



Health Communication



Information & Reliable Sources



Learning Objectives

1.

1. Analyze influences on health behaviors
2. Articulate strategies of effective health communication
3. Evaluate sources of health information for credibility

Identifying Health Influences

- Think of the people you interact with regularly and the types of interactions you have with them. How you engage with friends, family, teachers, and classmates all have an impact and shape your opinions and views.
- Groups or people outside of your immediate circle can also make an impact. For example: media, music, social networking, content creators/influencers
- For each group, write down the ways each informs or influences you
- **Influence:** *the power to have an effect on a behavior or feeling* (rmc.org)

Identifying Health Influences

Understanding the power of influences is important because:

Someone I look to for trusted information or guidance is:

Identifying Health Influences

Each of these groups of influence has their own social norms that make a behavior seem acceptable or “normal”.

- How has social media influenced your own health behaviors?
- How have your family influenced your own health behaviors?
- How have your friends influenced your own health behaviors?

Identifying Health Influences

Think of health behaviors you have. They can be positive, or strengths based, such as: drinking water instead of soda. They can also be behaviors you could improve, such as: eating less than the recommended amount of vegetables & fruit per day.

How might the influences in your life impact your positive or negative behaviors?

Identifying Health Influences

Where might you go to look for credible information to support your health behaviors?

Are they in your spheres of influence listed previously?

If not, where do you go for information? Why?

How do you know it is trustworthy and accurate?

Health Communications

Health communication can come from a variety of sources: friends, news, radio, articles, doctors, government, etc.

Depending on the source, the information can vary greatly in accuracy.

Understanding the credibility of the source and the motive behind the messaging is an increasing challenge. Following health communication instructions can have life or death consequences.

Health Communications

The job of a health communicator is to take evidence-based information and translate it into something the general public can use to protect their health.

This can include making sure materials are culturally sensitive and appropriate, translated into many languages, made accessible for people with hearing or visually impairments (blind, low-vision, deaf, or hard of hearing).

Health communication is an art that requires scientific skill. Information must be accurate, clear to understand, easily accessible, and timely.

Health Communications

- **Health literacy** is the single best predictor of an individual's health status. It is important to customize health-related education material to the individual patient's level of reading skills. Readability of a given text is the objective measurement of the reading skills one should possess to understand the written material (Badarudeen & Sabharawal, 2010).

Health Communications

- It is recommended that the readability of health education materials given to patients be no higher than a 6th-8th grade reading level. Additional visual aids such as: videos, line drawings, models and charts can be helpful.
- There are many tools used to determine how easy materials are to read.
- One tool is the Flesch Reading Ease score. It scores text between 1-100. A score between 70-80 is like an 8th grade reading level.

Health Communications

This tool looks at:

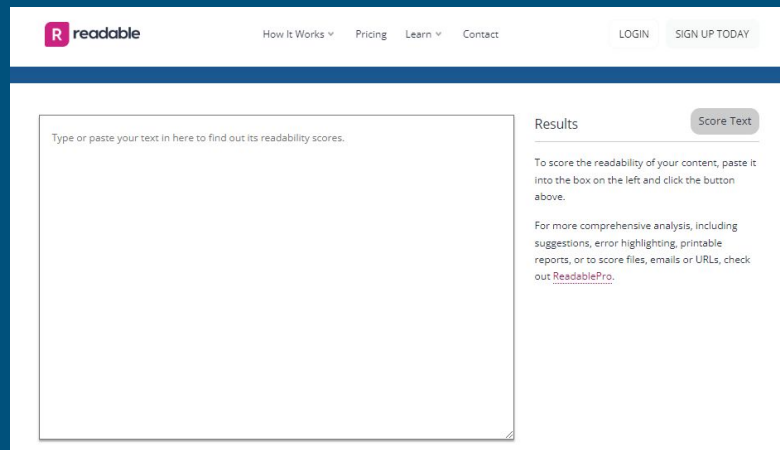
- the length of a sentence (how many words in a sentence)
- the length of words (average number of syllables in a word)

Best Practices

- Health communications should aim to be no harder than 8th grade reading level so that 80% of Americans can understand it.
- Use shorter sentences with words that do not contain a lot of syllables.
- Do not contain jargon, words that only trained professionals can understand

Test a writing sample for readability

- Find a source of health information online. Copy and paste a selection of the text in the box on the readable.com/text website
- Click “Score Text”
- How did it score? Did the writing sample need to be made easier to read?
- How would you change it to be more readable?



The screenshot shows the Readable website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Readable logo, links for 'How It Works', 'Pricing', 'Learn', and 'Contact', and buttons for 'LOGIN' and 'SIGN UP TODAY'. The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left, there is a large text box with the placeholder text 'Type or paste your text in here to find out its readability scores.' On the right, there is a 'Results' section with a 'Score Text' button. Below the button, there is instructional text: 'To score the readability of your content, paste it into the box on the left and click the button above.' and 'For more comprehensive analysis, including suggestions, error highlighting, printable reports, or to score files, emails or URLs, check out [ReadablePro](#).'

Seeking Health Information

Earlier we discussed areas of influence and your own health behaviors.

- Where do you turn to when you need to learn more about a health topic?
- Does it change if it is for you or a loved one versus a school report?
- Who is an “expert” in regards to health information?
- What would raise red flags or concern for you when you come across information online?

Know the Science



Know the Science: The Facts About Health News Stories

Complementary Health Approaches In the News

News stories about complementary approaches to health are often on television, the Internet, and in magazines and newspapers.



In fact, the media is one of our main sources of information when we make decisions about complementary health approaches. While many news reports are reliable, some are missing important information, and some are confusing, conflicting, or misleading.

1 of 12

next >

This online interactive guide can help you make sense of health research and decide if those headlines are too good to be true.

Click through presentation

Can you spot the problem with these headlines?



Check out @justinmice as they point out studies that sound amazing for humans are in fact, only relevant in mice.



Media Activity

Form groups of 2-3 max

Spend ~20 minutes:

- Choose a health topic (i.e. depression, diabetes, anxiety, stroke, etc.) write it down
- Find a credible source of advice- explain why you think it is credible. What are they advising? Is the author credible (how do you know?)
- Find a less credible source-explain why you think the advice is not reliable. Does this information contradict your credible source? What makes this author less trustworthy?

Present Findings

Trustworthy Attributes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Less Trustworthy Attributes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

