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Marquette University PA Program

WAPA Spring 2018 Meeting

# Lecture Objectives

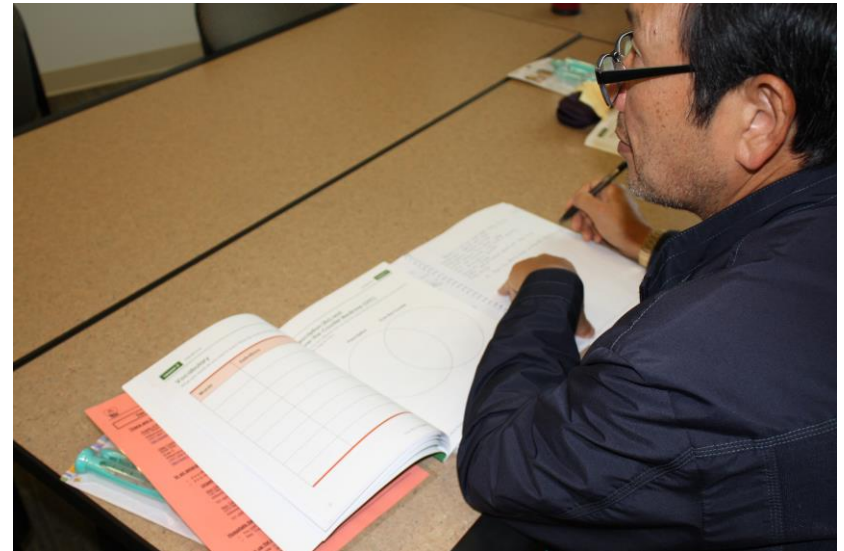
- Recognize the definition of health literacy and its components.
- Discuss the scope of the health literacy problem nationally and the implications for public health and clinical care.
- Identify the 5 team tactics to identify and improve patient health literacy.

# HEAL Program: Two Parts



**Health Team Strategies to  
Identify and Support  
Patients**

**Health Literacy Classes  
for Patients**



# Today's Topics



**Health Literacy Awareness**



**Health Care Team Strategies**



**HEAL Classes & Referrals**





# Health Literacy Awareness

# Health Literacy Awareness:

## What is Health Literacy

A measure of a patients' ability to read, comprehend, and act on medical instructions.



# How Is “Health Literacy” Different From “Literacy”?

## Literacy

- Having the basic skills to read, write and compute without regard to context

## Health literacy

- Reading, writing, computing, communicating and understanding in the context of health care

# What are the Core Health Literacy Skills?

1

Reading and  
writing ability

2

Communication  
proficiencies

3

Numerical  
computing and  
comprehension

4

Critical thinking  
and medical  
decision making



# Health Literacy Awareness: The System

- Health information is complex
- Patients feel vulnerable
- Clear communication is linked to better health outcomes
- Culture and literacy levels can make communication difficult



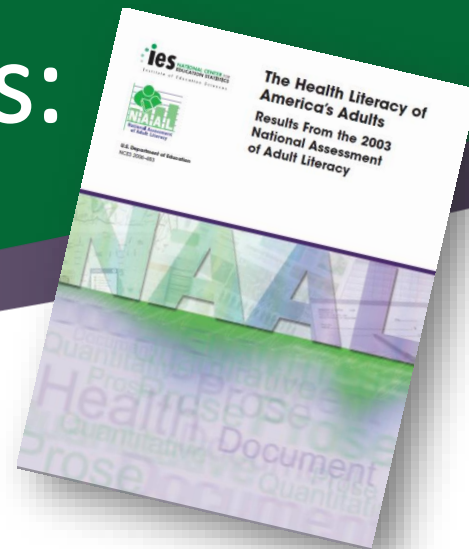
# Health Literacy Awareness:

## The Patient

Degree of Health Literacy affects how our Patients:

- Determine when to make an appointment
- Decide which type of provider is needed
- Communicate with health care provider(s)
- Describe symptoms
- Calculate dosages
- Analyze risks and benefits
- Locate health information and places of service

