



**St Patrick's**  
Mental Health Services  
*Empowering recovery*

# Societal vision for health literacy

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# Health Literacy and Numeracy is Important for everyone

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International research has shown that people who are better informed about their health have more effective consultations with their healthcare provider and are more likely to take their medication correctly (NALA, 2017)

Literacy committee established in St Patricks in 2014

# Developing Quality Standards for a health literacy friendly hospital

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(NALA November 2018)

People who are better informed about their health have better outcomes

NALA aim to improve health literacy and numeracy levels among Irish people to ensure

1. Health providers deliver a literacy friendly service including communicating clearly, and
2. Individuals can get, process and understand information



- 45% of people don't understand the term prognosis
- 39% of Irish people want healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, pharmacists) to use less jargon
- 17% admitted to taking the wrong medication at least once
- Those ages 15-34 years were less likely to ask a doctor, nurse or pharmacist to explain something they don't understand
- Embarrassment was ranked as the main reason for not seeking more information from a healthcare professional (24%)

# Steps to becoming a literacy friendly organisation



5 step process

- Planning
- Literacy Audit
- Action Plans
- Implement Action Plans
- Monitor and Evaluate



# Literacy Audit

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A literacy audit is a **snapshot** of an organisation looking at how it supports literacy issues and removes literacy barriers.

- What we **already do** to support people who have literacy and numeracy needs
- What we **could do better** to support them
- NALA gathered printed information from the hospital and did a walk around SPUH.
- <https://www.nala.ie/healthliteracy>

# Literacy Friendly Workshop

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Introduction to becoming literacy friendly and audit process

- Mapping the public journey
- Policies and procedures
- Communications, including written and verbal communication, navigating the space and using technology such as kiosks
- Staff awareness
- Evaluating and improving
- Action plans and next steps

# NALA Literacy Friendly Workshop -1 day

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## **18 staff members**

- Occupational Therapy
  - Pharmacy
  - Nursing
  - Safety Officer
  - Human Resources
  - Catering
  - Facilities
  - Recreational Activities
  - Administration
  - Social Work
  - Communications
  - Consumer Counsel
  - Information Centre
  - Finance
  - Senior Management
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# NALA Literacy friendly hospital 18 standards

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**Policies and procedures (4)**



**Communications (8)**



**Staff awareness and  
responding sensitively  
(3)**



**Evaluating and  
improving (3)**

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# Audit Results and Actions



# Communication

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Where a service user is sent a letter for an appointment, consider putting the map on the back of the letter

New and updated signage should:

- Use sans serif font such as Verdana or Arial
  - Be consistent – if you call something restaurant on one sign, then stick with it
  - Look at where arrows are placed – maybe put arrows going right at the right of the sign and arrows going left at the left.
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# Communication

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As SPMHS materials and text are reviewed over time, they are being rewritten in plain English using the NALA checklist for documents

The SPMHS Style Guide is under review and will include examples of good practice and templates. The guide will then be promoted to all staff – a short ‘lunch and learn’ on plain English will be given.

SPMHS is promoting and encouraging plain speaking amongst all staff – this links to greater staff awareness and training in literacy and plain English.

# Staff Awareness and Development

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All staff should attend a health literacy awareness session – this could be delivered through eLearning

The Human Resources and Training Department have met with NALA and discussed how to promote and support the development of literacy and numeracy skills of staff

# Staff Awareness and Development

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The complaints process has been reviewed and a new section developed on the website which is literacy friendly and takes account of the literacy requirements to make a written complaint

The 'Comments / Feedback / Suggestions' leaflet has been revised for plain English (language, layout and design)

# Evaluating and Improving

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The Health Literacy Committee reviews the audit, process, action plan and outcomes on a quarterly basis

The literacy committee and senior management encourage staff to engage with literacy friendly practices on an ongoing basis

Staff are required to read and understand the organisation's literacy friendly policy

Standing agenda item at a number of key meetings

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# Challenges to Implementation



# Challenges to Implementation

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- Dumbing down
- Branding
- Buy in from staff
- Mental health medical terminology
- Time



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# What have we done and what we are doing

# Completed- 18 months

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- Clinical/ administration staff training and Lunch & Learn sessions
  - Care plan created
  - HR have met with NALA
  - Leaflets and service user information have been re-written
  - Plain English on initial appointment letters and a map is now included on the back
  - Revised finance related forms
  - Website revised using plain English
  - Shared folder on the intranet containing all literacy friendly information and templates
  - Developed templates for letters and signs (door templates)
  - Revised the comments & complaints form and website section
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# Simplifying Signage



**Before**



**After**



# Currently Working On

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- An e-learning module is being developed
- Re-writing leaflets and service user information-ongoing
- Signage
- Crystal Clear Primary Care Site
- Revising the style guide

# Achievements

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- Crystal Clear Pharmacy Award- 1<sup>st</sup> hospital based pharmacy (April 2018).
- Highly commended in the Healthcare Section of NALA Plain English awards 2019.

# Any Questions?

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Thank You for your  
attention today

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