Improving the Health Literacy of a University:

A Collaborative Campus Effort

Matthew Vogelpohl, MEd
University of Louisville
Student Activities Board
Graduate Assistant

Dana Carpenter, MPH
University of Louisville
Health Promotion Office
Program Coordinator Sr.
Objectives

- Define health literacy
- Identify main health literacy issues for students that affect student success
- Describe health literacy initiative strategies
What is Health Literacy?

- The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, understand, communicate and utilize basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions to prevent or treat illness.

(USDHHS Health Resources and Services Administration & Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010)
Health Literacy:

- Involves both the context or setting in which health demands are made and the skills that people bring to that situation.

Health literacy occurs when information and services needed for health are aligned with skills and abilities of those needing them.
Real Life Examples?
Important to note:

Healthy People 2020:

✓ HC/HIT-1 (Developmental) Improve the health literacy of the population
  - HC/HIT-1.1(Developmental) Increase the proportion of persons who report their health care provider always gave them easy-to-understand instructions about what to do to take care of their illness or health condition
  - HC/HIT-1.2(Developmental) Increase the proportion of persons who report their health care provider always asked them to describe how they will follow the instructions
  - HC/HIT-1.3(Developmental) Increase the proportion of persons who report their health care providers’ office always offered help in filling out a form

Healthy Campus 2020:

✓ HC HC/HIT-a (Developmental) Increase proportion of students who report that their health care providers have satisfactory communication skills.
Health Literacy: By Level of Educational Attainment

- **Intermediate** indicates skills necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities.

http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/issuebrief/
So why college students?

- First-year students no longer have people able to assist.
- Students do not necessarily have high health literacy.
- “Teach to the test” approach
- Receiving little health education before college
- High risk taking/Negative health behaviors = poor academic progress
- Health status can be directly linked to level of educational attainment.
- Millennials are more inclined to trust institutions than 2 previous generations.
- Young adult college students are just beginning to make lifelong health care decisions – university ideal for promoting health literacy (SNRS)
The Beginning…

- **August 2010:** University of Louisville’s Campus Medical Services relocated off-campus, separating the Health Promotion and Medical Services.

- **July 2011:** Based on observations and conversations with students, HPO decided to focus on Health Literacy.
Research

Direct contacts:

- NYU - *LiveWell NYU* – Allison Smith
- Health Literacy Missouri
- Helen Osborne, M.Ed., OTR/L, Health Literacy Consulting
- Jennifer Manganello, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor, U. Albany – SUNY School of Public Health
- Brent T. Parton, M.Ed., Program Director, SHOUTAmerica
- Health Literacy Group in the LINCS Community

Literature research:

- Numerous articles
- Dissertation
Focus Groups

- # focus groups conducted
- # of students
- Variety of student populations represented

Questions
- Context
- Skill
- Both
Emergent Themes

- HL Focus Group:
  - Communication
  - Insurance
  - Medication
  - Characteristics of “good” healthcare

- HP Focus Group:
  - Health Is Holistic
  - Health is Hard
  - Connection
In what ways is Health Literacy being addressed on your campus?
Collaborations

- R.S.A/Housing and Resident Life
- Health Literacy Kentucky
- Civic Engagement Leadership & Service
- Office of Admissions
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Student Activities Office
- Health Insurance Advocate
- Undergraduate Affairs
- School Interdisciplinary Grad Studies
- Cultural Center
- International Center
- TRIO Student Support Services

August 2011 to September 2012
Collaborations

- Get Healthy Now
- Greek Life
- Pre-Health Honor Societies
- Student Activities Board
- Health Occupation Students of America
- Parent’s Association
- Counseling Center
- Disability Resource Center
- Manual High School
- Health Literacy Kentucky - Awareness Committee
- School of Public Health
Outcomes

- # of contacts with HL initiative - 5012
- Other
  - 16 tailored presentations
  - Health literate services – Nutrition Navigators, Grocery Store Tours
  - Documents created or revised
  - Major event
Other Outcomes cont.

- Staff modifications
  - 2 new Health Advocate Leader positions specific to Health Literacy

- Recognitions:
  - UofL Outstanding Collaboration Award

- Off-campus presentations:
  - “Whatchu Talkin’ ‘bout, Willis?”
    - SAACURH 2011 at Georgia State University
    - KRACLE 2012 at Eastern Kentucky University
  - “Improving the Health Literacy of a University: A Collaborative Campus Effort”
    - ACPA 2013 in Las Vegas
    - Kentucky Health Literacy Summit
    - ACHA 2013 in Boston
The Game of LIFE

Lessons Important For Everyone!
Game of L.I.F.E.: Lessons Important For Everyone

- **Purpose:** To place students in scenarios that they face everyday and learn about the decisions they are making.

- **Layout:**
  - 7 stations
  - 8 topics
  - 4 scenarios/topic – 2 in, 2 after
  - 3 LIFE tables

- **Score at end**
  - Answers to scenarios
  - “Bonus” life tile points
Game of L.I.F.E.:
Lessons Important For Everyone
Sample scenarios: (in college)

☐ You are a poor college student that has used all of your flex dollars and meal swipes. You still need to eat. What do you do?

A. Fast food for a few meals – it’s cheap (2)
B. Find a friend that still has flex/meal swipes left and use/buy their swipes (3)
C. Learn how to cook so you can eat healthy on a budget (4)
D. Volunteer at the soup kitchen in exchange for meals (1)
Sample scenarios: (after college)

☐ You are a recent college graduate that gained far more weight than you would have liked. You want to lose weight, but do not have a lot of time in your schedule for hours at the gym. How do you go about losing weight by focusing on your nutrition only?

A. Increase veggies and decrease sodas/sweet tea (4)
B. Eat smaller amounts (3)
C. Count Calories (2)
D. Take stimulants or diet pills to that decrease your appetite (1)
Game of L.I.F.E.:

Lessons Important For Everyone

- Sample LIFE tiles
  - “You found full time work” (+4)
  - “You rolled your ankle and cannot run in the mornings for a few days” (-2)

- Answer Data:
  - Question missed most
  - Question answered correctly most
  - How many answered 100%
Game of L.I.F.E.:
Lessons Important For Everyone

Evaluation:

- **On-site**
  - Asked overall enjoyment of the event
  - What they learned
  - What they want to learn more of

- **Post-event**
  - Key with answers to all 32 scenarios sent out
  - Survey about their understanding and increase of knowledge since reading the Key
Future Plans

- Create curriculum for training our Cardinal HeLPERs (Health Literacy Peer Educator and Resource)
- Recruit and train Cardinal HeLPERs
- Create 5, 30-second videos addressing the main issues discovered through focus groups which will be posted on various university websites.
- Create a webinar for incoming students and parents
- Create workshops for specific groups
- Continue to edit documents and create tools
- Pass out wallet cards at athletic events
- Add questions to NCHA
- and more!!!
The burden does not lie solely on the individual health consumer.
A framework for studying adolescent health literacy

Parting Thoughts

- College students are at a crucial stage of development, learning skills that will carry them.
- In addition to career/professional preparation, college graduates need health literacy.
- Schools are essentials in achieving health literacy.
Take Away Questions

- What types of programming would be most effective on your campus?
- Who would you collaborate with?
- Would a program like this be successful with your student body?
Resources


- Health Promotion International


- [http://livewellnyu.com/](http://livewellnyu.com/)


- SNRS

- USDHHS Health Resources and Services Administration & Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010

QUESTIONS OR THOUGHTS?

DLCARP02@LOUISVILLE.EDU
MJVOGE01@LOUISVILLE.EDU