



## Appendix B

# Implementing Health Literacy in Health Agencies and Institutions

Presented by Gabriel Maldonado

## Functional Health Literacy Interventions

- **Health literacy.** “If I know what it’s called, then I can tell you.” Maldonado stated that agencies should consider whether their materials, on a basic level, are comprehensible by the population for which they were created.
- **Monolingual materials.** “If I can read it, then I can engage with it.” Maldonado emphasized the importance of fully translating all materials into languages besides English.
- **Non-shame-based language, engagement, or policies** (e.g., empathy-driven case management services, protocols, and response plans). When an interaction denies a piece of an individual’s identity or induces shame, Maldonado said, any useful health information that might have been included in the messaging is undermined. Shame can be triggering for clients, he said, and shuts down opportunities for learning.
- **Multichannel communication tools.** “If I can reach you then I feel connected and supported.” Some individuals may have limited access to some communication tools (e.g., Internet access). As such, it is beneficial to communicate health information through multiple media.
- **Integrated behavioral health services.** “Every day my mind needs maintenance and my soul needs healing.” By integrating behavioral health services into care, health agencies can both increase access to this important type of care, and use the opportunity to improve health literacy about the intersections between mental and physical health.
- **Comprehensive prevention and care services.** “If I can go to one place then I can do it all.” By co-locating services, health agencies can both increase access to holistic care and improve health literacy about the connection between prevention and care.

## Interactive Health Literacy Interventions

- **Peer support/navigators.** “If they speak my language and know my story, we can move faster.” Once a community member has reached functional health literacy, they can serve as peer support/navigators and share health information with others. Maldonado stressed the importance of the messengers in building functional health literacy in a community. He noted that having community members as messengers can accelerate an intervention, due to the shared language and cultural context with the intended audience.

## Critical Health Literacy Interventions

- **Health systems literacy.** “If I can understand it, then I can navigate it” When individuals understand the stigma in health systems, and have built resiliency, they are better able to take actions to reduce stigma in those systems.

SOURCE: Maldonado presentation, January 27,2021.