

Lunch & Learn: Best Practices in Community Education and Dental Partnership

June 15, 2023

Speakers

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LOHP panelists from Marin, Shasta, and Sutter LOHPs

Cyndi Smith and Ammina Jones, Medi-Cal Dental Outreach

Facilitator

Aubri Kottek, COHTAC, UCSF

Housekeeping

- Meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the COHTAC website and YouTube channel – follow up materials and a link to the recording will be emailed
- Questions are welcomed in the chat box and will be answered at the end of the presentations – please stay muted until called on
- Comments, resource sharing, and other discussion are also welcomed in the chat box
- As always, we appreciate your feedback – please take a minute at the end to complete our evaluation survey

Learning Objectives & Agenda

Objectives

- Recognize how health literacy and cultural humility can improve health equity
- Understand how to access and use the California Oral Health Literacy Toolkit
- Use evidence-based communication techniques in community education
- Understand some best practices when creating partnerships with dental practices

Agenda

- Oral health literacy (OHL) overview
[Anthony Eleftherion](#)
- Unpacking the OHL Toolkit
[Kristin Hoeft](#)
- Panel discussion on dental partnerships
[Representatives from Marin, Shasta, and Sutter LOHPs](#)
- Medi-Cal dental outreach
[Cyndi Smith & Ammina Jones](#)
- Improving oral health communication
[Anthony Eleftherion](#)
- Q & A

Disclosure

- Presenters do not have any conflicts of interest to disclose.

An illustration featuring a group of stylized human silhouettes in blue with vertical stripes, arranged in a circle. In the center of the group is a large, grey, cloud-like shape filled with a dense, black, scribbled pattern. The entire scene is set against a background of horizontal green and blue stripes. A white rectangular border frames the central elements.

What Is Oral Health Literacy?

Health Literate People

- Are able to find, understand, evaluate, and use health information.
- Feel confident enough in healthcare settings to advocate for their own needs and interests.



Health Literate Professionals

- Present information in ways that improve understanding and make it easier for people to act on health information.
- Aim to:
 - Lower barriers to understanding
 - Reduce feelings of fear or shame
 - Use empathy