# Health Literacy Awareness: The Outcomes



Ability to read and write  
English is a strong  
predictor of health status

**Literacy**



**Health Literacy**

Patient's ability to read,  
comprehend, and act on  
medical instructions



**Patient Engagement**

Actions taken to get the  
greatest benefit from the  
health care services available



**Outcomes**

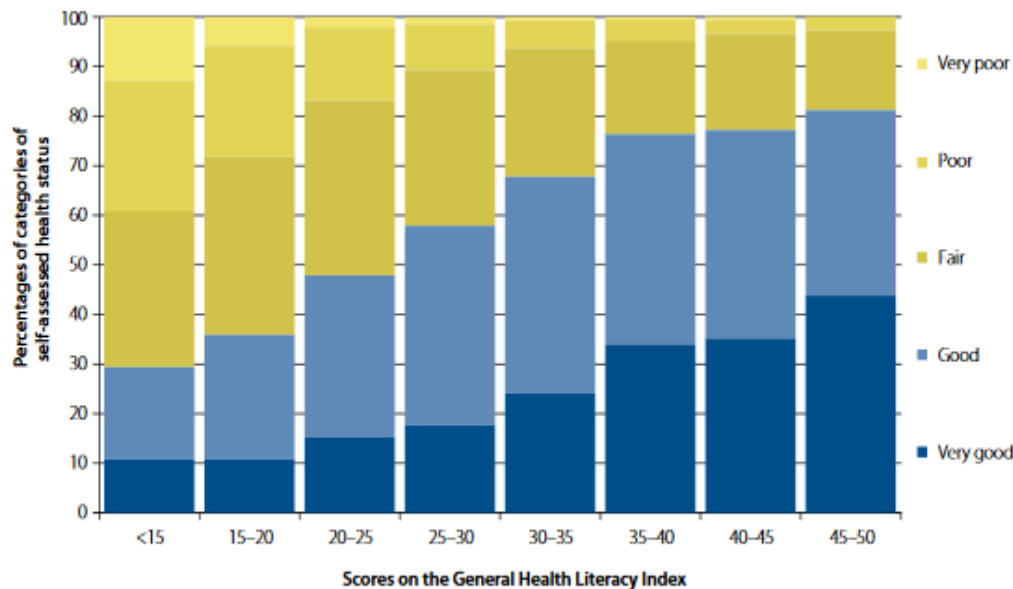
Patient's condition after  
care, medication,  
support, counseling

# Low Health Literacy Outcomes

- **Literacy skills are the strongest predictor of health status**, more than age, income, employment status, level of education or racial/ethnic group.<sup>1-2</sup>
- Low health literacy is associated with adverse health outcomes and poorer use of health care services, including:<sup>3</sup>
  - More hospitalizations;
  - Greater use of emergency care;
  - Diminished management of chronic conditions;
  - Lower receipt of screenings and influenza vaccine;
  - Poorer ability to demonstrate taking medications appropriately;
  - Poorer ability to interpret labels and health messages;
  - Poorer overall health status and higher mortality rates.

# Health Literacy Strongly Correlated to Self-reported Health Status

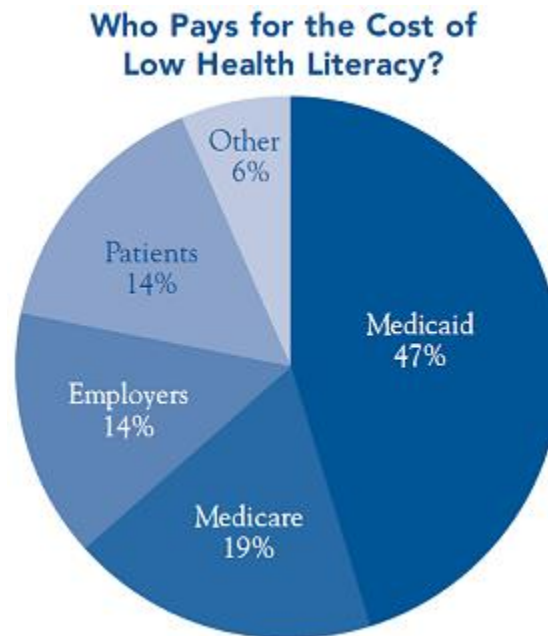
**Fig. 3. Self-assessed health status according to scores on the General Health Literacy Index for the 7780 respondents in the European Health Literacy Survey**



