



Health & Wellness Promotion

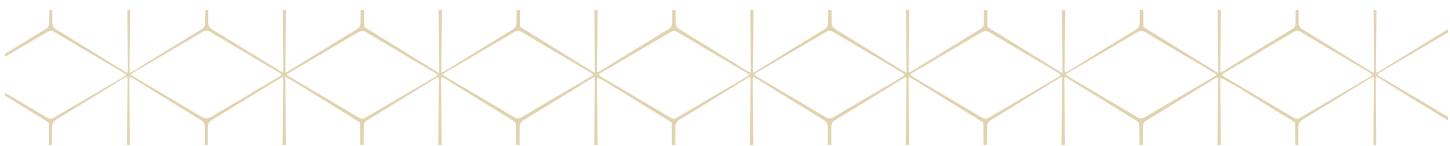
SPECIALTY TRACK

## Learner Manual



Health & Wellness Promotion  
Session 3: Health Literacy Basics





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## ➤ Session 3

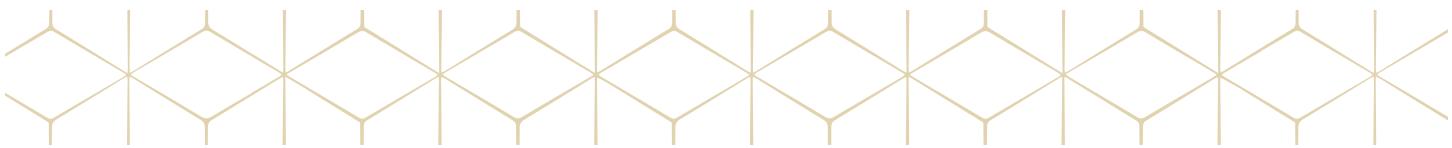
# Health Literacy Basics



### Session 3 Learning Objectives

We will be focusing today on the following objectives:

- Define health literacy.
- Identify strategies to explore health literacy



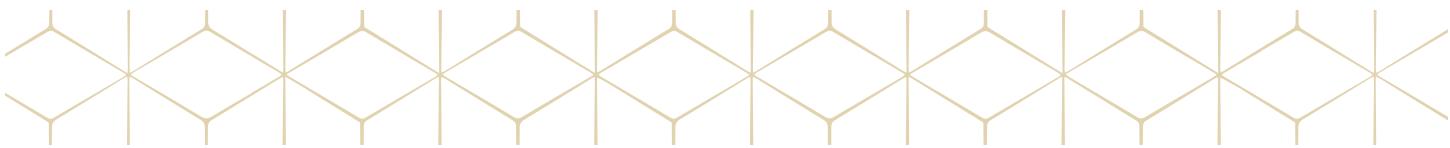
# Welcome

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Welcome to session three of the six-part series on Health & Wellness Promotion in Peer Support.

- Session 1: Health and Wellness Promotion
- Session 2: Health Communication
- **Session 3: Health Literacy Basics**
- Session 4: Characteristics, Competencies and Resources for PSS in Health & Wellness Promotion
- Session 5: The Peer Role in Health and Wellness
- Session 6: H & W Learning Collaborative Overview

**This session focuses on Health Literacy Basics.**



## Health Literacy Basics

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Peer support specialists must personalize the support they offer when helping others explore their health and wellness. Education, culture and learning preferences all impact how we understand and act on health information. Health literacy is very important to good health and preventing and managing chronic conditions. The goal of this course is to review health literacy concepts and identify how peer support can help people improve their health literacy.

**What do you think of when you hear the term health literacy?**

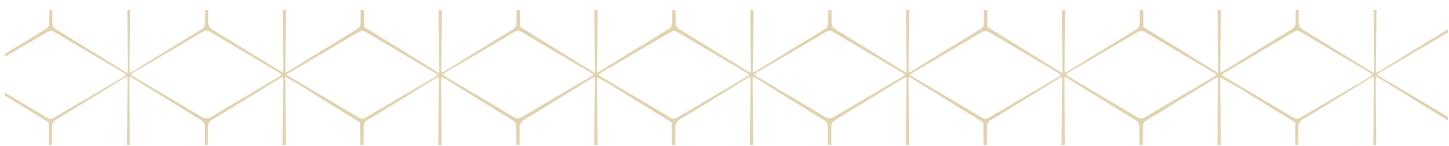
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Often, when we hear the word “literacy” we think about print literacy. This is how well a person can read, write, or understand written language (Institute of Medicine, 2004). Speech literacy is how well a person can speak, understand and communicate verbally (Institute of Medicine, 2004). Numeracy refers to a person’s mathematical abilities.

