

Tips for Clear Health Communication

Planning

Content

Writing

Design

Tailoring

Planning Easy-to-Read Documents

Creating a document that is easy-to-read and -understand requires patience and planning. This means that you must think about different aspects of your document, from content to design, before you ever sit down to write. Planning will help you consider your document from many perspectives. This will help you create a clear, easy-to-read piece, tailored to your reader.



Tips for Planning

- Identify your audience and research its demographic (e.g., gender, race, age). Tailor your document to a specific audience. For example, you would likely use a more casual tone if writing to teens rather than seniors.
- Decide, based on audience familiarity with your topic, how much detail to include. For example, you need to define terms like “insulin” for someone recently diagnosed with diabetes, whereas someone diagnosed years ago will be more familiar with the term.
- Define your objectives for the document. For example, do you want the reader to fill out and return a particular form? Your objective will serve as a compass throughout the writing process: If an element detracts from your objective, leave it out.
- Think about how you will present information visually. Are you writing a brochure? A form letter? How will you highlight main messages? Think about design and layout techniques, such as headings and bulleted lists. These will help you organize information and highlight main messages.

Questions to Ask When Planning a Document

1. Who is my audience? What are the audience:
 - Demographics?
 - Attitudes about the topic?
 - Beliefs about the topic?
2. How familiar is my audience with the content?
3. What is the main objective of my document?
4. What should this document look like?

Want more information?

To learn more about clear writing, materials assessments, and on-site trainings for your staff, please contact **Beccah Rothschild** at beccah_rothschild@berkeley.edu or (510) 642-0415.