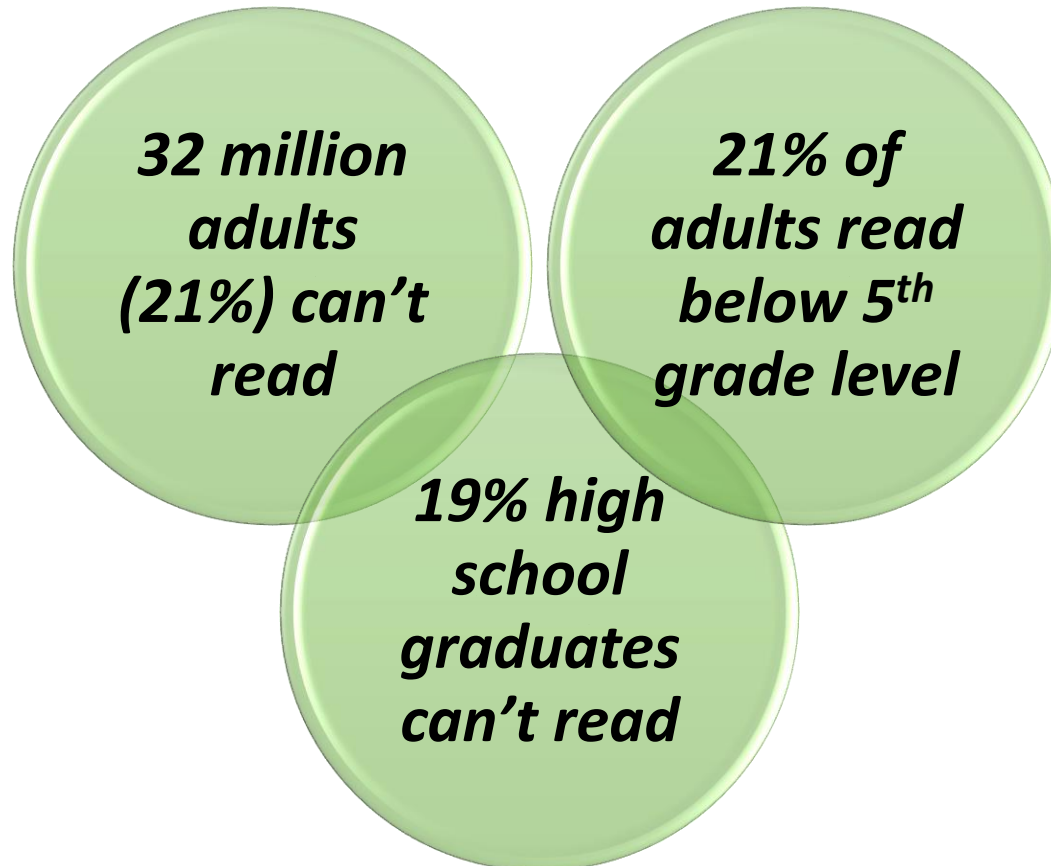
Source: adapted from: *Comparative report on health literacy in eight EU member states. The European Health Literacy Project 2009–2012.* Maastricht, HLS-EU Consortium, 2012 (<http://www.health-literacy.eu>, accessed 15 May 2013).

# Economic Implications

- Cost of low health literacy to the U.S. economy estimated at \$612 billion in 2015 inflation adjusted dollars.<sup>1</sup>
  - Represents 7-17% of all personal healthcare expenditures.