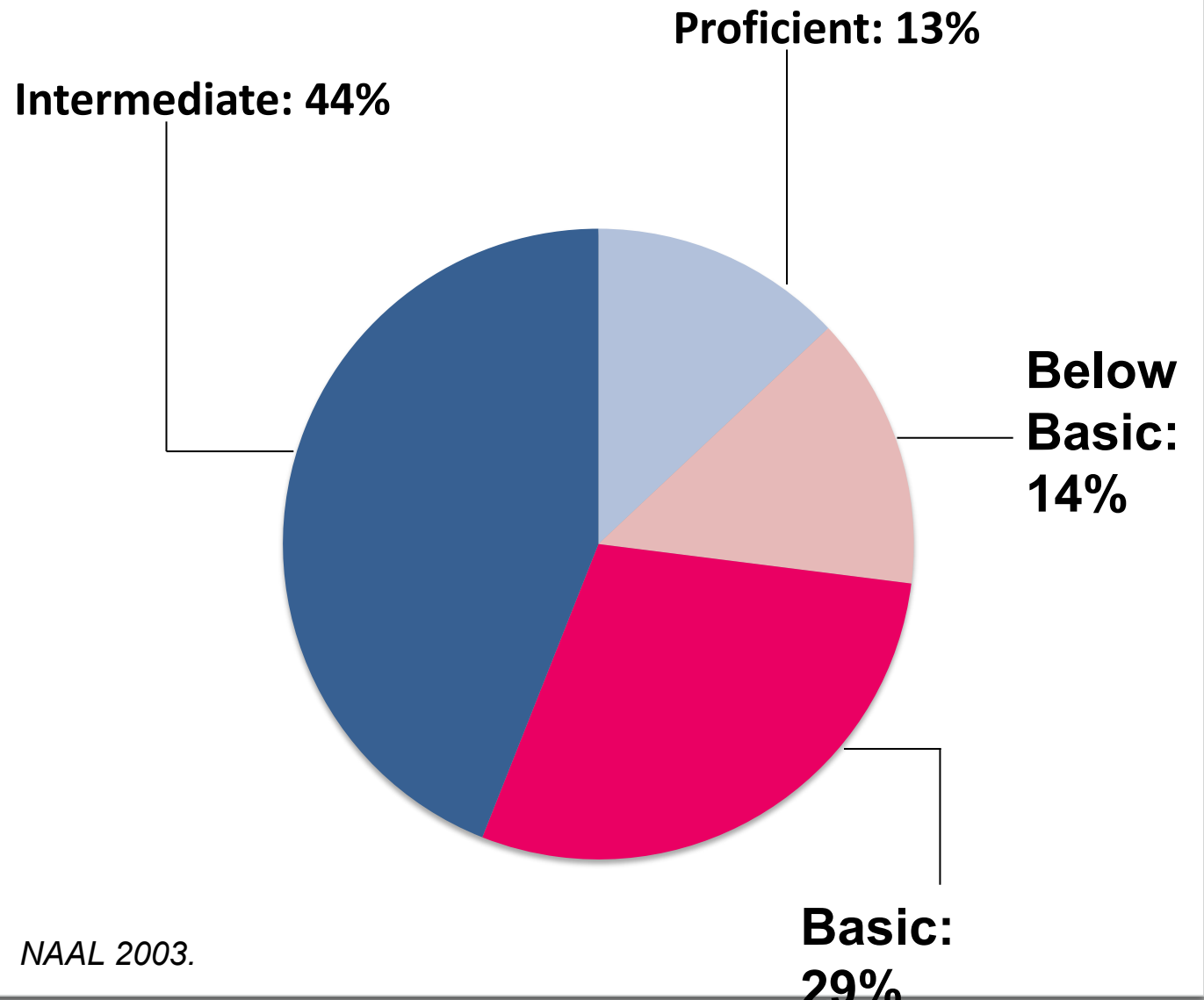


Why Health Literacy Is Important

- **Literacy is the single best predictor of a person's health status,** correlating more closely than age, income, employment status, education level, or racial or ethnic group.
- More than 2/3 of US adults lack understanding of health information.
- Many understand only the most basic health information.

Adult Health Literacy

- 93 million adults have basic or below basic health literacy.
- Lowest 2 levels cannot:
 - Use a bus schedule
 - Read a set of short instructions and identify what is permissible to drink before a medical test



Health Literacy and Health Disparities

- Age
- Income and education level
- Race/ethnicity
- Gender
- Culture
- Language

Oral Health Literacy Improves Lives

- Lower rates of and dental caries and periodontal disease.
- More use of preventive services.
- Better participation in their own care.
- More likely to get the care they need.





OHL Helps Everyone

Anyone can have difficulty in an oral healthcare encounter:

- Terms and subject matter can be new.
- Stress or anxiety can limit how much we hear, understand, or remember.



Unpacking the OHL Toolkit

Oral Health Literacy Toolkit

The toolkit has materials to help providers:

- Learn basic OHL principles, including communicating clearly and with cultural humility.
- Create a shame-free and fear-free environment.
- Understand how OHL affects patients.
- Understand the need to arrange language services.



OHL Guidebook

Direct providers to the guidebook so that they may:

- Connect better with patients and understand their needs.
- Implement health literacy at every touchpoint of patient visit.
- Implement changes at their own pace.



Adopting Health Literacy

The following pages suggest ways to implement health literacy in your practice, but you don't need to follow every suggestion. Try to keep the process manageable. This way, you can improve the patient experience without overwhelming your practice's resources.

Initial contact

First impressions matter. The more your patients feel welcome and cared for, the more likely they will want to participate in their care. Here are some tips for making the initial contact positive and focused on the patient.

