Am I Making Myself Clear?
Integrating Health Literacy into Athletic Training

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Disclosures

• I have no conflicts to disclose
Learning Objectives

• Define health literacy
• Identify written and verbal concepts and strategies of health literacy
• Identify areas of athletic training in which to apply health literacy concepts
• Apply health literacy concepts to domains of athletic training, including health promotion, patient education, and therapeutic rehabilitation
Defining health literacy

• “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to **obtain**, **process**, and **understand** basic health information and services needed to **make appropriate health decisions**” (Institute of Medicine)

• “a **shared responsibility** between patients (or anyone on the receiving end of health communication) and providers (or anyone on the giving end of health communication). **Both must communicate in ways the other can understand.**” (Osborne, 2018)
Importance of health literacy

• Healthcare Systems perspective
• Approximately **9/10 adults** have some health literacy limitations

**Universal Precautions of Health Literacy**
• Approach every patient as if they have low health literacy
• Example: BBP – treat all blood & fluids as if they’re infected
Importance of health literacy

- Applying health literacy = patient compliance, patient experience, patient safety
  - “By focusing on health literacy issues and working together, we can improve the accessibility, quality, and safety of health care; reduce costs; and improve the health and quality of life of millions of people in the US.” (National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy, 2010)

- Triple Aim of Healthcare
Importance of health literacy

• Providers/Organizations still need emphasis on health literacy training
  • Providers may overestimate their health literacy skills
  • Gap in the literature on health literacy in AT, specifically
• Include in health professions curricula
  • Included in 2020 CAATE educational standards
    • Standard 57: Identify health care delivery strategies that account for health literacy and a variety of social determinants of health.
      • Social determinants of health – health & health care
Health Literacy in Athletic Training

• Related to AT practice domains/task (PA7)
  • Domain 1: Injury & Illness Prevention and Wellness Promotion
  • Domain 2: Examination, Assessment & Diagnosis
  • Domain 4: Therapeutic Intervention
    • “To provide assurance of patient understanding and follow through…”
    • “AT communicates with the patient....that is easy to understand at the age maturity, cognitive and psychological level of the individual receiving information”
  • Domain 5: Healthcare Administration & Professional Responsibility
Applying Health Literacy in Athletic Training

- Clinician interview
- Treatment Planning & Patient Education
  - Shared decision-making
  - Compliance
  - Dr. Google – where are patients getting information?
- Patient advocacy/liaison
- Administration and documentation
Health Literacy Principles

• Written
• Verbal
• Examples:
  • Plain language
  • Plain numbers & numeracy
  • Culture & Patient-Centered
  • Universal Design
Health Literacy Principles

• Plain language
  • “living room” language or colloquial terms
  • Avoiding
    • Medical jargon or terminology; also legal terms
    • Abbreviations, shorthand, acronyms
    • Homonyms
    • Idioms or slang
    • “Simple” words or subjective terms
      • Example: Home care plans - names for exercises
        • Include photos, descriptions
Health Literacy Principles

• Plain language
  • The Plain Language Medical Dictionary from the University of Michigan (https://apps.lib.umich.edu/medical-dictionary/)
    • Cholesterol = “A kind of fat in your blood. Some cholesterol is useful in your body. Too much can lead to diseases such as hardening of your arteries (atherosclerosis) or coronary artery disease.”
    • Seizure = “Uncontrolled movements caused by unusual activity in your brain.”
  • let’s give them specific examples that we might want to know about or explain why we want to know
    • Viral infection... (ex: myocarditis; or COVID-19!)
    • Stinger or burner...numbness/tingling in your arm/hand that resolves

9. Have you ever passed out during or after exercise?  
10. Have you ever been dizzy during or after exercise?  
11. Have you ever had chest pain during or after exercise?  
12. Do you get tired more quickly than your friends do during exercise?  
13. Have you ever had racing of your heart or skipped heartbeat?  
14. Have you had high blood pressure or high cholesterol?  
15. Have you ever been told you have a heart murmur?  
16. Has any family member or relative died of heart problems or of sudden death, before age 50?  
17. Have you had a severe viral infection?  
18. Has a physician ever denied or restricted your participation in sports for any heart problems?  
19. Do you have any current skin problems (for example itching, rashes, acne, warts, fungus or blisters)?  
20. Have you ever had a head injury or concussion?  
21. Have you ever been knocked out, become unconscious, or lost your memory?  
22. Have you ever had a seizure?  
23. Do you have frequent or severe headaches?  
24. Have you ever had numbness or tingling in your arms, hands or feet?  
25. Have you ever had a stinger, burner or pinched nerve?
Health Literacy Principles

• Cultural competence & Social Determinants of Health
  • Ask/include the patient
  • Shared-decision making
  • Prepare/Integrate additional services
    • Interpreters (verbal)
    • Translation (written)
Health Literacy Principles

• Plain numbers/numeracy
• Several ways we “use” numbers
  • Basic, computational, analytical, statistical
Example: which is easier to understand?
• 12% of adults in the US have the needed health literacy skills; or...
• 9 out of 10 people will experience difficulty
  • 1 out of 10 people will fully understand health information...

