rural health literacy programs identify measures that align with their evaluation questions. It includes personal and organizational health literacy measures and points to tools such as AHRQ's consensus organizational health literacy measures, CAHPS health literacy item sets, the CDC Clear Communication Index, and PEMAT.

V-HLO (Vienna Health Literate Organisation Self-assessment Tool) (quantitative)

<https://www.tuftsmedicine.org/research-clinical-trails/research-institutes-research-specialty/center-health-literacy-research-and-practice/health-literacy-tool-shed/v-hlo>

Source: Original Article: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8011166/#CR13>

Year: 2021.

Highlights: Self-assessment tool for quality managers to determine the health literacy strengths and weaknesses of their health care organization.

Organizational Health Literacy-related Assessments

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These assessments specifically address essential elements of organizational health literacy. They generally focus on parts of the concept, rather than the whole picture. This means they are examining aspects of organizational health literacy, such as professionals, text/information, activities, and/or context/system. The focus is on the people, things, and activities of the organization. The aim is to reduce patient or participant burden as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions. However, they are not explicit comprehensive OHL assessments. The assessments are arranged by focus: professionals (assessment of staff), text/plain language, digital accessibility, navigation, accessibility by group (e.g., disability), and audience engagement. Within the text/plain language focus, there are also sub-parts: a. plain language & clear writing, b. numeracy, c. readability, d. charts/tables/forms, and e. visuals/video.

I. Professionals – Assessments of Staff

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These assessments examine the professional or staff members' skills as part of a health literate organization. The focus is on the people of the organization. The aim is to determine whether your staff is engaging with others in a health literate manner. If any criteria aren't met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how staff can reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Start with any of these three listings.

AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit, 3rd edition.

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: Originally created 2010; page last reviewed January 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit provides evidence-based guidance to help health care providers make health information easier to understand and act on, make health care easier to navigate, and support patients of all health literacy levels. It contains 23 short tools organized around five areas: starting on the path to improvement, improving spoken communication, improving written communication, improving self-management and empowerment, and improving supportive systems.

Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit

<https://teachbacktraining.org/>

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement; updated by Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County through funding from the Office of Minority Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit supports use of teach-back as an evidence-based health literacy intervention to improve patient-provider communication and health outcomes. The site defines teach-back as asking a person, in a caring way, to explain in their own words what they need to know or do, and frames it as a way to promote health equity through health literacy.

Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (quantitative)

<https://www.cms.gov/data-research/research/consumer-assessment-healthcare-providers-systems>

Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

Year: Last reviewed April 23, 2026.

Highlights: The Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems surveys are used by CMS to assess patient experience across health care providers and plans. Among many other topics, sections of the survey focus on patient, and sometimes family, experience with professionals and care settings across hospitals, health plans, home health care agencies, and more. CAHPS focuses on patient experience.

II. Text / Plain Language

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These assessments examine the accessibility, readability, understanding, and use of text and other information across websites, videos, signage, forms, and/or brochures, and beyond. The focus is on the organization's information and content. The aim is to determine whether your information meets evidence-based criteria for being easy-to-understand and use. If any criteria aren't met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how information across the organization can reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

This section is organized into sub-sections. Some tools are shown in more than one section because they focus on multiple aspects of text/plain language.

- a. Plain Language Clear Writing - Understandability & Actionability
- b. Numeracy
- c. Readability
- d. Charts/Tables
- e. Visuals/Video

Two to Start: Text / Plain Language

#1 AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/precautions/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: Originally created 2010; page last reviewed January 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit provides evidence-based guidance to help health care providers make health information easier to understand and act on, make health care easier to navigate, and support patients of all health literacy levels. It contains 23 short tools organized around five areas: starting on the path to improvement, improving spoken communication, improving written communication, improving self-management and empowerment, and improving supportive systems.

#2 Visual Guide to Plain Language

<https://plainlii.com/visual-guide/>

Source: Plain Language International Inc. / Plainlii; Romina Marazzato Sparano.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This unique visual guide presents plain language as a strategic tool for helping readers find, understand, and use information with confidence.

More Text/Plain Language

a. Plain Language & Clear Writing – Understandability & Actionability

CDC Clear Communication Index

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: Active website. Last review was May 29, 2025.

Highlights: The CDC Clear Communication Index is a research-based tool for developing and assessing public communication materials. It includes four introductory questions and 20 scored items drawn from scientific literature in communication and related disciplines, focused on characteristics that improve people's understanding of information.

Clear Writing Assessment (CDC)

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting/docs/Clear_Writing_Assessment-508.pdf

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: The assessment is a practical CDC tool for testing whether communication materials are clear and easy to understand. It can be used to assess entire documents or sections of longer documents. Questions span many issues like audience and purpose, formatting, headings, lists, emphasis, sentence length, paragraph length, active voice, pronouns, jargon, and visuals.

Maryland Plain Language Checklist

<https://umd.app.box.com/s/s6hwr0ttcat7fce4yv2xfj1dvaphlx8t>

Source: Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub; Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Year: Updated March 5, 2025.

Highlights: The Maryland Plain Language Checklist is a practical review tool for determining whether written content is clear, actionable, and written in plain language. It is organized around audience focus, calls to action, literacy, design and formatting, and language access, with yes/no checkboxes and space for notes.

NLM Health Education Materials Assessment Tool

<https://medlineplus.gov/pdf/HealthEducationMaterialsAssessmentTool.pdf>

Source: National Library of Medicine / MedlinePlus.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: The Health Education Materials Assessment Tool is based on the PEMAT's understandability section only, and does not assess actionability. The Tool helps reviewers determine whether a health education material can be designated as "easy-to-read."

PEMAT: Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool and User's Guide

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/patient-education/pemat.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: 2013 originally created; page last reviewed 2020.

Highlights: The PEMAT is a systematic method for evaluating and comparing the understandability and actionability of print and audiovisual patient education materials. It includes separate tools for printable and audiovisual materials and helps determine whether patients will be able to understand and act on information.

Plain Language Writing Checklist (sickkids.ca)

https://www.sickkids.ca/contentassets/92c5abda231e44b6832f5e3effeacdf8/plain-language-checklist_jan2017-sickkids-kt-program.pdf

Source: The Hospital for Sick Children, Learning Institute; content adapted from PlainLanguage.gov.

Year: 2014, PDF filename January 2017.

Highlights: This checklist helps writers review whether a document uses plain language and is organized around the reader's needs. It covers word choice, design, and knowledge translation principles.

SHeLL Editor (free basic version)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.com.au/> (requires free log-in)

Source: Health Literacy Solutions; directors who led development are health literacy academics at the University of Sydney.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The SHeLL Editor is an online tool designed to help users write clear, simple health information by giving real-time feedback on health literacy and plain language features. The user guide is an excellent resource in and of itself. The SHeLL Editor provides feedback on reading grade level, complex language, passive voice, long sentences, paragraph structure, questions, plain language suggestions, and person-centered language for specific health conditions.

b. Numeracy

CDC Clear Communication Index (numeracy components)

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: Active website. Last review was May 29, 2025.

Highlights: The CDC Clear Communication Index is a research-based tool for developing and assessing public communication materials. It includes four introductory questions and 20 scored items drawn from scientific literature in communication and related disciplines, focused on characteristics that improve people's understanding of information. This includes attention to numbers, risk, and scientific accuracy.

