

INNOVATIVE TEACHING ACTIVITY

Assessing Organizational Health Literacy

Overview and Instructor Notes

I. Introduction

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an opportunity to assess a health care or public health organization's degree of health literacy. Organizational health literacy is the extent to which an organization enables their patients to obtain, access, understand, and make decisions based on health information. Health literacy is a strong indicator of positive health outcomes in maternal and child health.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this teaching activity is to equip students with a better understanding of health literacy and how it is impacted by the structure and function of health care organizations. The assignment portion gives students an opportunity to evaluate a health care or public health organization's degree of health literacy. Assessments and observations from this assignment will equip students with insights into how maternal and child health organizations can improve their health literacy, thereby delivering higher quality care and services.

III. Learning Objectives & MCH Competencies

Upon completing this project, students will:

- Describe the importance of health literacy in maternal and child health
- Recognize the role that health care organizations play in health literacy
- Identify the attributes of a health literate organization
- Gain experience evaluating a maternal and child health care organization's health literacy
- Develop an assessment of a local maternal and child health organization's health literacy

Maternal and Child Health Leadership Competencies:

- Self: Ethics and Professionalism, Critical Thinking
- Others: Communication, Cultural Competency

- Wider Community: Working with Communities and Systems

IV. Materials and Resources

- **Power Point Presentation** (with instructor notes)
 - Includes a short introduction to MCH systems; an introduction of health literacy and organizational health literacy; a description of the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 10 Attributes of a Health Literate Health Care Organization; questions regarding practical applications of the attributes in different organizational settings; and an overview of the assignment
- **Suggested Assigned Reading**
 - The IOM's Ten Attributes of a Health Literate Health Care Organization
- **Assignment Instructions & Grading Rubric**
 - Includes interview questions, worksheets, and a grading rubric
- **Sample Assessment of Organizational Health Literacy**
 - Provides an example of a completed report

V. Procedure

Instructor Responsibilities:

- Provide clear instructions for conducting the organizational health literacy evaluation
- Provide a list of local health organizations that could be selected for evaluation
- Provide an example of a completed assessment report (optional)
- Review and approve the maternal and child health organization to be evaluated
- Discuss the importance of conducting the evaluation and interview with respect and professionalism
- Determine whether this will be a group or individual assignment

Student Responsibilities:

- Identify a health care organization or public health organization that provides direct services in maternal and child health
- Select five of the IOM's 10 Attributes of a Health Literate Health Care Organization

- Conduct preliminary research on the organization
- Contact the organization and arrange a brief interview with a key informant
- Visit the organization and use the selected attributes to assess the degree of the organization's health literacy
- Interview a staff member regarding health literacy practices
- Submit a report that describes and analyzes the health care organization's health literacy
- Present the report to the class

VI. Assessment

A grading rubric is included in this assignment toolkit.

VII. Instructor Reflection

It is suggested that instructors reflect on the execution of the lesson and assignment in order to improve the course quality.