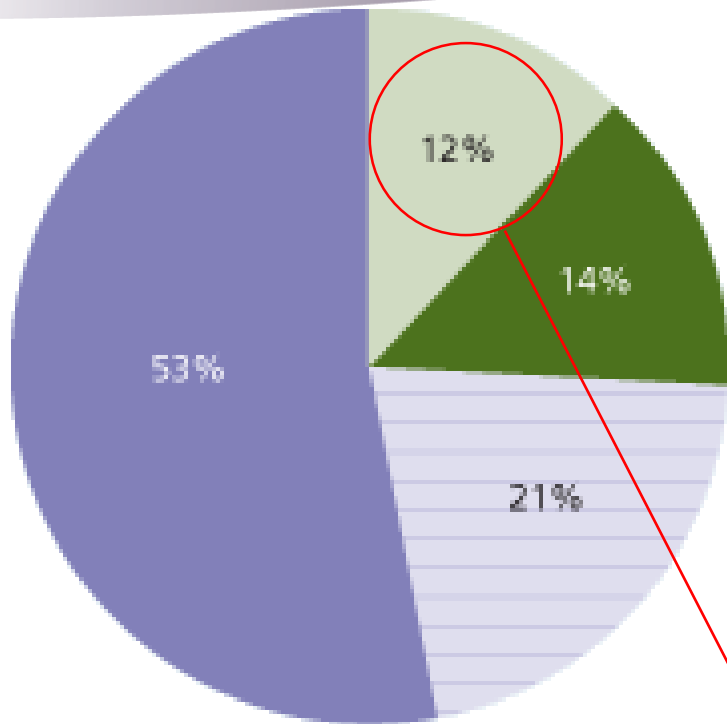
# Health Literacy Awareness: The Statistics



90 million have basic/below basic health literacy!<sup>1</sup>



# Health Literacy Awareness: The Statistics



Only 12% proficient!

**BELOW BASIC:** Circle the date of a medical appointment on a hospital appointment slip.

**BASIC:** Give two reasons a person should be tested for a specific disease, based on information in a clearly written pamphlet.

**INTERMEDIATE:** Determine what time a person can take a prescription medication, based on information on the drug label that relates the timing of medication to eating.

**PROFICIENT:** Calculate an employee's share of health insurance costs for a year, using a table.

# Health Literacy Awareness

## Vulnerable Populations:

Older Adults

Low Income Levels

Less than High School or GED degree

Racial and Ethnic Minority  
Populations

Limited English Proficiency

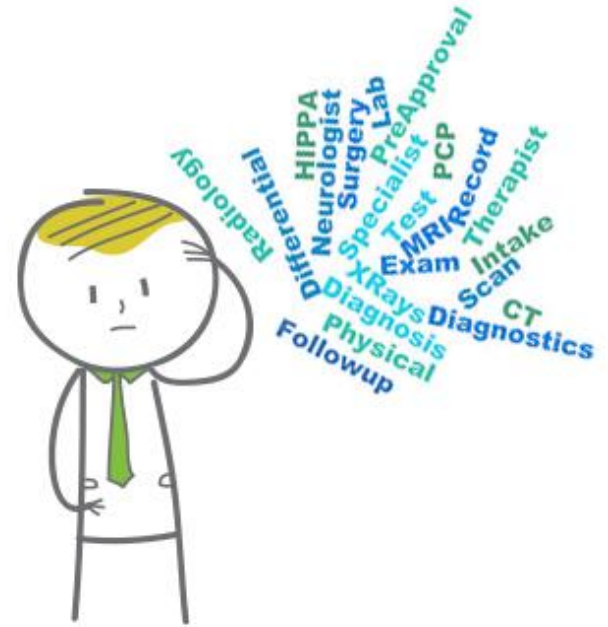
# Health Literacy: A Public Health Problem

- **All people have the right to health information that helps them make informed decisions.**
- **Health services should be delivered in ways that are easy to understand and that improve health, longevity, and quality of life.**
- Several major reports, have identified the nation's limited level of health literacy as a serious and escalating public health issue.<sup>1-6</sup>
  - *The Affordable Care Act* includes provisions to help people obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services.<sup>7</sup>
  - *The UN* recognizes the significant impact on health outcomes & called for development of appropriate action plans.<sup>8</sup>
  - *Healthy People 2020* includes a national action plan to improve health literacy including measurable objectives.<sup>9</sup>

# Health Literacy Awareness

Your Experience:

**What percent of your patients struggle with Low Health Literacy?**





# Health Care Team Strategies

# Health Literacy Awareness: 'Universal Precautions'

- Structure the delivery of care as if everyone may have limited health literacy
  - You cannot tell by looking
  - Higher literacy skills  $\neq$  understanding
  - Anxiety can reduce ability to manage health information
  - Everyone benefits from clear communications

# Health Care Team Strategies: Five Tactics

- Identify Patients
- Communicate Clearly and Effectively
- Use Patient-Friendly Materials
- Check for Comprehension
- Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity



# Identify Patients: Observe Behaviors

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**Makes excuses** when it comes to reading or filling out a form

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**Misses appointments**

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Becomes very **quiet or angry** for little apparent reason

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Doesn't seem to be able to **take medications as prescribed**

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**Only comes in when really ill or comes in often**

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**Doesn't ask questions**

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Unable to name **medications or reasons** for taking them

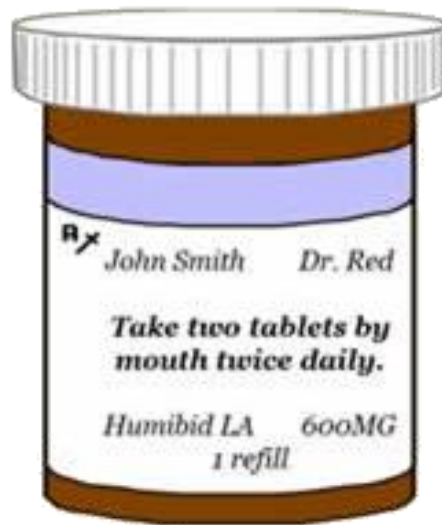
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# Identify Patients: Observe Responses

How many pills would you take in one day?

What time would you take your pills?



# Identify Patients: Observe Behaviors & Responses

Would you like me to help  
you fill out this form?



# Communicate Clearly & Effectively: Verbal Communication



# Communicate Clearly & Effectively:

## What was different?

? *She showed you what to do*

? *Repeated*

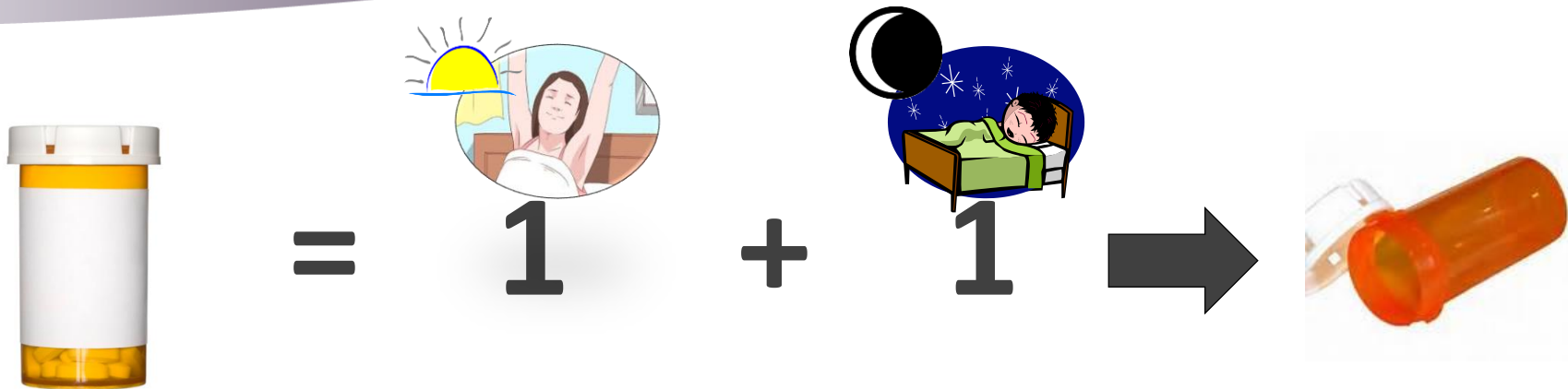
? *Empathetic*















? *Used fewer words*

? *Spoke slower*

# Communicate Clearly & Effectively:

## Pictures and Visual Aids



January 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	 	 	 	 	 	 
 						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