Health literacy is “a set of skills that people need to function effectively in the health care environment” (Berkman et al., 2011). Put another way, **health literacy is the ability to get and understand information about health and health choices so a person can make the best health decisions for themselves.**



## Activity #1: Maria

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Maria was born in Mexico and has been in New York since she was 15 (she's 45 now). While she does speak some English, she prefers to speak Spanish to her friends and family. Maria's mother and aunts were diagnosed with heart disease in their early 40s, and her mother died at age 46 from a heart attack. Maria has not been feeling well and is concerned that she could also have heart disease. To address this concern, she goes to church regularly and is drinking a shake her family claims will help prevent heart problems. A friend from work convinces Maria to see a doctor about how she's been feeling.

Please consider the following questions and jot down some thoughts in the spaces provided.

**What barriers might get in the way of Maria's health literacy if she goes to the doctor?**

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**What questions might you ask Maria as a Peer Supporter to learn more about her health experiences and health literacy?**

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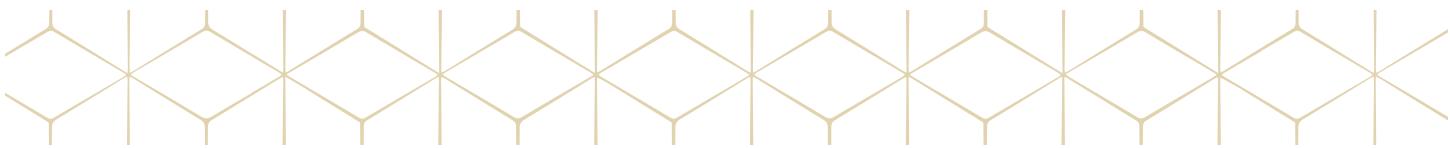
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**How might you use your own experiences to support Maria's experience?**

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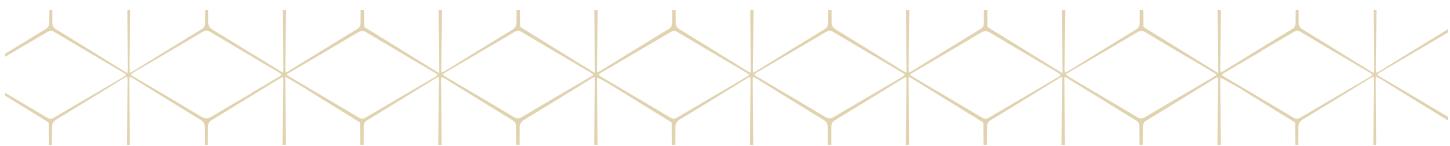
## Factors that Affect Health Literacy

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Our health and health literacy can benefit or be negatively influenced by our emotional reactions, language, and culture. Culture includes the values and beliefs we hold and the groups we belong to, such as ethnicity, race, geographical region, etc. ((Brega et al., 2015; Centers for Disease Control, 2021)).

- Culture can include many health-related beliefs and customs, including:
- How medical care should be provided.
- When to get health care
- Who in the family makes health care decisions.
- Religious and faith traditions regarding health
- Dietary customs
- Gender roles in health

*Peer support specialists should ask people about their cultural beliefs and values, and how those might influence seeking and receiving health care.*



