

# Tips for Clear Health Communication

Planning

Content

Writing

**Design**

Tailoring

## Design Easy-to-Read Documents

Good design can help the reader understand the message. A well-designed document is also visually appealing. Follow these tips to create well-designed documents for your readers.



### Tips for Clear Design

- Create white space. Use wide margins and space between paragraphs and columns of text.
- Use titles and headings to organize content. Maintain a clear hierarchy between headings and subheadings.
- Use bulleted lists to break up blocks of similar information. Use numbered lists to guide readers through action steps. Limit lists to 3-7 bullet points or action steps.
- Use check boxes or a question-and-answer format to involve your readers.
- Use a sans serif font (such as ARIAL) for headers and a serif font (such as TIMES) for larger blocks of text.
- Use at least a 12-point font for a general audience and a 14-point font for seniors.
- Use graphics and photos that are relevant to the reader.
- Ensure strict contrast between paper and print colors. Black print on light paper looks the best.

### Common Design Mistakes

1. **Too many styles in one DOCUMENT.** Limit emphasis to your main points so the reader will know what is important.
2. **MULTIPLE STYLES at the same time.** Consider using only bold for emphasis.
3. Too many *fonts* and font sizes. This can clutter the document's appearance. Use no more than 2 font types and 2-3 font sizes.
4. *Italics* or CAPITALS for emphasis. Use **bold** or underline instead.
5. Dense blocks of text. Smaller text blocks are less overwhelming and more easily understood.

### Want more information?

To learn more about document design, materials assessments, or on-site health communication trainings for your staff, please contact **Beccah Rothschild** at [beccah\\_rothschild@berkeley.edu](mailto:beccah_rothschild@berkeley.edu) or (510) 642-0415.