# Use Patient Friendly Materials: Plain Language

INSTEAD OF

Anticipate



Expect

Discontinue



Stop

In the event of



If

Terminate



End

Edema



Swelling

Hypertension



High blood  
pressure

TRY SAYING



# Use Patient Friendly Materials: Plain Language

## Flesch–Kincaid readability test (ex., Microsoft Word)

Score	School Level	Notes
100.00-90.00	5th grade	Very easy to read. Easily understood by an average 11-year-old student.
90.0–80.0	6th grade	Easy to read. Conversational English for consumers.
80.0–70.0	7th grade	Fairly easy to read.
70.0–60.0	8th & 9th grade	Plain English. Easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students.
60.0–50.0	10th to 12th grade	Fairly difficult to read.
50.0–30.0	College	Difficult to read.
30.0–0.0	College Graduate	Very difficult to read. Best understood by university graduates.

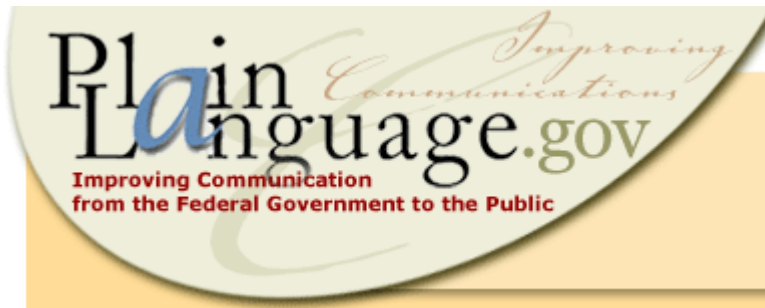


# Use Patient Friendly Materials: Plain Language

## Before

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activity on most days, preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, calisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sports exercise, and dancing.

19.3 % College Graduate



## After

Do at least 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking, most days of the week.

78.8 % Seventh Grade





# Check for Comprehension:

## Communication is two-way



# Check For Comprehension:

## Teach Back

A way to make sure you—the health care provider—explained information clearly; it is not a test or quiz of patients.

**Do not simply ask, “Do you understand?”**

- Ask the patient to repeat what you’ve told them: “I know I talk kind of quickly... I just want to make sure I clearly explained this to you...”
- Ask the patient what they’re going to tell their spouse, friend, etc., when they go home
- Ask the patient to show you with a calendar how they are going to take their medicine or when they need to set up the next appointment
- Teach your patients the Ask Me 3 questions.



# Ask Me 3

1. What is my main problem?

2. What do I need to do?

3. Why is it important for me to do this?



# Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity: Generalizing vs Stereotyping



# Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity: Generalizing vs Stereotyping



**Knowledge of cultural customs can help avoid misunderstanding and enable you to provide better care**

- Involve family in medical decisions or prefer that families, rather than the patient, hears bad news
- Prefer working with only males or females
- Not make eye contact or shake your hand
- Eat at different times during the day
- Prefer to be called by a formal name
- Rely on the advice of a healer or herbalist



# Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity: Life Experiences

**Be sensitive to feelings of insecurity  
& frustration which can interfere  
with the patients health care.<sup>1-3</sup>**

Sometimes I inspire  
my patients; more  
often they inspire me

**Remember, your  
patients have a  
wealth of life  
experience.  
They're used to  
making decisions.**



# Kleinman's 8 Questions

1. What do you call the problem?
2. What do you think has caused the problem?
3. Why do you think it started when it did?
4. What do you think the sickness does? How does it work?
5. How severe is the sickness? Will it have a long or a short course?
6. What kind of treatment do you think you/the patient should receive?
7. What are the chief problems the sickness has caused?
8. What do you fear most about the sickness?"



# Review

**Name two ways to identify patients who may need extra support?**

- ✓ Observe behaviors and responses; prescription bottle; ask

**Give an example of clear communication.**

- ✓ Gestures, pictures, objects, fewer words, repeat

**What is patient friendly language?**

- ✓ Plain language for medical terms and other words

**How can you ensure your patients understand your teaching or instruction?**

- ✓ Don't ask, "Do you understand?" (Try, "I need to be sure I made myself clear... Could you repeat....?")