PEMAT: Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool and User's Guide (numeracy components)

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/patient-education/pemat.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: 2013 originally created; page last reviewed 2020.

Highlights: The PEMAT is a systematic method for evaluating and comparing the understandability and actionability of print and audiovisual patient education materials. It includes separate tools for printable and audiovisual materials and helps determine whether patients will be able to understand and act on information.

RER Numeric Assessment: A Guide for Discussions of Numbers and Data Displays

<https://umd.app.box.com/s/jbg9u6ojke6m1tbqsqw11sjolr3agekz>

Source: University of Maryland, Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. Author: Rima E. Rudd.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: This guide helps reviewers assess how numbers, numeric concepts, and data displays are used in health-related texts, presentations, postings, charts, and graphs. It provides checklists for examining numerous issues in numeracy. It is presented as a placeholder while more formal health numeracy assessment tools are developed.

c. Readability

SMOG Readability Formula

https://ogg.osu.edu/media/documents/health_lit/WRRSMOG_Example.pdf

Source: Excerpted from Making Health Communication Programs Work, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; SMOG conversion table developed by Harold C. McGraw, Office of Educational Research, Baltimore County Schools, Towson, Maryland.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: This short guide explains how to use the SMOG (Simplified Measure of Gobbledygook) readability formula to estimate the reading grade level needed to fully understand a written health text. It gives step-by-step instructions for assessment and formula calculation. *Note:* SMOG calculators risk misinterpreting input; human determination of sentence structure or text is typically necessary.

SOL Formulas for Converting SMOG Readability Scores Between Health Education Materials Written in Spanish, English, and French

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10977275/>

Source: A. Contreras, R. García-Alonso, M. Echenique, and F. Daye-Contreras; Journal of Health Communication.

Year: 1999.

Highlights: This article examines whether the SMOG readability formula, originally developed and tested in English, is also valid for health education materials written in Spanish and French. Authors found that SMOG appeared consistent across the three languages but produced scores that varied by language, leading them to present SOL formulas for converting SMOG scores among Spanish, English, and French. *Note:* This article is not publicly available; it is included here because of the importance of measuring readability in languages other than English. Try your organizational or local library!

d. Charts/Tables/Forms

Forms, HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606503.pdf>

Source: Rima E. Rudd, Sandy Oelschlegel, Kelsey Leonard Grabeel, Emily Tester, and Eric Heidel; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Health Literacy Task Force of the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Year: 2019, 2nd edition. Original: 2007.

Highlights: The HLE2 is an assessment tool for identifying health literacy-related factors that facilitate or create barriers to accessing information, care, and services in hospitals and health centers. The communications section, Part 2 addresses the 'usability' of forms. A series of questions explores issues like instructions, font size, layout, thematic question groupings, and question skip patterns.

How to Write and Evaluate Health Questionnaires, Surveys, and Forms

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/blogs/iha-staff1/2024/06/03/how-to-write-and-evaluate-health-questionnaires-su>

Source: Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement; Katie Leath, MPH, MA.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This blog post offers health literacy-informed strategies for improving questionnaires, surveys and forms. These involve including a clear purpose, easy-to-follow instructions, short questions, response/question alignment, and feedback from intended users.

PMOSE/IKIRSCH Document Readability Formula

<http://www.makingnumbersmeaningful.org/documents/pmose.pdf>

Source: Developed by Peter Mosenthal and Irwin Kirsch.

Year: 1998.

Highlights: This short guide explains the PMOSE/IKIRSCH document readability formula. It highlights how to use the formula for items not written in prose, such as lists, charts, graphic displays, and medicine labels. Unlike sentence-based readability formulas, this tool assesses document complexity using structure, density, and dependency, document design, number of labels and items, and whether readers need information outside the document.

e. Visuals/Video

CDC Clear Communication Index (video)

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: Active website. Last review was May 29, 2025.

Highlights: The CDC Clear Communication Index is a research-based tool for developing and assessing public communication materials. It includes four introductory questions and 20 scored items drawn from scientific literature in communication and related disciplines, focused on characteristics that improve people's understanding of information. It is validated for use in assessing video.

PEMAT: Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool and User's Guide (video)

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/patient-education/pemat.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: 2013 originally created; page last reviewed 2020.

Highlights: The PEMAT is a systematic method for evaluating and comparing the understandability and actionability of print and audiovisual patient education materials. It includes separate tools for printable and audiovisual materials and helps determine whether patients will be able to understand and act on information. It is validated for use in assessing video.

RER Numeric Assessment: A Guide for Discussions of Numbers and Data Displays

<https://umd.app.box.com/s/jbg9u6ojke6m1tbqsqw11sjolr3agekz>

Source: University of Maryland, Horowitz Center for Health Literacy. Author: Rima E. Rudd.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: This guide helps reviewers assess how numbers, numeric concepts, and data displays are used in health-related texts, presentations, postings, charts, and graphs. It provides checklists for examining numerous issues in numeracy. It is presented as a placeholder while more formal health numeracy assessment tools are developed.

III. Digital Accessibility

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These assessments examine issues of digital accessibility. The focus is on the organization's digital information and content. The aim is to determine whether your digital information meets evidence-based criteria for being easy-to-understand and use. If any criteria aren't met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how information across the organization can reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: Digital Accessibility

#1 Digital Accessibility Section508.gov

<https://www.section508.gov/>

Source: U.S. General Services Administration, Office of Government-wide Policy.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Section508.gov provides federal guidance and resources on digital accessibility for information and communication technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. The site includes resources on policy, acquisition, content creation, design and development, accessibility testing, training, tools, events, and a searchable content library.

#2 Digital Health Literacy

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer/digital-health-literacy>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) Patient Safety Network (PSNeT); authored by Elizabeth Seidel, Tara Cortes, and Cynthia Chong.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: This AHRQ PSNet primer defines digital health literacy, or eHealth literacy. It explains why digital health literacy matters for patient safety as more people use online health information, telehealth, patient portals, electronic communication with providers, and digital health tools.

More Digital Accessibility

Clear Writing Assessment

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clearwriting/docs/Clear_Writing_Assessment-508.pdf

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health.

Year: Not stated in the PDF text reviewed.

Highlights: The Clear Writing Assessment is a practical CDC tool for testing whether communication materials are clear and easy to understand. It can be used to assess entire documents or sections of longer documents and includes questions on audience and purpose, formatting, headings, lists, emphasis, sentence length, paragraph length, active voice, pronouns, jargon, and visuals.

Digital Health Literacy Toolkit

<https://gdhp.health/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/00-GDHP-CHE-Digital-Health-Literacy-Toolkit-Full.pdf>

Source: Global Digital Health Partnership, Clinical and Human Engagement Work Stream.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit compiles international learning and practice to support public digital health literacy in information sources such as apps, video conferencing platforms, online portals, and websites. The toolkit includes survey findings from Global Digital Health Partnership members, case examples from Australia, Canada, and Hong Kong, checklists for developing digital health literacy resources, and a collection of such resources.

Health Literacy Online

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthliteracyonline>

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: 3rd edition; last updated July 7, 2025.

Highlights: Health Literacy Online is a research-based guide for creating user-friendly digital health information and services for a range of audiences. These include people with limited literacy, health literacy, or digital literacy skills. The third edition focuses includes people-first design, accessibility across devices, actionable content, and simplified navigation and search.