People don't have a strong intuitive sense of how much bigger 1 billion is than 1 million. 1 million seconds is about 11 days. 1 billion seconds is about 31.5 years.
Health Literacy Principles

• Plain numbers/numeracy
  Example: reading labels
  (Mohan, Riley, Boyington, Kripalani, 2003)

• Prescription labels
  (Mohan, Riley, Boyington, Kripalani, 2003)

• Example 2: Food label (Mackert & Pasch, 2013)
  • New Vital Sign (NVS)
Health Literacy Principles

• Universal Design
• Font
• Contrast
• Identifiable visuals
• Plain language & numbers!

https://www.nata.org/blog/jordan-grantham/free-injury-infographics-available
An Athletic Training scenario...

A patient who misses an appointment (e.g. evaluation, rehab or treatment) or they're late...

• Is it because they don't care?
• Are they are prioritizing other activities?
• Typical for their age?
• ...these might be plausible reasons...but maybe we're missing something!
  • Do they understand their condition & treatment plan?
  • Can they (accurately) remember what you told them?
  • Are our expectations realistic or shared by the patient?
  • Any cultural differences we needed to consider?
Tools for implementing Health Literacy in AT


• "Need-to-know & Need-to-do" focus
• Using visuals
  • Ex: Have blank anatomy photos to draw on
• Providing reliable sources
• Teach-Back Method
• Ask Me Three

Primary Care Health Literacy Assessment*
Please select one answer that most accurately describes your practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing Well</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Not Doing</th>
<th>Not Sure or N/A</th>
<th>Tools to Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our practice is doing this well</td>
<td>Our practice is doing this, but could do it better</td>
<td>Our practice is not doing this</td>
<td>I don’t know the answer to this question OR This is not applicable to our practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Prepare for Practice Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Our health literacy team meets regularly.</th>
<th>Doing Well</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Not Doing</th>
<th>Not Sure or N/A</th>
<th>Tools to Help</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-Create a Health Literacy Improvement Plan</td>
<td>1-Form Team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Our practice regularly re-assesses our health literacy environment and updates our health literacy improvement goals.

3. Our practice has a written Health Literacy Improvement Plan and collects data to see if objectives are being met.

4. All staff members have received health literacy education.

5. All levels of practice staff have agreed to support changes to make it easier for patients to navigate, understand, and use health information and services.

6. All staff members understand that limited health literacy is common and can affect all individuals at one time or another.

7. Our Health Literacy Team understands how to implement and test changes designed to improve performance.
Tools for implementing Health Literacy in AT

- Avoiding Dr. Google!
- Empower...with the right sources
- Provide patients with **reliable** sites and technology!
Tools for implementing Health Literacy in AT

- Teach-Back Method
  - Strategy to check for understanding
  - Provider-driven

Open-ended questions: “I want to make sure I explained that clearly...can you repeat back to me...?” or “Show me how...”

Teach-back of patient: Find opportunities to reinforce correct information and correct inaccuracies or uncertainties

Continue process until satisfied with patient’s understanding

Supplement with written instructions

Finish with: “What questions do you have for me?”
Tools for implementing Health Literacy in AT

• Ask Me Three®
  • Developed & trademarked by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)
  • Patient-driven
1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?
Teach-back moment!

• So, what have we learned about health literacy?!
  • “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”
• Universal Precautions approach
  • 9 out of 10 patients will experience difficulty with health literacy
• Apply strategies across domains of athletic training, from our clinical evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation, and administration.
• There are many easy-to-use strategies and tools available
  • Bookmark the Plain Language Dictionary
  • Design educational/written materials
  • Review forms for language and accessibility
  • Implement the teach-back method
  • Adopt a shared decision-making approach
References

* * links to resources & tools


Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education. Standards for the Accreditation of Professional Athletic Training Degree Programs. Austin, TX: Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education, 2013.


References

* links to resources & tools


Thank you!

• What questions do you have for me?

• I look forward to Q&A!

• Or feel free to reach out via e-mail at meredith.madden@maine.edu