- Ask if the patient has a preferred language.
- Have a friendly tone and speak slowly.
- Explain what will happen during the visit.
- Ask what questions they have.



Questions for your practice from a patient's perspective:

- Has someone explained what I can expect during my appointment?
- Has someone told me what to bring to my visit?
- Can I easily read the signs and forms, even if I have limited eyesight?
- Are signs and forms available in the language I am most comfortable reading?
- Is the greeting from the front office person welcoming and friendly?
- Has someone offered to help with or explain the forms?
- Has someone asked about my preferred language?
- Am I being encouraged to ask questions about my care?
- Will I know what to do when I leave?


Create a safe and patient-centered environment


Coming to a new office with new routines can feel uncomfortable or intimidating. You can set up your office in ways that reduce patients' fear, shame, and discomfort. Some techniques for creating a patient-centered environment are practical, such as training staff to greet patients warmly. Others are about empathy. Imagine what it is like for a patient entering your practice for the first time. **Go through your practice site and ask yourself the questions above.**


Practice Assessment

Instruct providers that the checklist may help them:

- Quickly learn what they should improve in their practices to communicate with all patients better and reduce fear and shame.

 Practice assessment checklist

 Preparing for change	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Excellent
1. Oral health literacy team or leader has been selected.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Practice has an oral health literacy action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff understands the impact of oral health literacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Each staff member understands their role in oral health literacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Each staff member understands their role in the action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Staff has received health literacy training.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

 Creating a health-literate environment	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Excellent
1. Patients can speak to a person when they call.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Signs are in plain language and are easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Signs are in the languages spoken by the patient population or used commonly in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Patient waiting room is friendly and inviting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

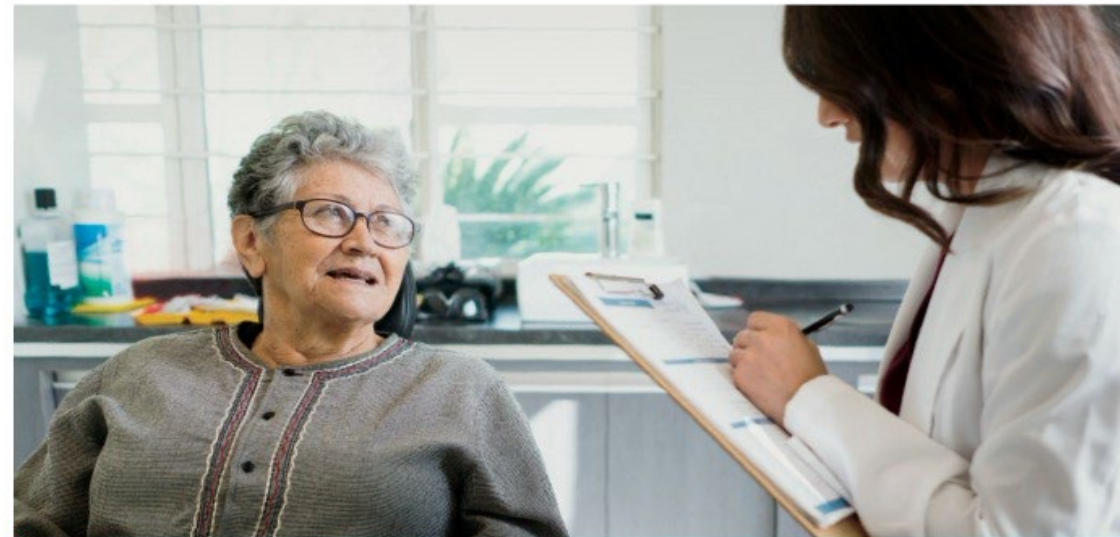
Teach-Back Booklet

- Tool for learning teach-back, a technique for confirming understanding
- Contains step-by-step explanation of teach-back method
- Provides opening lines to help start teach-back conversations
- Presents example scenarios and scripts to use for practice



Spanish-Language Teach-Back Booklet

- Provides step-by-step explanation of teach-back in Spanish
- Helps you conduct teach back in Spanish
- Also downloadable from COHTAC website



¿Qué es el metodo de enseñar lo aprendido (Teach-Back)?