**What is the difference between generalization and stereotyping?**

- ✓ Don't assume, be non-judgmental, adaptable, empathetic.







# HEAL Classes & Referrals

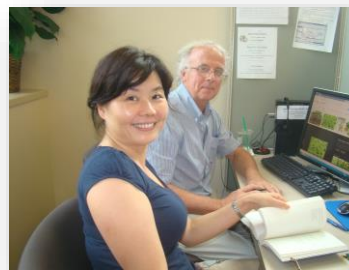
# HEAL Classes & Referrals: Literacy for Life

Independent non-profit located in the  
William and Mary School of Education

Individualized one-on-one tutoring  
and classroom instruction

## Adult instruction

- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Health Literacy
- English as a Second Language (ESL)

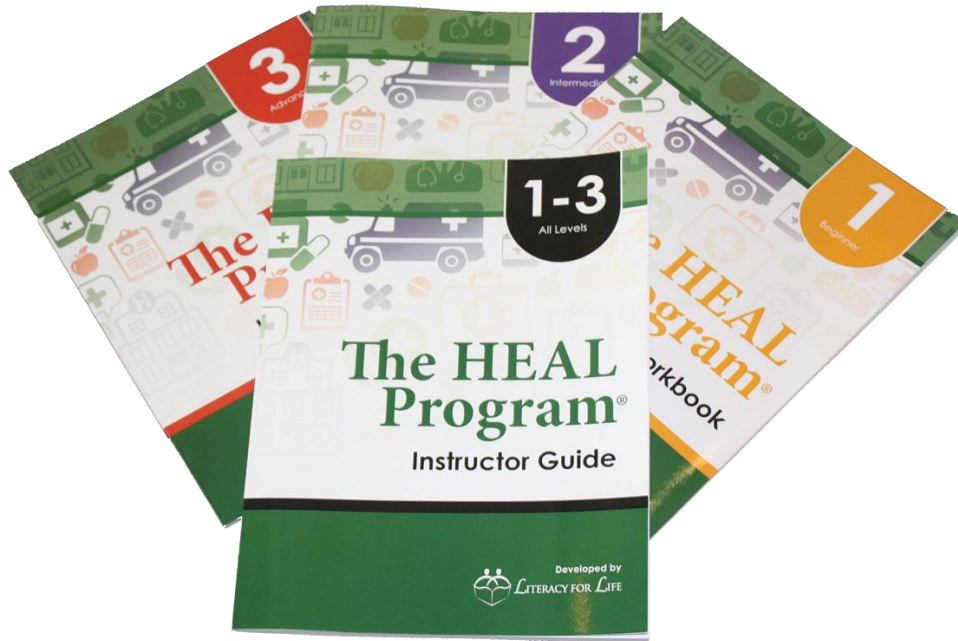


# HEAL Classes & Referrals: Content

FREE

**8 SESSIONS**

**Healthy Eating • Medicine  
Emergencies • Appointments  
Talking to the Doctor  
It's My Health**



## **Students learn to:**

- Describe symptoms to doctors
- Read and understand prescription labels
- Know when to use Urgent Care instead of ER
- Understand basic medical forms
- Ask questions to better understand directives
- Identify lifestyle changes to improve health
- Ask Me 3 <sup>TM</sup>



# What Are We Doing Locally?

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Utilizing the HEAL curriculum program, we are teaching basic health literacy skills at 2 low resource clinics over 8 group sessions.

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The curriculum is/will be delivered to ~50 clinic students (patients) at Bread of Healing and Repairers of the Breach clinics.

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Participants complete pre-and post-surveys assessing confidence of knowledge of the session topics.

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Raise awareness of health literacy among health professionals by providing education to the clinics' staff, Marquette PA students, nursing students and community clinicians.

Bread  
of  
healing  
clinic



# Other Resources

- [Wisconsin Health Literacy](#)
- [CDC Health Literacy](#)
- [Healthy People 2020 National Snapshot](#)