Maryland Web Content Review Checklist

<https://umd.app.box.com/s/mrcs50zeskt6mqz1fzg5cwup9co84ak8>

Source: Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub; Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Year: Not stated in the document.

Highlights: The Web Content Review Checklist is a practical tool for reviewing how understandable web content is across three categories: actionable items, plain language, and organization. It prompts reviewers to assess a number of best practice strategies for web content.

Section508.gov Playbooks

<https://www.section508.gov/manage/playbooks/>

Source: U.S. General Services Administration / Section508.gov.

Year: Page reviewed/updated April 2026.

Highlights: The Section508.gov Playbooks page provides guidance to help federal agencies improve management and delivery of accessible information and communication technology. It includes a Technology Accessibility Playbook, Executive Guide to IT Accessibility, and Chatbot Accessibility Playbook with checklists and design/development guidance.

Test for Accessibility

<https://www.section508.gov/test/>

Source: Section508.gov, U.S. General Services Administration.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Section508.gov page provides an overview of methods and tools for testing websites, software, electronic documents, hardware, and other information and communication technology for complying with Section 508 Standards. It organizes accessibility testing resources by category, including testing lifecycle, methods, and tools and document, hardware, software and website testing.

Usability – digital.gov guide series

<https://digital.gov/topics/usability/>

Source: digital.gov

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This usability section of the digital.gov series focuses on how easily and effectively people can accomplish their goals using a product or system, while having a positive experience. It explains what usability is and how to test it.

Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools List

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/tools/list/>

Source: World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), Web Accessibility Initiative.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This W3C page provides a searchable and filterable list of software programs and online services that help users evaluate whether web content meets accessibility guidelines. The tools can be filtered by multiple categories, such as purpose, cost, tool and file type, accessibility standards, scope, and language.

IV. Navigation

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These assessments examine issues of navigation whether online, in-person, or of systems. The focus is on the way the organization makes it easy to move through its spaces. The aim is to determine whether your activities, processes, practices, and policies meet evidence-based criteria for being easy-to-understand and use. If any criteria aren't met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how reducing navigational complexity across the organization can reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: Navigation

#1 Activities & Processes - Exploring the Navigational Burden, Improving Processes with Curiosity

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Improving-Processes-with-Curiosity.pdf>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), created in collaboration with Clear Language Lab at Literacy Works.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This activity helps teams examine where processes and systems break down, map how a process is actually working, and identify one or two changes to try. It is framed as a companion to CCDPH's Advancing Organizational Health Literacy toolkit and encourages teams to approach breakdowns as opportunities to reflect, learn, and improve rather than as fixed failures.

#2 Health Literacy Environment Activity Packet: First Impressions & Walking Interview

<https://healthconfianza.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2024/07/activitypacket.pdf>

Source: Rima E. Rudd, Health Literacy Studies, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Year: 2010.

Highlights: This activity packet helps (health care) teams examine the health literacy environment of hospitals and health centers by looking at the demands placed on patients, clients, and families as they try to find, enter, and navigate a facility. It includes "First Impressions" activities focused on telephone, website, and walk-to-the-entrance experiences, followed by a structured Walking Interview that asks a

guide and observer to assess navigation, signage, help-seeking, posted information, and physical service access.

More Navigation

Health Literacy Online, Website Navigation

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthliteracyonline>

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: 3rd edition; last updated July 7, 2025.

Highlights: Health Literacy Online is a research-based guide for creating user-friendly digital health information and services for a range of audiences, including people with limited literacy, health literacy, or digital literacy skills. The third edition focuses on people-first design, accessibility across devices, actionable content, easy scanning, simplified navigation and search, and content governance.

The HLS19-NAV Instrument to Measure Navigational Health Literacy (quantitative)

<https://m-pohl.net/sites/m-pohl.net/files/inline-files/Factsheet%20HLS19-NAV.pdf>

Source: HLS19 Consortium of the WHO Action Network M-POHL; coordinated by the HLS19 International Coordination Centre.

Year: June 2022.

Highlights: This factsheet describes the HLS19-NAV, a 12-item questionnaire for measuring navigational health literacy in general adult populations. The instrument focuses on people's ability to access, understand, appraise, and apply information needed to navigate health care systems and services. The factsheet includes the questionnaire items, scoring approach, psychometric properties, validation information, available languages, and conditions for use.

V. Accessibility by Group (e.g., disability)

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These assessments examine the accessibility of information, content and environments across culture, language, and ability. The focus is on the organization's information and content with specific attention to marginalized populations. The aim is to determine whether your information and environment meets evidence-based criteria for being easy-to-understand and use for specific populations. If any criteria aren't met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how information across the organization can reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: Accessibility by Group

#1 Checklist for Inclusive Communications, Information and Content

https://www.act-center.org/application/files/8617/1537/9343/ACTCenter_Checklist-Inclusive-Communications.pdf

Source: Center for Accelerating Care Transformation, Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: This checklist was created to advance equity in health care research communications, with emphasis on communications to health care collaborators, patient partners, the scientific community, and the general public. It provides guidance on language, image choices, accessibility, respect, inclusivity, and audience awareness.

#2 How to Develop Products for Adults with Intellectual Developmental Disabilities and Extreme Low Literacy: A Product Development Tool

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/pdf/idd-ell-product-development-tool-508.pdf>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of the Associate Director for Communication.

Year: Not stated in the accessible PDF text reviewed.

Highlights: This CDC tool helps people develop health communication products for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and extreme low literacy, as well as their caregivers. It provides evidence-based best practices for behavior-focused messaging, sentences, words and numbers, text layout, and visuals, plus a score sheet for checking how well a product follows the guidance.

More Accessibility by Group

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Family Organization Assessment Instrument

<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/NCCC-CLCFOAAssessment.pdf>

Source: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

Year: 2010. Authors: Goode, Jones, Jackson, Bronheim, Dunne, & Lorenzo-Hubert.

Highlights: This instrument supports family organizations in assessing cultural and linguistic competence across attitudes, behaviors, policies, structures, and practices. It is intended to help organizations serving children and youth with behavioral-emotional disorders, special health care needs, and disabilities identify strengths and areas for growth.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment

<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/documents/CLCPA.pdf>

Source: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development; developed at the request of the Bureau of Primary Health Care, HRSA.

Year: 2006.

Highlights: The Cultural and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment helps community health centers assess policy development and administration related to cultural and linguistic competence. It includes subscales on knowledge of diverse communities, organizational philosophy, community involvement, resources and linkages, human resources, clinical practice, and engagement of diverse communities.

Culture and Language, HLE2: The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED606503.pdf>

Source: Rima E. Rudd, Sandy Oelschlegel, Kelsey Leonard Grabeel, Emily Tester, and Eric Heidel; Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Health Literacy Task Force of the University of Tennessee Medical Center.

Year: 2019, 2nd edition. Original: 2007.

Highlights: The HLE2 is an assessment tool for identifying health literacy-related factors that facilitate or create barriers to accessing information, care, and services in hospitals and health centers. The Culture and Language section assesses whether the organization meets best practice for meeting the needs of all people.

