

Effective Partnerships between Literacy Organizations and Hospitals: Reducing Health Literacy Barriers for All Patients

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Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit

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Can I park here?



What would happen if we sought the perspective of adult learners?

Could literacy organizations and hospitals partner to improve the health literacy environment?

Could we apply concepts of universal design?

Improving the health literacy environment of Wisconsin hospitals – a collaborative model

wisconsin•literacy



Wisconsin
Research &
Education
Network



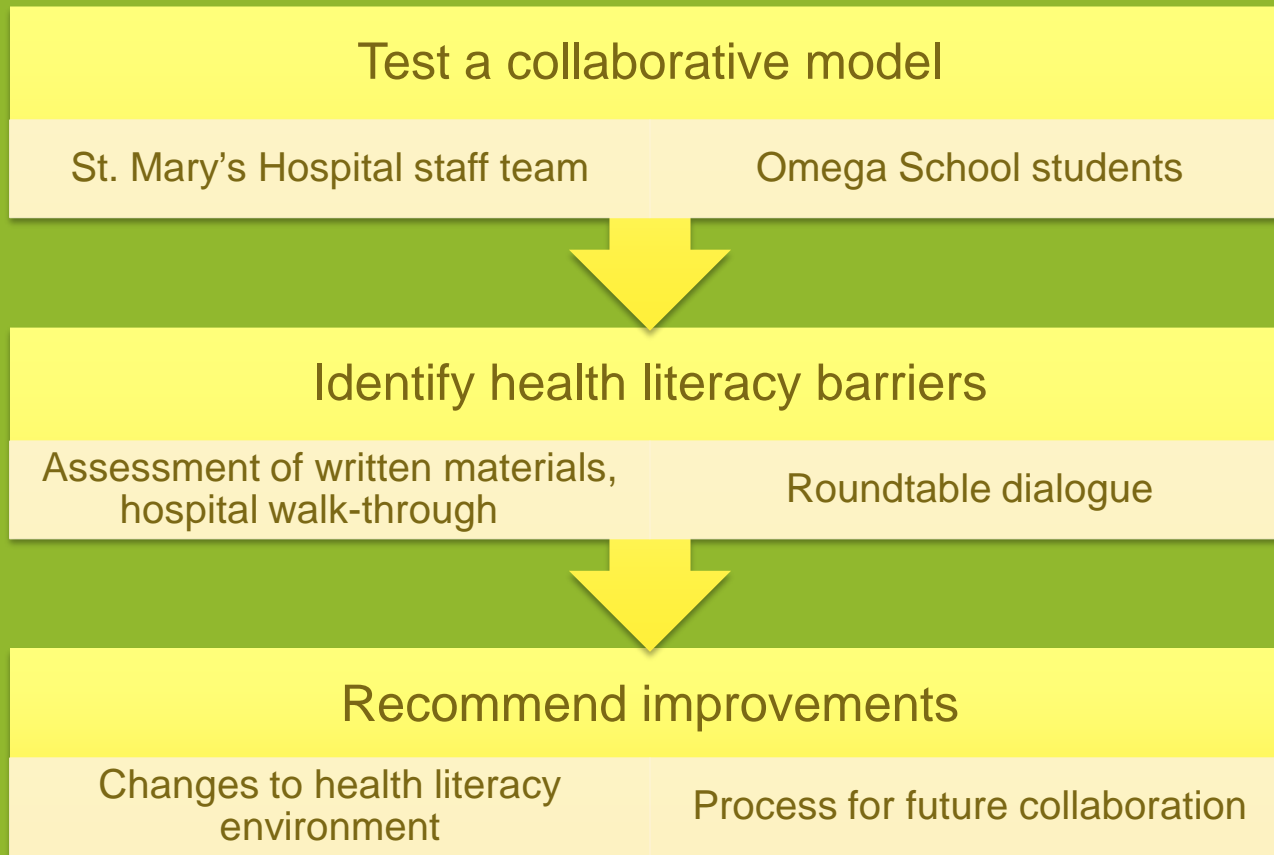
St. Mary's
HOSPITAL



Confident Conversations

Project sponsors and
supporters: AAFP, St.
Mary's Hospital,
MetaStar, WHA

Project goals



Study design

Target population

- Project focus:

St. Mary's Hospital patients
with low literacy or limited
English skills

- Project reach:

Wisconsin hospitals and
their patients
Wisconsin literacy member
programs

Methods

- Common areas of study

- Adaptation of assessment tool

- Internal and external evaluation
teams

- Roundtable dialogue and focus
group feedback

Assessment tool

The Health Literacy

Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers

Partners for Action:

