



October Activity Ideas

Health Literacy

As a health information disseminator, it is important to ensure that the information and resources you distribute are appropriate for your target populations. You want to provide materials that are easy to understand and follow, especially when it comes to making decisions about healthy behaviors and health care. Below are a few ideas that you as a health promotion coordinator or health educator can conduct throughout the month:

Review your website

Take a look at the materials and links you have on your website:

- Is the information credible and easy to understand?
- Is it from a reputable source?
- If the materials are targeted at service members and their families, are they at the appropriate reading level? These materials should be at no more than the eighth grade reading level. If you created the document, you can check the readability by using the tool in Microsoft Word or another online tool. To use the tool on Microsoft Word:
 - Go to File, Options, Proofing, and then check the box for 'Show readability statistics'.
 - Once you complete the spell check, a box will pop up with the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease and Grading Level. The Reading Ease and Grading Level are based on word length and sentence length. For the eighth grade reading level, Reading Ease scores should be 60 or higher.
- Replace materials that are hard to understand or read. If it's your own document, simplify the wording accordingly, taking into account word length, sentence length, and the use of medical terms.

Provide education at your clinic or hospital about health literacy

Provide information in a short deck or article to your medical staff about the appropriateness of the information being provided in terms of reading level and comprehension. Medical staff may be focused on the diagnosis or treatment of a medical condition and may not consider the patient's understanding of the health information. Talk with providers about offering information in a variety of formats to address different learning methods, such as written and verbal. Encourage providers to practice the following tips found in NMCPHC's HP toolbox, "[Easy Ways to Improve Patients' Health Literacy](#)" fact sheet:



- Make sure to ask patients if they understand the information they were given.
- Since a lot of information can be given at a medical appointment, provide information in a written format so patients can review after the fact or provide paper so patients can jot down a few notes.
- Ask if there are any questions, especially regarding the condition or medications.

Observe Health Education Week

Health Education Week is sponsored by the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE). This year, the week will be observed 20-24 October, 2014 and the theme is Celebrating the Next Generation of Health Educators. More information can be found on the [SOPHE](#) site.

For more information on health literacy, please visit the [October Health Literacy Month toolbox](#).