Este folleto describe cómo hacer el metodo de enseñar lo aprendido. Proporciona ejemplos de situaciones y guiones con los cuales puede practicar. Utilícelos. Se familiarizará con cómo se hace y obtendrá algunas ideas sobre cómo comenzar una conversación acerca de cómo enseñar lo aprendido.

The Action Plan

Direct providers seeking to implement a health literacy action plan. It is:

- A convenient place to record OHL goals and action items.
- Complementary to the OHL Guidebook.

OHL Action Plan

Use this page to write down your action plan for implementing health literacy. Consider selecting a few action steps that are easier to achieve and a few that may be implemented over time.

Health Literacy Goal

1. Improve patient communication

Action Steps

1. Use plain language in-take forms
2. Encourage questions at each touchpoint of patient visit
3. Organize teach-back training



Your Health Literacy Goals

1.
.....
.....
2.
.....



Your Action Steps

- a.
- b.
- c.
- a.
- b.

The Patient Resource

Give this patient resource, called “Going to the Dentist,” to providers and members of the community you serve:

- It explains the “before, during, and after” of dental visits.
- It lets new patients know what to expect & how to prepare for a dental visit.

How to get ready

You can make your first visit to the dentist easier if you do some things ahead of time, like these:

? Things to Ask Before You Go

- ☐ Find out where the office is and decide how you will get there. Ask the office for directions.
- ☐ Find out about parking or public transportation.
- ☐ Ask if the office takes your dental insurance.
- ☐ Ask for language assistance if you need it.

✎ Things to Do Before You Go

- ☐ Fill out any forms that the office sends to you.
- ☐ Arrange for child care if you need to. You should not bring any extra people to your visit.
- ☐ Brush and floss your teeth.

📄 Things to Bring With You

- ☐ Your insurance card.
- ☐ Any forms you filled out.
- ☐ A list of all your medicines.
- ☐ A list of your questions.
- ☐ A face mask.

Who you will meet

You will meet people in the dental office who have different jobs. Not all offices are the same, but many offices work like this:

- **The receptionist** greets you when you arrive. They help with your paperwork and tell other staff members that you have come in. You will likely talk to them when you leave as well.
- **The dental assistant** may seat you in the dentist's chair. The assistant also helps the dentist with your exam and treatment.
- **The dental hygienist** cleans your teeth and talks to you about how to keep your mouth healthy.
- **The dentist** talks to you and looks in your mouth to see if you need treatment. The dentist provides any treatments you need. An assistant or hygienist may help with treatments.



Spanish- Language Patient Resource

“Going to the Dentist” is available in Spanish.

- Has the same content as the English version
- Is downloadable from same webpage as other Toolkit components

Cómo prepararse para la consulta

Puede hacer que su primera consulta con el dentista sea más fácil si hace algunas cosas antes de ir, como estas:

? Cosas que debe preguntar antes de ir

- ☐ Averigüe dónde está el consultorio y decida cómo llegará allí. Pregunte al personal del consultorio cómo llegar.
- ☐ Averigüe sobre el estacionamiento o el transporte público.
- ☐ Pregunte si en el consultorio aceptan su seguro dental.

✍ Pida asistencia con el idioma si la necesita. Cosas que debe hacer antes de ir

- ☐ Complete los formularios que el consultorio le envíe.
- ☐ Organice quién cuidará a sus hijos si hace falta. No debe llevar a nadie con usted a su consulta.

Lávese los dientes y use hilo dental.