Project Lifecycle Checklist: Integrating Health Equity

https://www.act-center.org/application/files/6417/1537/9326/ACTCenter_Project-Lifecycle-Equity-Checklist.pdf

Source: Center for Accelerating Care Transformation, Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute.

Year: 2023; Version 2, May 2024.

Highlights: This checklist provides practical questions, activities, and resources for integrating health equity across the lifecycle of a health care research project, from scoping and planning through implementation, analysis, evaluation, action, and dissemination. It is designed for project teams to use in structured discussions, document commitments and next steps, and revisit equity commitments throughout the project.

Racial Equity Tools Collection

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/>

Source: Racial Equity Tools; brought to users by Equity In the Center.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Racial Equity Tools is a large online library of racial equity resources for people working to deepen their understanding and advance racial justice in systems, organizations, communities, and culture. The site organizes more than 5,000 resources into areas such as fundamentals, planning, action, evaluation, connection, and curricula, with topics including structural racism, systems thinking, data, health and health care, language justice, community engagement, organizational change, communication, inclusive evaluation, and movement building.

Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf>

Source: Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition, with state coalition members from Massachusetts education and health and human services agencies; led by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Public Health.

Year: June 2020.

Highlights: This framework provides a roadmap for practitioners and families across health, human services, and education to strengthen family engagement from the prenatal period through young adulthood. It defines family engagement as systemic, intentional, and grounded in two-way

communication, equal partnership, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, equity, and a shift from “doing to” families toward “doing with” families.

Think Cultural Health (hhs.gov), CLAS Standards

<https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/>

Source: Think Cultural Health, CLAS Standards (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services), Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Think Cultural Health resources page helps users find articles and educational materials about culturally and linguistically appropriate services and the National CLAS Standards. It links to a searchable resource library and to video-based educational units that use clinical case studies to show culturally and linguistically appropriate encounters in daily work.

VI. Audience Engagement

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These assessments examine the ways in which you can engage your audience. The focus is on the organization’s engagement, whether in planning, implementation, or engagement activities. The aim is to determine whether your information and environment meets evidence-based criteria for engagement with your audience. If any criteria aren’t met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The assessment can help an organization figure out how to create and improve engagement activities to reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: Audience Engagement

#1 Community Engagement Actions, Tools, and Activities (cdc.gov)

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pha-guidance/engaging-the-community/community-engagement-tools-actions.html>

Source: Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Year: Active website. Last review was May 6, 2026.

Highlights: This ATSDR guidance page describes community engagement actions, tools, and activities that can be used during the Public Health Assessment process. It organizes engagement activities across phases—setting the stage, getting started, keeping it going, and wrapping up—and emphasizes choosing approaches based on the phase of work, level of community interest, site-specific issues, and degree of hazard.

#2 Community Engagement Toolkit: Tool Index

<https://equity.wa.gov/resources/community-engagement-toolkit/tool-index/tool-index>

Source: Washington State Office of Equity.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Tool Index is part of the Washington State Office of Equity’s Community Engagement Toolkit and provides direct links to downloadable tools for planning and managing inclusive community

engagement. The tools cover sponsor and advocate meetings, landscape analysis, disability understanding, universal design, inclusive meetings, accessible documents, CART and ASL services, language access and Plain Talk, recruitment and appointment, application forms, onboarding, participatory research and action training, co-creation, and inclusive facilitation.

More Audience Engagement

Community Engagement Assessment & Planning Guide

https://sustainablect.org/fileadmin/Random_PDF_Files/Equity_Action_PDFs/CommunityEngagementPlanningGuide.pdf

Source: City of Brooklyn Park; developed by Lidiya Girma, Neighborhood Relations Specialist.

Year: Not stated in the PDF.

Highlights: This guide helps staff think through how to develop a community engagement plan for city projects, including policies, programs, infrastructure development, construction work, and other projects that may affect the community. It walks users through whether engagement is needed, what is known and unknown about the project, who should be engaged, how to choose appropriate engagement strategies, and how to define and assess success.

Creating an Inclusive Environment Checklist, [Financial] Education Programs, Disability

<https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/handout-creating-an-inclusive-environment-sept2024.pdf>

Source: National Disability Institute.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This checklist helps organizations remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities and create a more inclusive environment. Although the title focuses on “financial education programs”; the checklist is broadly applicable to community engagement of populations with disabilities. It prompts teams to examine staff attitudes and expectations, physical accessibility, communication access, program flexibility, instructional design, and relationships with community disability organizations.

Ensuring Your Research Is Disseminated: Proactive Steps to Involve Your Community-Led and Patient-Centered Audience [From the Beginning!]

<https://texashealthinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Ensuring-Your-Research-is-Disseminated-8-15-2025.pdf>

Source: Texas Health Institute.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This guide supports community-led and patient-centered research teams in planning dissemination from the very start that is trustworthy, relational, reciprocal, and meaningful to the communities involved. It frames dissemination not as an end-of-project task, but as an equity and accountability practice that should be planned early and grounded in community trust, values, lived experience, cultural relevance, and long-term relationship building.

Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit

<https://engagement-toolkit.phila.gov/>

Source: City of Philadelphia; created by City of Philadelphia engagement practitioners and community members.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit provides guidance, stories, tools, and training to help City of Philadelphia practitioners center equity in community engagement. The toolkit is organized around common engagement challenges, including understanding community conditions, making engagement more accessible, planning engagement work, and supporting civic participation.

Index of Community Engagement Techniques

<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Tools/Index%20of%20Engagement%20Techniques.pdf?hsLang=en-us>

Source: Tamarack Institute

Year: Not stated.

Highlights: This index organizes community engagement techniques by level of engagement—Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower—and notes that its continuum is adapted from the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. For each technique, it provides a short description and practical considerations, including accessibility, staffing, participant expectations, communication channels, facilitation needs, and when a method may or may not be appropriate.

Stakeholder Engagement Guide of Guides

<https://researchimpact.ca/wp-content/uploads/Stakeholder-Engagement-Guide-of-Guides.pdf>

Source: NeuroDevNet's Knowledge Translation Core, hosted by York University's Knowledge Mobilization Unit; authored by Anneliese Poetz, David Phipps, and Stacie Ross.

Year: Last updated September 2016.

Highlights: This guide compiles existing stakeholder engagement resources for researchers and organizes them into three areas: introduction to stakeholder engagement, how to do stakeholder engagement, and evaluating the outcome of stakeholder engagement on research. It is grounded in integrated knowledge translation and emphasizes that stakeholder engagement can help ensure that research questions, methods, outputs, dissemination products, and innovations respond to stakeholder needs.

Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf>

Source: Massachusetts Family Engagement Coalition, with state coalition members from Massachusetts education and health and human services agencies; led by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care and the Department of Public Health.

Year: June 2020.

Highlights: This framework provides a roadmap for practitioners and families across health, human services, and education to strengthen family engagement from the prenatal period through young adulthood. It defines family engagement as systemic, intentional, and grounded in two-way

communication, equal partnership, cultural and linguistic responsiveness, equity, and a shift from “doing to” families toward “doing with” families.

Testing for Understanding

<https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language/test>

Source: Digital.gov, U.S. General Services Administration.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Digital.gov guide explains how to test whether content is easily understood before it is finalized. It emphasizes how testing should be part of the writing and planning process, not something done only after content is complete.

