

Understanding Personal Health Literacy



What is Health Literacy?

Personal Health Literacy is the degree to which individuals can find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others. ^[1]

What does Personal Health Literacy look like?

Personal Health Literacy is apparent when one takes charge of their health by practicing a lifestyle reflective of positive health behaviors including daily physical activity, proper nutrition, and attention to one's emotional/social/mental health. Additionally, understanding prescription drug instructions, understanding doctor's directions and consent forms and the ability to navigate the complex health care system are pre-requisites to personal health literacy.

Health Literacy Life Cycle

Who?



Where?



Development of Personal Health Literacy

Personal Health Literacy is developed gradually through a variety of educational opportunities and individual experiences. The nature of these opportunities will change across the lifespan.



The Person with Personal Health Literacy:

- Knows how to find health information and health services.
- Has the ability to understand this information to make health-related decisions.
- Applies this information by making well informed health-related decisions related to self and others.

Inclusion in Personal Health Literacy

People with disabilities experience health disparities of delayed care, lower likelihood of preventative care, and higher incidence of tobacco use, obesity, and high blood pressure at a higher rate than their peers. [2] The promotion of inclusion in healthcare settings removes barriers and improves the individual's ability to make informed health-outcome decisions to reduce health disparities and improve quality of life. Health care and health-related information should be specifically designed for individual needs and abilities rather than prescribing generic practices for all individuals.

References

1. [Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion \[ODPHP\], n.d.](#)
2. [Healthy People 2020](#)

