

Introduction to Community Health Literature



0:01	This short tutorial introduces you to the concept of writing community health literature and promotional items.
0:09	Professionals working in community health focus on the health needs of people who live in or who are otherwise members of a particular community of people.
0:18	For example, a community health nurse who works at hospital in a large urban setting may develop health outreach programs, conduct health studies, or create health educational literature that addresses a specific health problem among members of a particular subset of people in the urban setting.
0:35	This nurse, for example, may detect a sharp rise in diabetes among members of a particular district in the urban setting or among people from a particular social class and then develop a plan to learn more about the problem and work toward a solution that may be as simple as a brief informative poster displayed in key places within the community or as complex as a formal study followed by a formal findings report with an action plan.
1:01	Other possible communication products might include health education brochures or pamphlets, web-based resources, slide-based presentations, or even multi-media presentations.
1:12	The form and genre of the communication will depend on several factors, including the nature of the identified health problem, the target audience, and the availability of funding to cover development and distribution costs.
1:27	While audience is always an important factor in the creation of any written communication, it's especially important for community health documents.
1:35	You may be writing for a group of low socioeconomic status community members, or you may be writing for decision makers, such as physicians, administrators, grant makers, and so on.
1:46	Get to know your audience as well as you can, and write the community health literature specifically to address their specific needs.
1:55	The content for community health literature varies widely from one situation to another.
2:00	For example, a simple poster advertising a community health promotion class will have different content than would a formal study report containing a full-fledged health improvement action plan.
2:12	Because there is such a variety of genres that community health practitioners have at their disposal, they must begin any project by focusing on the basic rhetorical elements of the situation.

2:23	When you start a new project, ask some basic questions to help determine what kind of document to create for a given purpose and a given audience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What health problem do I need to address? • What would I like to accomplish with this project overall? • What role does this particular document play in the overall project?
2:44	These three questions should help you zero in on a precise sense of purpose for the document you are about to create.
2:51	You need to specify what you want to happen as a consequence of your chosen audience reading the document you produce.
2:58	Commencing your document with a clear sense of its purpose is essential.
3:03	Along with a clear sense of purpose, you must also have precise understanding of who your target audience will be for the document.
3:10	As a community health professional, you should have a deep understanding of the community members you serve, including a clear understanding of their particular health problems, their abilities to cope with their health problems, their ability to effectively use the information you develop for them, and their willingness to work with you to solve their health problems.
3:29	All of these factors and many more should inform the decisions you make when deciding what kind of document you need to create and how best to convey information within that type of document.
3:39	It's also essential to understand the context surrounding your creation of the document.
3:44	How much time and expense can you afford to devote to this project?
3:48	What will the scope of work be given the resources you have available to work on the project?
3:53	Decisions you make about the purpose of your document, the type of document, and the distribution of the document should be tempered by your knowledge of the available financial, time, and personnel resources you'll need to complete the project.
4:08	It's essential that you write in a style that would be easily understood among members of the community you intend to serve with the document.
4:15	Avoid medical jargon and use the active voice whenever possible.
4:19	Additionally, if appropriate for the type of document you plan to create, break up the content into small paragraphs and use appropriate headings to make the document easy to scan.
4:30	Consider the abilities of your audience as well.
4:33	For example, if you plan to address a community of people who have a hard time seeing, you may need to use a larger font.

4:40	If you plan to address a community of people who are not highly educated, you may need to adjust your style and word choice to meet your audience at a level of reading that they are comfortable with.
4:50	Again, this all comes back to having a careful understanding of your audience and their specific needs.
4:58	On this page, you see an example of community health literature.
5:02	Specific formats can vary widely and are often dictated by the organization for which you are writing.
5:08	For example, the CDC produces numerous templates for its community health literature, as do local boards of health, physician practices, and large healthcare systems.
Displayed on screen	Links: Excelsior Online Writing Lab, Download a Transcript, Download a Tip Sheet, with Examples, Audience Awareness, Purpose