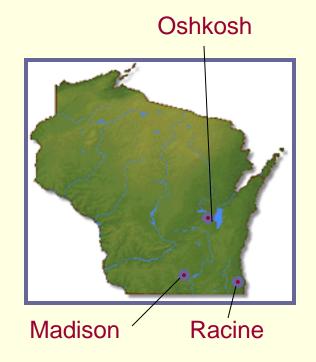
# Working with Literacy Program Students

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# A Focus Group Evaluation of Health Literacy Issues

# Local Literacy Council Recruitment

- Adult Basic Education students (ABE)
- English language learners(ELL)
- 2 groups at each location
- •61 participants



# **Getting Started**

Engaging with literacy programs

State Director identified interested programs

Sent introductory email to local Directors

Sent brief description of project

# **Getting Started**

Phone conversation with local Director

Explained details

Confirmed potential for recruiting enough

appropriate students

# **Encouraging Student Participation**

Participation request from Director or tutor

Tutor can accompany student

Meeting held at literacy program site

Child care available

# **Encouraging Student Participation**

- \$20 incentive
- Bus passes
- Convenient time
  - Late afternoon, early evening
- Healthy dinner served before or after

#### ABE and ELL

- Fewer ABE students available
- Groups conducted in English
  - Multiple native languages
  - Accents made transcription difficult
- Mixing ABE and ELL influenced conversation

# A Focus Group Questions

#### **Questions about:**

- Where to go
- Understanding what to do
- How to stay healthy
- Problems encountered

#### 5 Themes Define Barriers

- Difficulty communicating and understanding verbal and written health information
- 2. Medication errors
- 3. Problems with accessing healthcare
- 4. Hard to read and understand forms
- 5. Low literacy causes anxiety and shame

#### Communication and Understanding

- Providers speak too fast
  - "And then they speed up and speed up."
- Difficult to find right word to explain what is wrong.
  - "When you go to the doctor, you would like to explain how you feel, but sometime you couldn't because you don't have the good words for that."

#### Medication Errors

- Dose and side effects not explained well
  - "I was taking some medicine one time, and I was taking too much... (I got) really sick from it, you know ...all I did was sleep."

## Accessing Healthcare

- The health care system is complex.
  - "Then you ain't going to be able to find healthcare unless you have some kind of interpreter that would guide you in the right direction."

#### Forms and Consent

- Open-ended questions can be difficult
  - "(It would be) easier if they have like questions, not write anything, just have a checkmark on them... words that I could check it off."

#### Forms and Consent

- Some sign consent forms without understanding
  - "I don't understand. I just sign."
  - "You know, it's like, and then it's like you could sign your life away, and you don't even know that you did it."

# **Anxiety and Shame**

#### Shame

- "I feel stupid, really stupid, and I' ve been doing it for years, you know, it's like, you know, it gets . . . after awhile.."
- Male interpreters with female patients
  - "She has to say all her things, her personal things, to the interpreter, and then the interpreter to the doctor. And so she was thinking . . . that was very embarrassing."

## **Anxiety and Shame**

- Disengagement can occur.
  - "Just like from my case, sometimes I can't understand what the person is saying, and I just stop asking."

# Summary

Work with trusted intermediaries

Make it easy to participate

We still have a lot of work to do.

#### **Contact Information**

Power Point file on your flash drive and will be posted on:

www.healthliteracywisconsin.org

www.wren.wisc.edu

or contact:

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Questions?

Comments?