Free Health Literacy Trainings, OHL and OHL-related

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These **free** trainings are all good options for learning about organizational health literacy and related topics. You can take a variety yourself or use it to start discussion and/or train staff, departments, programs, and/or organizations. The focus is on the organization’s capacity to do, and improve, organizational health literacy capacity. The aim is to determine whether your staff, and organizational activities, processes and policies, meet evidence-based criteria for implementing and sustaining organizational health literacy work. If any criteria aren’t met - you can make changes to meet the specific criteria not yet in practice. The trainings can help an organization “get on the same page” and prompt conversation and action about creating and improving activities to develop and sustain a health literate organization. The goal being to reduce burden on the patient or participant as they seek services, navigate systems, and make decisions.

Two to Start: Trainings

#1 Clear Language Lab: Plain Language Training and Support

<https://www.litworks.org/cll-trainings>

Source: Clear Language Lab, Literacy Works.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Clear Language Lab’s training page offers plain language professional development and support through live virtual workshops, webinars, community-building opportunities, one-on-one support, and on-demand learning. Topics include foundational plain language, centering the audience, accessibility, writing for understanding, communication equity, information design, clear communication, and plain language as part of equity-driven work.

#2 Webinar: Advancing Organizational Health Literacy

<https://cookcountypublichealth.org/organizational-health-literacy/>

Source: Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH).

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This webinar provides an overview of CCDPH’s Advancing Organizational Health Literacy toolkit and resource hub. The webpage identifies the presenters and situates the webinar alongside the toolkit, assessment tool, supplementary materials, and six organizational health literacy focus areas.

More Trainings

Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County On-Demand Library

<https://advancinghl.org/resources/#on-demand-library>

Source: Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County On-Demand Library provides previously recorded trainings related to many health literacy topics including accessibility, visual design, analytics, presentations, numeracy, social media, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The page also links to Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County tools, plain language guidance, and partner, OHL, and misinformation resources.

Center for Plain Language Tools and Training

<https://centerforplainlanguage.org/learning-training/tools-training/>

Source: Center for Plain Language.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This page gathers plain language tools, guidelines, and free online training resources. It provides access to the U.S. Federal Plain Language Guidelines, explains why the guidelines matter for public communication, links to Canadian plain language resources, and lists free trainings from CDC, NIH, USCIS, the Department of Defense, and other sources.

Health Literacy Out Loud Podcast

<https://www.healthliteracyoutloud.com/>

Source: Health Literacy Consulting; hosted by Helen Osborne.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Health Literacy Out Loud is a podcast hosted by Helen Osborne. In the episodes, she interviews people “in-the-know” about health literacy. It is designed to help listeners understand why health literacy matters and learn practical ways to improve communication. Episodes cover topics from policy to oral interactions to risk communication.

Health Literacy Training: A Solution for Addressing Workforce Challenges *about training, not a training itself*

https://ihaacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/HealthLitTraining_Whitepaper_081225.pdf

Source: Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This white paper describes how workforce training in health literacy can help hospitals address two challenges: workforce shortages and insufficient reimbursement. It connects health literacy training to a number of advances like improved communication, better employee well-being and retention, improved health outcomes, and value-based reimbursement metrics.

Public Health Communications Collaborative - Plain Language Academy

<https://academy.publichealthcollaborative.org/>

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC).

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: PHCC Academy offers public health communication training via pre-recorded on-demand courses and live online sessions with subject matter experts. The on-demand courses are about two hours, self-paced, and interactive, using expert-led video content, animations, knowledge checks, and reflection exercises.

Strategy 6G: Training To Advance Physicians' Communication Skills

<https://www.ahrq.gov/cahps/quality-improvement/improvement-guide/6-strategies-for-improving/communication/strategy6gtraining.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, CAHPS Program.

Year: Original: June 2013; last reviewed March 2020.

Highlights: This AHRQ CAHPS resource explains why clinician communication skills matter for patient understanding, care experience, and health outcomes. It offers training via a variety of approaches including history-taking, cross-cultural communication, interviewing techniques, empathic responses, and written communication with patients.

The Always Use Teach-back! Interactive Learning Modules

<https://teachbacktraining.org/teach-back-interactive-learning-module/>

Source: Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit; updated by Advancing Health Literacy Franklin County; hosted by the Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA).

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit Interactive Learning Module has six sections. The focus is on learning and applying teach-back and plain language skills.

Webinars: Health Literacy Innovations

<https://healthliteracyinnovations.com/resources/webinars>

Source: Health Literacy Innovations. copyright 2006-2026.

Year: 2025-2026.

Highlights: These webinars cover topics including misinformation, health literacy and plain language standards, web content, pre-testing materials, and organizations.

(\$) Health Literacy Specialist Certificate Program

Health Literacy Specialist Certificate Program

(only accredited health literacy training program in the world!)

<https://ihaacademy.org/professional-learning/health-literacy-specialist-certificate-program>

Cost (2026): Varies. Standard: \$2000. And sometimes with *discount code*: \$699. Tiered discounts available for groups.

Format: Online, self-paced.

Audience: Anyone who wants to gain deeper, professional health literacy skills.

Focus: IHA's Health Literacy Specialist Certificate Program is designed to build health literacy knowledge across seven individual courses covering key areas like communication, ethics, and organizational systems and policies. You will earn a Specialist Certificate demonstrating you have mastered the fundamentals of evidence-based health literacy practices. It is possible to earn up to 49 continuing education contact hours.

Annual, Active Health Literacy Conferences

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These conferences are explicitly focused on health literacy. As of this collection's release, they are held annually, or are regularly active; take place in-person, virtual, and/or hybrid; and cost nothing or \$50+. Conferences that are no longer active are not included.

Two to Start: Conferences – free/low-cost and virtual

#1 IHA Health Literacy Conference (Institute for Healthcare Advancement) (Virtual)

<https://ihaacademy.org/conferences-events/conferences/hlc-overview/>

Cost: Free. Registration required. Additional cost for continuing education credits.

Format: Virtual. Extensive conference platform for on-demand, live, and networking sessions. Hosted annually in May.

Audience: Professionals, advocates, educators, researchers, students, and emerging leaders committed to advancing health literacy.

Focus: The IHA Health Literacy Conference is the largest convening dedicated to health literacy. It offers professional development opportunities, peer networking, and practical tools that help attendees expand their knowledge and integrate health literacy solutions into their organizations.

#2 IHA Health Literacy Annual Research Conference (HARC) (Institute for Healthcare Advancement) (Virtual)

<https://ihaacademy.org/conferences-events/conferences/harc-overview/>

Cost: \$50. Registration required. Additional cost for continuing education credits.

Format: Virtual. Extensive conference platform for on-demand, live, and networking sessions. Hosted annually in October.

Audience: Researchers engaged in health literacy research, including public health, health services, epidemiology, translational research, and intervention research.

Focus: The Health Literacy Annual Research Conference is an interdisciplinary meeting for researchers dedicated to health literacy research. The conference is intended to advance the field of health literacy, improve the quality of health literacy research, and support professional development.

More Conferences

AHLA International Health Literacy Conference (Asia)

<https://www.ahla-asia.org/about/30.htm>

Cost (2026): AHLA member rates: \$200 USD for general registration and \$220 USD with workshop. Early-bird rates: \$200 USD and \$220USD with workshop. Regular rates: \$300 USD and \$320 USD with workshop. Student rates: \$110-170 USD depending on timing and workshop.