📄 Cosas que debe llevar a la consulta

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Su tarjeta del seguro. | <input type="checkbox"/> Una lista de sus preguntas. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Todos los formularios que haya llenado. | <input type="checkbox"/> Una mascarilla. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Una lista de todos los medicamentos que toma. | |

A quiénes verá

En el consultorio dental verá a varias personas que tienen trabajos diferentes. No todos los consultorios son iguales, pero en muchos verá a las siguientes personas:

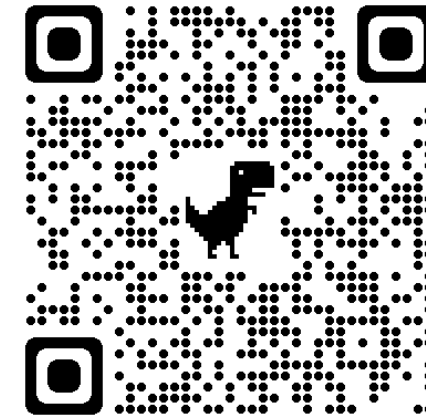
- **El/la recepcionista** lo recibe cuando llega. Le ayudará con el papeleo y les dirá a los otros miembros del personal que usted ha llegado. Probablemente hable con él/ella de nuevo antes de irse.
- **El/la auxiliar de odontología** le indicará que se siente en el sillón odontológico. También es quien ayuda al dentista con su examen y tratamiento.
- **El/la higienista dental** limpia sus dientes y le comenta cómo cuidar su salud bucal.
- **El/la dentista** habla con usted y le examina la boca para ver si necesita tratamiento. También le brinda los tratamientos que necesita. Es posible que un auxiliar o higienista ayude con los tratamientos.



Accessing the Toolkit

CA Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC) website:

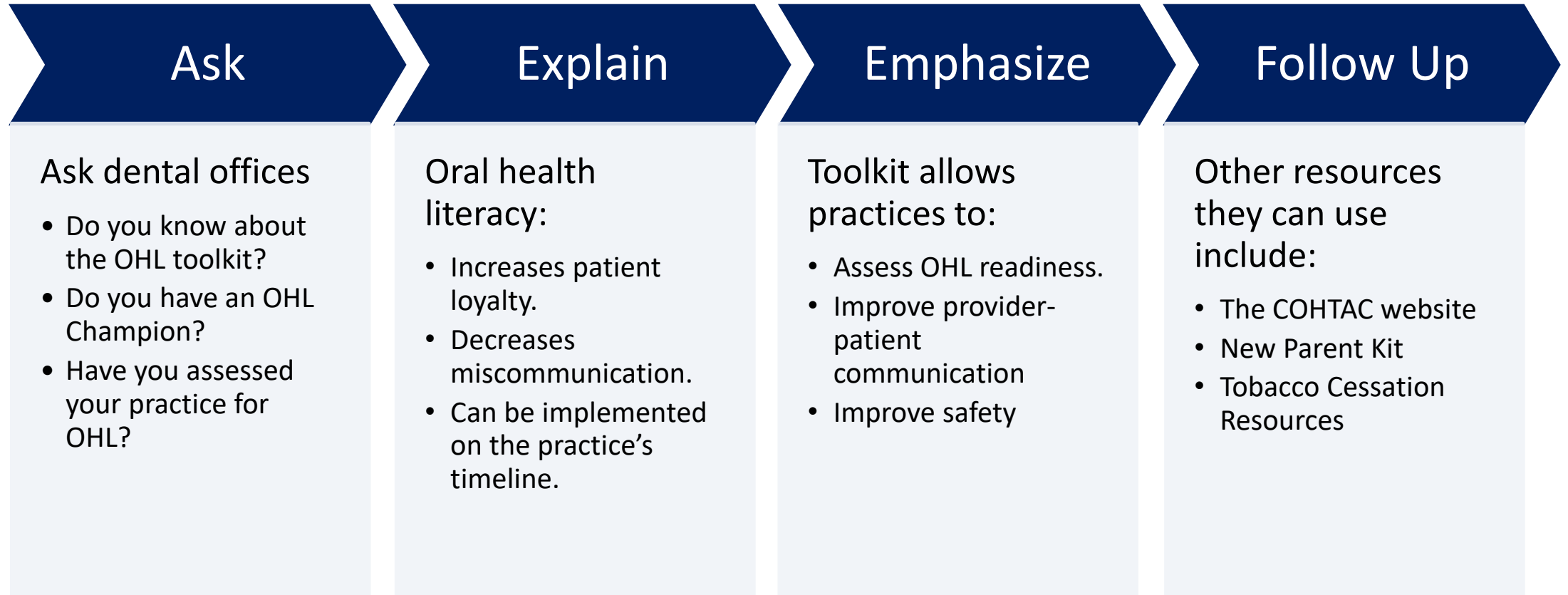
- <https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/oral-health-literacy-toolkit>



