Heart Talk:
Teaching Your Patients
Module 4:
Evidence-based Education for Health Care Professionals
Health Literacy and Literacy

- Literacy is the ability to:
  - Read
  - Write
- Health literacy is the ability to:
  - Read
  - Understand
  - Act on health information
Health Literacy and Literacy

- Patients’ health literacy determines their ability to:
  - Read an appointment slip
  - Interpret prescription information
  - Understand recommendations
  - Complete health insurance applications
  - Understand informed consent
Talking with Patients

- Studies have shown that 40-80% of medical information given to patients is immediately forgotten and almost 50% of the information retained is incorrect.
- Patients often do not understand the words that clinicians use such as: echo, lesion, hypertension, etc.
- Patients’ limited ability to read and understand health information translates to poor health outcomes.
Patient Education Key Points

- Use simple words
- Avoid medical jargon
- Introduce 2 or 3 teaching points at a time
- Involve patient, family, significant other in teaching sessions
Patient Education Key Points

- Use 6th grade level as the highest literacy level
- Use pictures to demonstrate
- Use large print
- Use lots of white space along with text/pictures
- Consider standardizing teaching materials throughout the community
Teach-Back Technique

- The teach-back method is very effective with health literacy
- Teach-back explains to the patient what they need to know in a manner that the patient understands
- Patient understanding is confirmed when they explain it back to you
Teach-Back Technique

- “I want to be sure that I explained your medications correctly. Can you tell me how you are going to take this medicine?”
- “We reviewed a lot today about your heart failure, and I want to make sure that I explained things clearly. Let’s review what we discussed. What are three things that will help you manage your heart failure?”
- Do not ask “Do you understand?”
Teach-Back Technique Demonstration
Good Interviewing Techniques

- Listen, don’t judge
- Connect with your patient
  - Understand their unique challenges, motivations and goals
- Give recommendations specific to them
- Remember these are complex patients
Patients Unable to “Teach-Back”

- May have poor compliance with lifestyle recommendations and medications
- Keep trying: Repetition may improve understanding
- Involve family members and significant others
- Frequent and comprehensive outpatient follow-up
Summary

- Use simple language and avoid jargon
- Teach-back technique ensures patient comprehension
- Listen, don’t judge
- Identify patient-specific challenges
For information on the Heart Talk videos, please visit us on our website: www.qualidigm.org or email us at: HeartTalk@qualidigm.org
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