# Practical Actions for Peer Support Specialists to Promote Health Literacy

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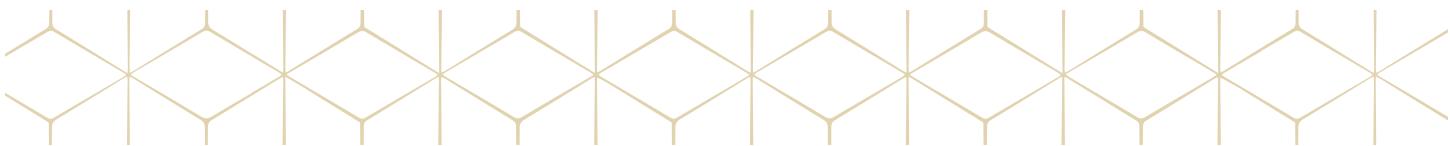
The Teach-Back Method is a way to check for understanding in which someone explains “in their own words what they need to know or do about their health” (Brega et al., 2015, p. 18). This strategy gives the peer supporter a good idea of a person’s understanding of their health situation and whether it would be helpful to learn more.

## What Is Teach-back?

- A way to make sure you (the health care provider, peer specialist—explained information clearly; it is not a test or quiz of patients.
- Asking a patient (or family member) to explain—in their own words—what they need to know or do, in a caring way.
- A way to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again.
- A research-based health literacy intervention that promotes adherence, quality, and patient safety.

## The 10 Elements of the Teach Back Method

1. Use a caring tone of voice and attitude.
2. Display comfortable body language and make eye contact.
3. Use plain language.
4. Ask the patient to explain back, using their own words.
5. Use non-shaming, open-ended questions.
6. Avoid asking questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
7. Emphasize that the responsibility to explain clearly is on you, the provider.
8. If the patient is not able to teach back correctly, explain again and re-check.
9. Use reader-friendly print materials to support learning.
10. Document use of and patient response to teach-back.



## Activity #2: Dave & Jess

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Dave, a Peer Supporter, is working with Jess. Jess comes to a meeting and reports that their health provider gave them 3 new prescriptions to fill. They also say that they feel overwhelmed with all of the medication and the instructions.

Please Consider the following questions and jot down some thoughts in the spaces provided.

**Which of the 10 Elements of Competencies for the Teach Back Method might be most important in this scenario? Why?**

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**What questions might Dave ask to learn more about the situation?**

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**How might Dave use the Teach Back method to support Jess?**

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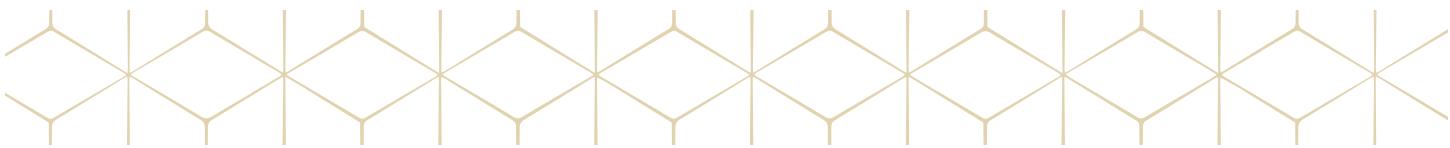
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**What might get in the way of using the Teach Back method in your work?**

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Bring the groups back together. As a large group, discuss the questions the group came up with, "How Dave might use the Teach Back method, and how could Dave use his own experiences to support Jess?".

#### Learn More

Visit the [Always Use Teach-Back](#) website to learn more.

#### Teach Back Observation Tool:

[http://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/HEALTHLITERACYSOLUTIONS/b33097fb-8e0f-4f8c-b23c-543f80c39ff3/UploadedImages/docs/Teach\\_Back - Observation\\_Tool.pdf](http://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/HEALTHLITERACYSOLUTIONS/b33097fb-8e0f-4f8c-b23c-543f80c39ff3/UploadedImages/docs/Teach_Back - Observation_Tool.pdf)

#### Complete after this session:

Watch this video about people experiencing challenges with health literacy-  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgTuD7i7LG8>

#### What emotions did you notice from the people receiving health care?

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#### What kind of literacy skills could you identify?

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#### Next Session:

- Session 1: Health and Wellness Promotion
- Session 2: Health Communication
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- **Session 4: Characteristics, Competencies and Resources for PSS in Health & Wellness Promotion**
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## NOTES:

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