

The role of health literacy in decreasing anxiety in healthcare

Christine Beer, PhD, MEd

christine.beer@conferenceboard.org

The role of health literacy in decreasing anxiety in healthcare

Patient engagement

commitment
relationships
interactions

Case study of health literacy
in an adolescent population



Overlay 'patient
engagement' on
the case study
findings:

Anxiety

Optimism

**Taking
Control**







Case study

20 high school students, ages 15-18

Myanmar

participatory curriculum

mental health

August 2011 – January 2014



How is critical media health literacy present in this population?

How will participants engage with a health literacy curriculum?

Theorists→

Nutbeam, 2008

Begoray, Cimon & Wharf-Higgins, 2010

Levin-Zamir, Lemish & Gofin, 2011

Lankshear & Noble, 2011

→Constructs of Health Literacy

Questionnaire

Interviews + Online Blog + F2F Classes + Webpages

Constructs of Health Literacy→

Personal/socio-demographic characteristics

Developed knowledge

Participation social norms and practices

Skills - self management

identify, understand, & assess health messages

advocacy for individual and community benefit

Changed health behaviours

Examples from the data:

Interviews

"health is a happy background an environment, peace"

"worried about my parents"

"parents work too much...are stressed"

"parents' diabetes"

"high blood pressure"

"heart attack"

"taking herbs"

"ginseng to grow tall"

"kidnapping"

Blogs, F2F, Webpages

"stress" of grades

"humiliated [online]"

"isolated"

"having a breakdown"

"depressed"

"help yourself"

"You can either change your situation or change your reaction ... focus on what makes you feel calm and in control"

"if information appears a lot...it's true"

Mapping the relationship between health literacy and patient engagement

How can anxiety be leveraged as motivation to **engage** with health literacy interventions and healthcare?

What would that look like, and what are the risks?





Can plain language materials help address the anxiety people experience when trying to engage in their care?

Can understandable information improve people's confidence to talk with their healthcare teams and ask questions?

Does a lack of anxiety or concern ever cause problems?

Future research



Patient engagement participatory curriculum?

Randomized control trial?