Supporting Community through the Toolkit

- Offering to conduct health literacy assessment of dental office.
- Providing free Spanish-language material.
- Improving provider communication techniques and patient understanding.
- Improve own team's communication skills

LOHPs Can Support The Toolkit Initiative



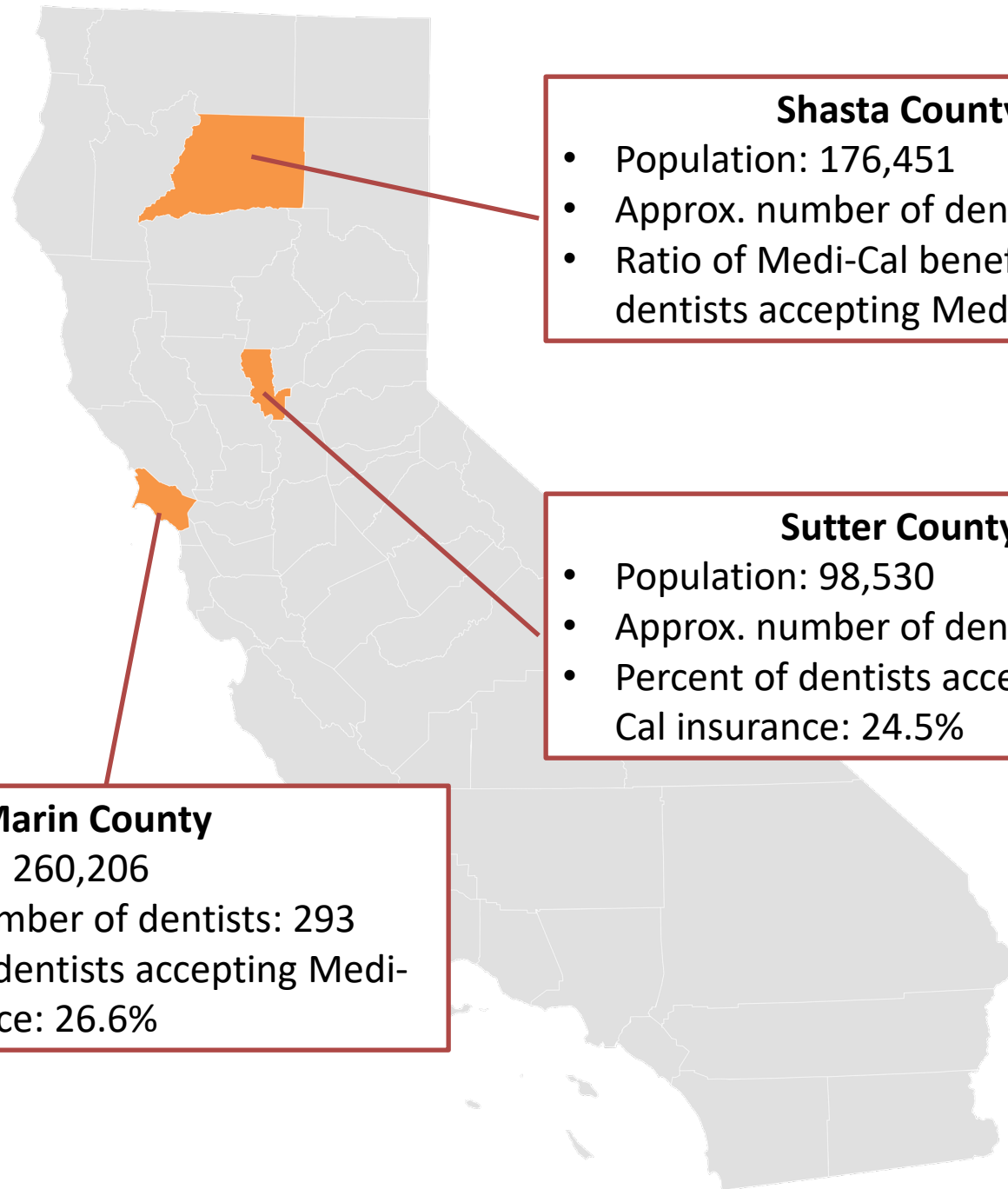


Dental Partnerships

It's challenging

- Post-COVID, dental partnerships have been especially difficult





Shasta County

- Population: 176,451
- Approx. number of dentists: 100
- Ratio of Medi-Cal beneficiaries to dentists accepting Medi-Cal: 2,478:1

Sutter County

- Population: 98,530
- Approx. number of dentists: 53
- Percent of dentists accepting Medi-Cal insurance: 24.5%

Marin County

- Population: 260,206
- Approx. number of dentists: 293
- Percent of dentists accepting Medi-Cal insurance: 26.6%

Dental Partnerships

Who

- FQHCs
- Private Practice
- Dental Societies
- Dental Professional Schools
- RDH/RDHAP

Role

- Advisory Committee
- School screenings
- Community events
- Promotion of materials/initiatives
 - OHL Toolkit, Tobacco Cessation, Rethink Your Drink

Dental Partnerships

- How did you initiate relationships?
- How do you maintain partnership?
- What advice to do you have for other LOHPs?



SUPPORT



TRUST



UNITY



EXCELLENCE

Partnerships with LOHP and Providers

Marin County Local Oral Health
Program

Danika Ng, MPH and Sayra Soriano

Marin County Partnerships

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):**

- Marin Community Clinics (MCC)
- Marin City Health and Wellness Center
- Petaluma Health Center (formerly Coastal Health Alliance)

- **Partnership Engagement:**

- Marin County Oral Health Advisory Committee
- Support in School-Linked Dental Screenings and referral process
- Supports and participates in community events, such as trainings and presentations
- Provides content expertise and literacy support in messaging development



Marin County Partnerships

- **Dental Society Partnerships:**

- Marin County Dental Society (MDS)
 - Primary network for private practicing dental offices in Marin County
 - Are the primary pathway to reach private offices in Marin with messaging and information
- Marin County Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC)
 - Society-like volunteer organization based out of Marin County Health and Human Services