Format: On-site. Historically, various countries in Asia.

Audience: International health literacy researchers, practitioners, educators, policymakers, and others interested in health literacy and sustainable development.

Focus: The AHLA International Health Literacy Conference is an international meeting of the Asian Health Literacy Association.

Health Literacy Collaborative Summit (Texas in 2026)

<https://www.healthliteracycollaborative.org/2026-summit-agenda>

Cost (2026): USHLA Member: \$400 USD. Regular registration: \$450. Student registration: \$150.

Format: In-person. Locations vary. Collaborative member states include: Arkansas, Delaware, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, Texas, Wisconsin.

Audience: Professionals (open to all, not only member states) from health care, community-based organizations, libraries, health insurance, health information technology, public health, and related fields.

Focus: The Health Literacy Collaborative Summit is a regional gathering intended to bring health professionals from diverse settings together to build partnerships, share practical tools, and develop actionable health literacy strategies.

Sidra Medicine - Health Literacy Conference (Qatar)

<https://www.sidra.org/events/the-6th-health-literacy-conference/>

Cost (2026): Day 1: \$300 QAR; Day 2: \$150 QAR; Day 1 + Day 2: \$375 QAR.

Format: Hybrid; Day 1 is in person and Day 2 is virtual. Hosted annually in October in Qatar, in English.

Audience: Physicians, pharmacists, nurses, allied health professionals, dentists, students, and trainees.

Focus: The Sidra Medicine annual health literacy conference translates health literacy strategy into actionable frameworks across clinical, educational, and community settings. Conference objectives include exchange of evidence-based knowledge, research ideas and results, and best practices; alignment with Qatar's National Health Strategy 2024–2030; and integration of health literacy as a driver of patient-centered outcomes.

Health Literacy Organizations

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These are organizations across the world that focus on health literacy. They offer incredible health literacy resources including content, trainings, conferences, assessment tools, and relevant examples.

Two to Start: Organizations with Excellent Health Literacy Resources

#1 Public Health Communications Collaborative

<https://publichealthcollaborative.org/>

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC).

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: PHCC creates practical tools, messaging, and training to strengthen public health professionals' communication capacity. The site includes timely topics, ready-to-share resources, communication guides/tools, webinars, and a free training hub.

#2 Literacy Works

<https://www.litworks.org/>

Source: Literacy Works.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Literacy Works supports adult literacy and clear communication through two main program areas: Community Literacy and Clear Language Lab. Its Community Literacy work provides professional development, volunteer tutor training, and capacity-building for adult literacy professionals, while Clear Language Lab works with mission-driven organizations to improve clear and effective communication.

More Organizations

AHRQ Health Literacy

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This AHRQ health literacy hub organizes federal resources to help health care organizations, leaders, and professionals improve health literacy. The page links users to improvement tools, professional education and training, publications, patient engagement and education resources, and research tools, data, and funding opportunities.

Austrian Health Literacy Alliance

<https://oepgk.at/schwerpunkte/english-summary/the-austrian-health-literacy-alliance/>

Source: Austrian Health Literacy Alliance / Österreichische Plattform Gesundheitskompetenz; coordination centre hosted by Gesundheit Österreich GmbH.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Austrian Health Literacy Alliance is Austria’s national steering and coordination structure for advancing Health Target 3, “to enhance health literacy in the population.” The Alliance supports networking, collaboration, intersectoral coordination, shared understanding of health literacy, monitoring, reporting, transparency, and quality.

CDC Health Literacy

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Office of Communications.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This CDC health literacy hub provides information, tools, training, and links on health literacy research, practice, and evaluation for public health topics and situations. The site connects users to resources such as training, organizational planning, developing and testing materials, federally funded research, research summaries, program evaluation, and state health literacy activities.

Center for Plain Language

<https://centerforplainlanguage.org/>

Source: Center for Plain Language.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Center for Plain Language is a professional plain language organization that encourages government agencies and businesses to write clear and understandable communication.

Coalition on Health Literacy and Human Rights

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-and-biomedicine/coalition-on-health-literacy-and-human-rights>

Source: Council of Europe; Human Rights and Biomedicine.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Council of Europe’s Coalition on Health Literacy and Human Rights exists within the Human Rights and Biomedicine program’s health literacy work. The Coalition sits alongside Council of Europe events, videos, and publications that frame health literacy as connected to trust-building, equitable access to health care, stigma and discrimination reduction, and individual and organizational health literacy.

Council of Europe, Human Rights & Biomedicine, Health Literacy

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-and-biomedicine/health-literacy>

Source: Council of Europe; Human Rights and Biomedicine.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This Council of Europe page presents health literacy as a human rights and equitable access to health care issue within the Human Rights and Biomedicine program.

EUPHA Health Literacy Section (European Public Health Association)

<https://eupha.org/sections/health-literacy/>

Source: European Public Health Association.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The EUPHA Health Literacy Section is a professional network within the European Public Health Association focused on strengthening health literacy across research, policy, practice, and education. The section serves as a communication and networking hub for professionals across Europe and promotes cross-sector collaboration and partnerships with national and European health literacy networks.

Health Literacy Europe

<https://www.healthliteracyeurope.net/>

Source: Health Literacy Europe.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Health Literacy Europe is a European network launched in 2010 to connect people interested in health literacy across the European region. The network focuses on health literacy knowledge-sharing and agenda-setting in policy, research, and practice. It hosted the European Health Literacy Conference four times between 2011-2019.

Health Literacy Place

<https://www.healthliteracyplace.org.uk/>

Source: National Health Service (NHS) Scotland.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Health Literacy Place is a website of NHS Scotland. It explains health literacy and provides practical tools, techniques, resources, news, and e-learning to support clearer communication and person-centered care.

Health Literacy UK

<https://healthliteracy.org.uk/>

Source: Health Literacy UK.

Year: Established in 2008; became a Community Interest Company in 2025.

Highlights: Health Literacy UK is a not-for-profit organization. It describes itself as “the go-to place for best practice in health literacy.” The organization provides health literacy expertise across the United Kingdom in policy, practice improvement, research, professional learning, and by curating resources.

Health Literacy Workgroup (health.gov)

<https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/national-health-initiatives/health-literacy/health-literacy-workgroup>

Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP), Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Year: Last updated July 12, 2022.

Highlights: This ODPHP page describes the HHS Health Literacy Workgroup, an interagency group that has met regularly since 2003. The workgroup collaborates to keep health literacy a priority across HHS, with goals related to creating understandable and actionable health information, supporting engaged health consumers, and refreshing the health literacy science base.

Horowitz Center for Health Literacy

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy>

Source: University of Maryland School of Public Health; Horowitz Center for Health Literacy.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Horowitz Center for Health Literacy provides research, education, and service to improve health literacy at individual, family, community, organizational, and societal levels. The Center's work is exemplified by the [Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub](#) which includes consumer health information, the Maryland Health Literacy Organizational Seal, a Health Literacy Education Toolkit, and projects focused on digital tools, diabetes prevention, and oral health.

Institute for Healthcare Advancement

Health Literacy Solutions Center (free account to login)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/home/memberhome>

Source: Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA).

Year: Website copyright 2024.

