



Creating an Evidence-Based Health Literacy Training Program for Seniors

Workshop I: Health Literacy: Communicating with your Healthcare Provider
Workshop II: Finding Reliable and Accurate Health Information on the Internet

Objective

- To develop an evidence-based health literacy workshop program for older adults

Background/Need

- Limited health literacy in seniors has been associated with a 2-fold risk of death (Sudore, J Gen Intern Med, 2006)
- Seniors have lower health literacy levels than all other age groups (U.S. Department of Education, The Health Literacy of America's Adults, 2006)
- Seniors make up 13% of the population, but 36% of all hospital stays (Elixhauser, Hospitalization in the United States, 1997)

Methods

Needs Assessment

- Focus groups; Questions on health information use and communicating with providers; 2 sessions, 11 participants

Workshop (Intervention) Assessment

- Pre- and post-tests; Questions on workshop content; 12 workshops offered (6 of each), 52 participants/33 individuals

Outcomes Evaluation

- Survey (planned as focus group); Questions on quality/value of workshop content/format; 33 distributed, 31 delivered, 17 returned; 55% response rate

Findings

Needs Assessment

- All see providers regularly
- Main concerns include staying informed, drugs, healthcare costs, access to personal health information and others' ability to self-advocate
- Main information sources are providers, information sheets and Internet resources

Workshop (Intervention) Assessment

- Multiple-choice tests too time consuming
- Results showed increases on every post-test measure
- Participants indicated they know what questions to ask and will ask questions until they understand
- Participants reported increased comfort in finding and evaluating online health information

Outcomes Evaluation

- No focus group response; high survey response rate
- More or same amount of information requested for each workshop
- Both workshops would be recommended to friends
- Several workshop tools used
- Participants more empowered to ask questions and more successful in finding online health information

Outcomes/Actions

- Revised workshop content to include drug information
- Revised pre- and post-tests to Likert-scale format with added questions on content, format, and delivery
- Changed outcomes evaluation from focus group to survey
- Removed redundant and unused content
- Formatted workshop presentations and supporting materials to increase readability and visual appeal
- Created program guide that includes lessons learned from evaluation findings and program implementation

Impact

- Creation of a model health literacy workshop program for older adults that shows positive outcomes on key indicators for improved health literacy
- Workshop and evaluation materials freely available online at <http://www.healthliteracymn.org/>
- Materials can be customized to meet audience needs
- Program promoted through professional conferences (7), newsletter articles (2), website announcements, directed email, and celebratory launch event

"I found the workshops most interesting and helpful. [I] have incorporated some of the ideas ... during ... visits to my medical facility. The computer sessions had lots of good sources which I have also used. All in all a very worth-while experience. Thank You"
--Workshop Participant

Participants report feeling *more empowered* to ask questions and *more successful* in finding online health information