

HEALTH LITERACY

**Kansas Center for Cultural Competency Advancement
KU School of Nursing Senior Students, Fall, 2017**

WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY?

“The degree to which individuals can obtain, process, and understand the basic health information and services they need to make appropriate health decisions” (AHRQ, 2011 p.1)

HOW DOES HEALTH LITERACY IMPACT PATIENTS?

Low health literacy has been linked to:

- Poorer health status
 - Increased hospitalization rates
 - Non-adherence to medications
 - Poor diabetes management
 - More chronic health conditions
- (Jacobs, Lou, Ownby, & Caballero, 2014)

HEALTH LITERACY IN KANSAS:

About half of the population in the state of Kansas has literacy levels at or below basic, including urban, rural, and frontier counties (National Health Literacy Mapping to Inform Healthcare Policy, 2014).

HOW CAN NURSES IMPACT HEALTH LITERACY?

Gain an understanding of how health literacy affects the way people act on their health (Batterham, Hawkins, Collins, Buchbinder, & Osborne, 2016)

Understand the health literacy levels and learn strategies to address these levels such as:

- Proper patient education
- Demonstration
- Teach-back method



LEVELS OF HEALTH LITERACY

Below Basic:

Able to locate information in simple text, but struggle with information in more complex documents e.g., the time of their next clinic visit from an appointment slip (National Health Literacy Mapping to Inform Healthcare Policy, 2014).

Basic:

Able to locate multiple pieces of information in a document, but difficulty interpreting this information e.g., determining whether their body mass index is in a healthy range (National Health Literacy Mapping to Inform Healthcare Policy, 2014)

Intermediate:

Can understand and apply medical information to their specific health context, but difficulty navigating multiple complex texts (e.g., consent forms or health insurance documents) (National Health Literacy Mapping to Inform Healthcare Policy, 2014)

Proficient:

Able to use a table to calculate an employee's share of health insurance costs (National Health Literacy Mapping to Inform Healthcare Policy, 2014).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This link contains free continuing education regarding health literacy for healthcare professionals:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/gettraining.html>

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