Highlights: The Health Literacy Solutions Center is a free resource based at the Institute for Healthcare Advancement. IHA hosts two annual conferences (free or low-cost), supports an active health literacy listserv, and provides many free resources. In addition, it runs the Health Literacy Research and Practice journal (see below) and offers the only health literacy specialist certificate available (\$).

Health Literacy Research and Practice – Academic Journal with Plain Language summaries (open access)

<https://journals.healio.com/journal/hlrp>

Source: Healio / SLACK Journals; *Health Literacy Research and Practice (HLRP)*. Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Health Literacy Research and Practice is an interdisciplinary and international journal dedicated to bridging research with best practices to advance the field of health literacy, promote health equity, and reduce health disparities. HLRP is open access (anyone can read the articles!), peer reviewed and indexed in the National Library of Medicine.

International Health Literacy Association

<https://www.i-hla.org/>

Source: International Health Literacy Association.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The International Health Literacy Association describes itself as “the international voice of health literacy.” It is a non-governmental, not-for-profit, member-based organization. The focus is on creating an international voice for health literacy and raising awareness world-wide.

Literacy Works

<https://www.litworks.org/>

Source: Literacy Works.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Literacy Works supports adult literacy and clear communication through two main program areas: Community Literacy and the Clear Language Lab. The Community Literacy work provides professional development, volunteer tutor training, and capacity-building for adult literacy professionals. The Clear Language Lab works with mission-driven organizations to improve clear and effective communication.

M-POHL: WHO Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy

<https://m-pohl.net/>

Source: M-POHL, World Health Organization Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy; International Coordination Centre located at the Austrian National Public Health Institute.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: M-POHL is a World Health Organization Action Network focused on measuring population and organizational health literacy. It produces and shares internationally comparable health literacy surveys (2019, 2024-2026) and organizational health literacy resources, including publications and toolkits.

United States Health Literacy Association

<https://www.ushla.org/>

Source: United States Health Literacy Association (USHLA).

Year: Copyright 2025.

Highlights: USHLA is a U.S.-based 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization that describes itself as health literacy focused, policy powered, and advocacy driven. The grassroots organization was established in 2025 to champion health literacy as a pillar of health care policy through advocacy at federal, state, and local levels. It offers membership (\$), professional development and networking opportunities, policy and advocacy resources, leadership opportunities, and opportunities to participate in task forces and national health literacy efforts.

World Health Organization, Improving Health Literacy

<https://www.who.int/activities/improving-health-literacy>

Source: World Health Organization.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The WHO frames population health literacy as a foundation for people to take an active role in their own health, engage in community action, and hold governments accountable for health and health equity. WHO emphasizes health literacy at personal, organizational, and systemic levels. It supports Member States through assessment, monitoring, reporting, workforce training, and development of tools for health literacy interventions.

Health-Literacy Related Policy Information

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These are examples of policy and policy scans from around the world that focus on health literacy. They offer ideas for creating and implementing policy focused on health literacy.

Two to Start: Policy

#1 Integrative Review of National Health Literacy Policy Blueprints as a Tool for Change Toward Health Literate Systems

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240113138>

Source: World Health Organization.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This is a WHO technical report that introduces health literacy, its political mandate, and lessons from national health literacy policy. It is a blueprint developed to help support health-literate systems. It highlights moving from individual health literacy work to a systems change focus.

#2 LegiScan (U.S.) National Legislative Search: “Health Literacy”

<https://legiscan.com/gaits/search>

Source: LegiScan.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This LegiScan search page returns current-session federal and state legislative records that include the phrase “health literacy” in bill text or bill data.

More Policy Information

Advocacy Toolkit: Health Literacy

<https://www.unthealth.edu/tcom/public-health/binaries/HealthLiteracy-Advocacy-Toolkit.pdf>

Source: UNThealth – Health Literacy Lab. Authors Wagner & Penikalapati, Y.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: This toolkit provides a step-by-step introduction to advocating for health literacy policy and systems change. It is organized into three main sections—health literacy, advocacy, and strategy—and includes practical planning tools.

Health Literacy Policies — How Can They Be Developed and Implemented? A Guide for Policy and Decision Makers

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379929533_Health_literacy_policies_-_how_can_they_be_developed_and_implemented_A_guide_for_policy_and_decision_makers

Source: WHO Action Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy (M-POHL); International Coordination Center of M-POHL at the Austrian National Public Health Institute.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: This guide supports policy and decision makers in developing and implementing health literacy policies, strategies, action plans, and interventions.

Maryland Health Literacy Legislation

<https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy/consumer-health-information-hub/act-and-legislate>

Scroll down to “legislate” and click the + sign to open the list of laws.

Source: Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub, University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: This section of the Horowitz Center/Maryland Consumer Health Information Hub website focuses on literacy resources for legislative action. The “Act” section links to organizational assessments, rural health literacy resources, and training tools. The “Legislate” section explains that health literacy-specific laws are not common at the federal level, but that possibilities abound. In Maryland, for example, health literacy-related laws include: plain-language hospital patient rights, cultural competency and health literacy training, community health worker certification, adult Medicaid dental coverage, and language access for people with limited English proficiency.

Maryland’s Plain Language Approach Promotes Information Accessibility for All, Commentary

<https://marylandmatters.org/2023/11/07/commentary-marylands-plain-language-approach-promotes-information-accessibility-for-all/>

Source: Maryland Matters; guest commentary by Cynthia Baur, director of the University of Maryland Horowitz Center for Health Literacy and professor in the University of Maryland School of Public Health.

Year: 2023.

Highlights: Dr. Cynthia Baur, director of the Horowitz Center for Health Literacy, explains Maryland’s plain language and language access approach. She describes how Maryland’s information accessibility strategy for public information focuses on health, safety, health insurance, and social services benefits. Dr. Baur highlights Maryland’s 2022 House Bill 1082, which directs public agencies to put information in plain language and make it available in everyday languages people use.

United States Health Literacy Association

<https://www.ushla.org/>

Source: United States Health Literacy Association (USHLA).

Year: Copyright 2025.

Highlights: USHLA is a U.S.-based 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization that describes itself as health literacy focused, policy powered, and advocacy driven. The grassroots organization was established in 2025 to champion health literacy as a pillar of health care policy through advocacy at federal, state, and local levels. It offers membership (\$), professional development and networking opportunities, policy and advocacy resources, leadership opportunities, and opportunities to participate in task forces and national health literacy efforts.

Best Practice Examples, Health Literacy-informed Organizations and Information

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These are examples of health literacy best practice across domains: organization, content, websites, and beyond. They offer ideas for creating and implementing health-literate organizations and related components.

Two to Start: Best Practice Examples

#1 Building Health Literate Organizations: A Guidebook to Achieving Organizational Change, 2nd Edition (examples listed in each chapter and in case studies)

<https://www.healthliteracysolutions.org/viewdocument/building-health-literate-organizati-2>

Source: Advancing Health Literacy, Franklin County. Mary Ann Abrams, MD, MPH; Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi, MEd; Audrey Riffenburgh, PhD. Hosted by Health Literacy Solutions Center, Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This guidebook is designed to help organizations that promote, restore, or maintain health become more health literate. It focuses on organizational health literacy and the intersection of health literacy and health equity. Best practice examples are presented in every chapter of the guide.