Making Your Healthcare Facility Literacy-Friendly

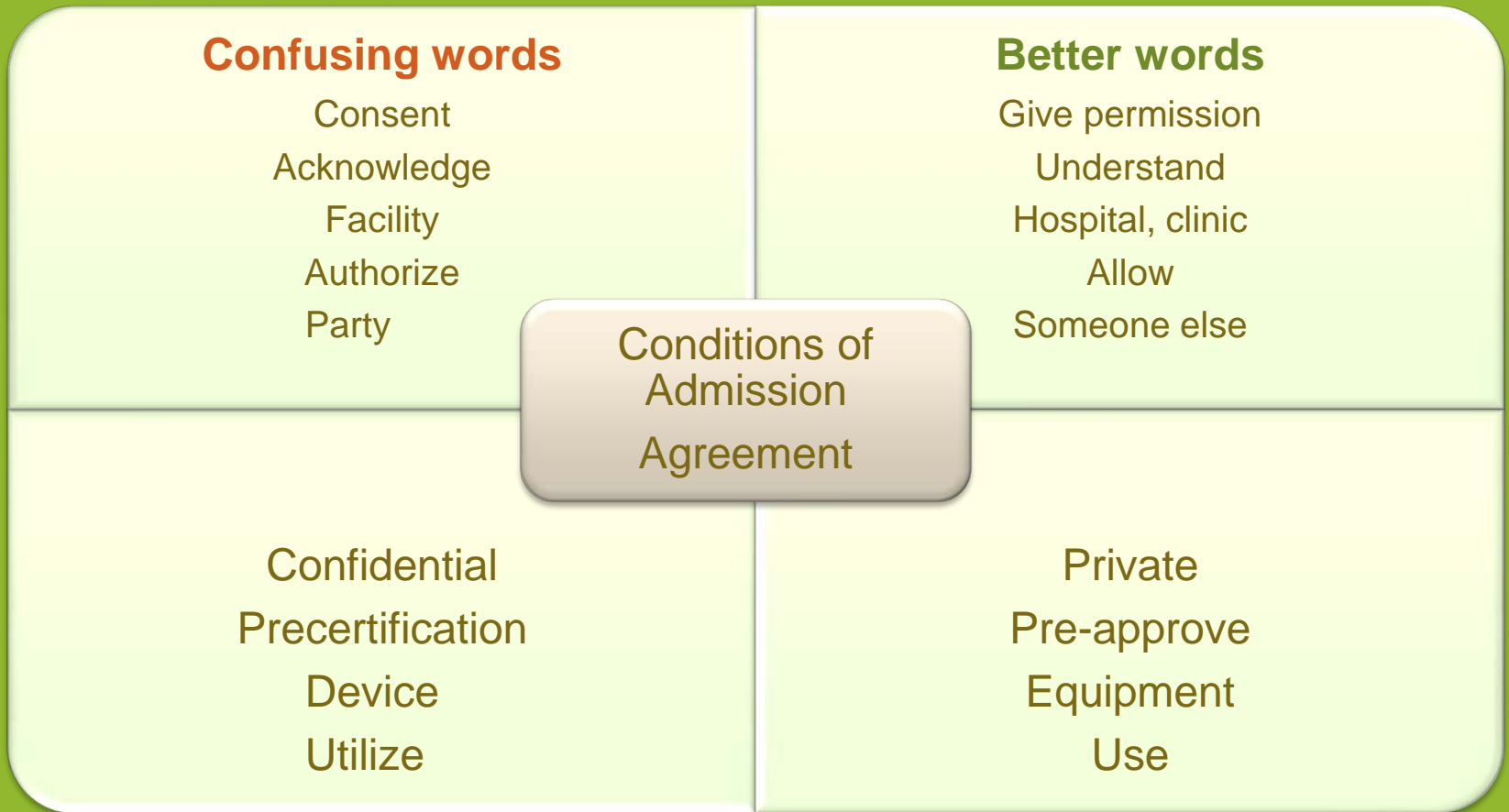
Rima E. Rudd Principal Investigator, Health Literacy Studies

Harvard School of Public Health

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy



When words get in the way



Say what you mean

Advanced directive
Declaration to physician
Pastoral Care

Bioethics Task Team
DPOA
Bioethics Committee
Resource

Legal and Ethical
Decisions

Do not resuscitate
Catastrophic illness

DNR Order
Persistent Vegetative State

Making sense of the maze

- Color coding of signs
- Use of symbols, maps, subway or mall kiosks
- “You are here” signs
- Focus on central elevator system with maps
- Signage inside and outside the elevators
- Clearly delineate staff and patient/staff elevators
- Address branding confusion

Results

St. Mary's Hospital

- unique, unvarnished feedback
- specific recommendations for improvement

Omega School Students

- learned more about the health care system and how to communicate more effectively
- empowered to advocate for themselves

Partnership

- unique forum to describe and explore recurring, systemic issues and to identify potential solutions to benefit all patients
- valuable collaboration

From the hospital's point of view

“The student team and employees unfamiliar with the clinical environment encountered comparable difficulties in the document review and way finding scenarios. St. Mary’s Hospital understands that trust is a foundation of exceptional care, and because of this, we strive to provide a healing environment that is open and inviting to diverse patients from all walks of life...Therein lies the real value of this health literacy project—the experience reinforced for our team the importance of listening to those we serve and seeing things from the patient perspective, and allowed us to examine new ways to build trust with our customers.”

Matt Albert, CQI Director, St. Mary’s Hospital

From the literacy organization's point of view:

Students considered health care as possible profession.

Hospital staff were made aware that there could be many others with reading difficulties that they had not considered.

The GED students gained confidence and spoke more freely once it became clear that the hospital " really wanted to hear what they had to say."

Oscar Mireles, Omega School Executive Director



Continuing the work

How Well Do Your Patients Understand? Improving the Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals

Improving the Health Literacy of Hospitals: A Collaborative Guide for Literacy Organizations

See www.healthliteracywisconsin.org

Questions?

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