#2 Clear Language Lab Case Studies

<https://www.litworks.org/casestudies>

Source: Clear Language Lab, Literacy Works.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Clear Language Lab case studies highlight Literacy Works' plain language and clear communication work. Highlighted projects range from University of Chicago Urban Labs: Health Lab to the Vermont Human Rights Commission to the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance.

More Best Practice Examples

AHRQ Quality Improvement Tools, Examples/Templates

<https://www.ahrq.gov/health-literacy/improve/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Resources & Quality, Health Literacy.

Year: Active website. Last review was March 2024.

Highlights: The AHRQ has many toolkits for best practice, including many examples and templates for creating health literate information and processes. See highlighted AHRQ examples below.

AHRQ Re-Engineered Discharge Toolkit, Case Studies

<https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/settings/hospital/red/toolkit/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); toolkit prepared by Boston University and AHRQ.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The Re-Engineered Discharge Toolkit offers resources to help hospitals improve discharge processes to reduce readmissions and post-hospital emergency department visits. The toolkit includes implementation guidance, discharge delivery steps, follow-up phone call guidance, monitoring tools, and specific guidance for delivering discharge education to diverse populations.

AHRQ Taking Care of Myself: A Guide for When I Leave the Hospital

<https://www.ahrq.gov/questions/resources/going-home/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Year: Originally created April 2010; last reviewed November 2020.

Highlights: This easy-to-read discharge guide for when patients leave the hospital. It can help patients track care information, including medicines, follow-up appointments, medical problems, pharmacy information, and questions. The guide was created for patients to complete it with staff before the patient leaves the hospital. It is a resource to take home with them.

AHRQ Transitioning Newborns from NICU to Home

<https://www.ahrq.gov/patient-safety/settings/hospital/resource/nicu/index.html>

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); Safe Passages project team, including Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Children's Hospital, Texas Children's Health Plan, University of Texas Houston, and partners.

Year: Original: 2013; last reviewed 2021.

Highlights: This toolkit is a resource for improving safety as newborns transition from NICU to Home. A Health Coach Program is recommended and tools are provided for coach training, customizable information packets for families, clinical materials for primary care providers, a NICU needs assessment, and a follow-up telephone survey.

CDC Clear Communication Index: User Guide - Examples & Design

<https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/pdf/clear-communication-user-guide.pdf>

Examples: <https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/examplematerial/index.html>

Design Guide: <https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index-design-guides.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of the Associate Director for Communication.

Year: Page last reviewed 2019.

Highlights: This CDC user guide explains how to use the Clear Communication Index, a research-based tool for developing and assessing public communication products. It also provides best practice examples throughout the guide, along with a design guide.

ClearMark Awards

<https://centerforplainlanguage.org/awards/clearmark/>

Source: Center for Plain Language. Presented in collaboration with the Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: The ClearMark Awards recognize outstanding plain-language work in English, French, and Spanish from government agencies, nonprofits, and private companies across North America.

Digital Health Literacy Toolkit - Case Examples (Section 4)

<https://gdhp.health/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/00-GDHP-CHE-Digital-Health-Literacy-Toolkit-Full.pdf>

Source: Global Digital Health Partnership, Clinical and Human Engagement Work Stream.

Year: 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit for a global audience houses supports for public digital health literacy learning and practice. Case examples from Australia, Canada and Hong Kong are highlighted as are resources for developing and evaluating digital health literacy resources.

Health Literacy Activities by U.S. State

<https://www.cdc.gov/health-literacy/php/about/state-data.html>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communications.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: Health literacy-focused state and local collaborations, academic centers, government programs, and nonprofit organizations across the United States are highlighted. The site notes these examples are efforts aligned with the National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy: they cross organizational boundaries, create new knowledge, or convene diverse groups of people interested in health literacy.

Health Literacy Case Study Highlights: Communicating Complex Research Results

<https://mrctcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/MRCT-Center-Health-Literacy-with-Tufts-case-study.pdf>

Source: Multi-regional Clinical Trials Center of Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard University (Health Literacy in Clinical Research). Tufts University School of Medicine case example.

Year: 2022.

Highlights: This case study describes the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health. It highlights how a team communicated environmental exposure and health risk information to immigrant communities near a Boston interstate highway. It showcases the best practice strategies used: community engagement, plain language, best practice design principles, translation into most common languages other than English, English language learner feedback, and community advisory board review.

Health Literacy in Practice, Examples

https://www.cpha.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/healthlit/examples_e.pdf

Source: Canadian Public Health Association; funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Year: 2014.

Highlights: Eight Canadian examples of health literacy initiatives are discussed. Across the examples, we see initiatives that are relevant to practitioners and policymakers, adaptable, practical across various settings, and connected to Canadian health literacy domains (i.e., access, comprehension, evaluation, and communication). The examples cover various approaches, including patient-provider communication, peer navigation, health careers workshops, oral health access, diabetes work with First Nations communities, and community-based support.

Journey to Become an Equitable Health Literate Healthcare Organization by Focusing on Quality and Safety (webinar about organizational change)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bsiqbHx95A>

Source: Seattle Children's, Pediatric Grand Rounds, Emergency Medicine.

Year: 2024.

Highlights: This video explores Seattle Children's Hospital's process of becoming a health literate healthcare organization as they worked to improve quality and safety outcomes. Case study in webinar format.

NLM Health Education Materials Assessment Tool, Annotated Example

<https://medlineplus.gov/pdf/HealthEducationMaterialsAssessmentTool.pdf>

Source: National Library of Medicine / MedlinePlus.

Year: 2021.

Highlights: This assessment tool helps reviewers determine whether a health education material can be designated as "easy-to-read." It is based on the PEMAT and was developed through an iterative expert review process. The tool includes an annotated example on page 5.

Oral Health Literacy Toolkit, Patient Brochures in Multiple Languages

<https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/oral-health-literacy-toolkit>

Source: California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center; developed by Health Research for Action Center, University of California, Berkeley, and the Office of Oral Health, California Department of Public Health.

Year: Webpage copyright 2025.

Highlights: This toolkit explains oral health literacy concepts and their benefits for providers and dental patients. It includes best practice templates and tools as well as patient brochures in multiple languages.

Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool (PEMAT) and User's Guide

https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/publications/files/pemat_guide.pdf

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; authors Sarah J. Shoemaker, Michael S. Wolf, and Cindy Brach.

Year: 2013. Updated 2014.

Highlights: This AHRQ guide introduces the Patient Education Materials Assessment Tool, or PEMAT, as a systematic method for evaluating and comparing the understandability and actionability of patient education materials. It also provides best practice examples throughout the guide.

Public Health Communications Collaborative, Best Practice Examples

<https://publichealthcollaborative.org/topics/>

Source: Public Health Communications Collaborative.

Year: Active website. Last review date not provided.

Highlights: Information is listed by current health topics. These are ready-to-use content pages as well as communication guides by topic.

Rural Health Literacy Toolkit, Program Models (Module 2) and Program Clearinghouse (Module 3)

<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-literacy>

Source: Rural Health Information Hub.

Year: Published 2022. Last updated 2025.

Highlights: This is a comprehensive health literacy toolkit applicable specifically to rural contexts. In particular, the toolkit has sections highlighting program models and a program clearinghouse.

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Thank you!

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