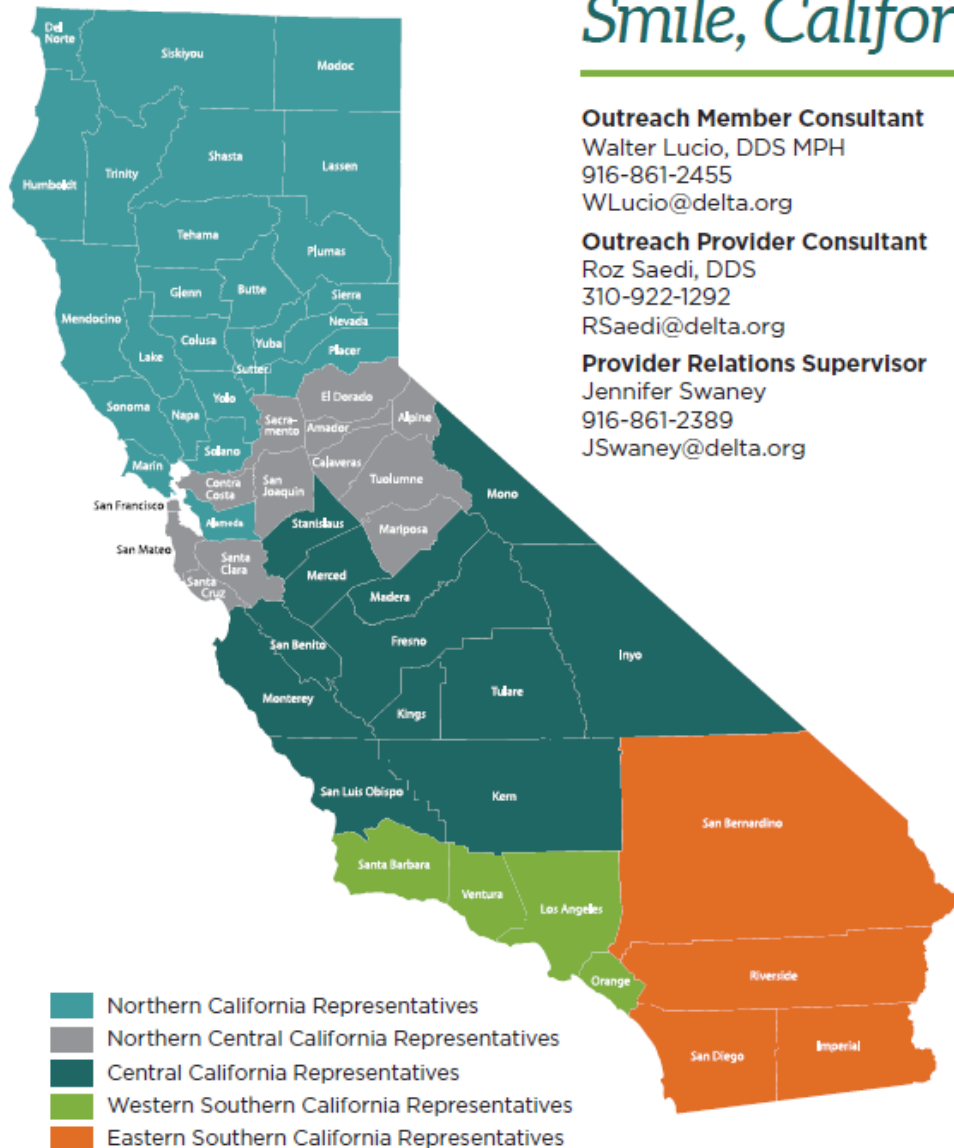
- **Partnership Engagement:**

- Marin County Oral Health Advisory Committee (MDS, MMRC)
- Supports and participates in community events, such as trainings and presentations (MDS)
- Provides support in messaging dissemination to the private practice network (MDS)
- Support in School-Linked Dental Screenings and referral process (MMRC)



Requests for disability accommodations may be made by phoning **415-473-7059** (Voice), CA Relay 711 or by e-mail at **Dng@marincounty.org**.

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*This Regional Representative Contact List is for local outreach stakeholders to assist you with the local events, questions about Smile, California and provider recruitment opportunities. This is **not** for public distribution. Please refer all members to the Member Customer Service Line at (800) 322-6384 and providers to the Provider Customer Service line at (800) 423-0507 for general inquiries and customer service support.*

Resources when you partner with dental offices



First 5 California Kit for Parents

First 5 California's Kit for New Parents is available in five languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Order 1 or 100, and it will be shipped to you for free.



Oral Health in the Kit



Advice for Pregnant People

The kit explains why oral healthcare is important during pregnancy and helps parents find a dentist and get care.



Nutrition Information

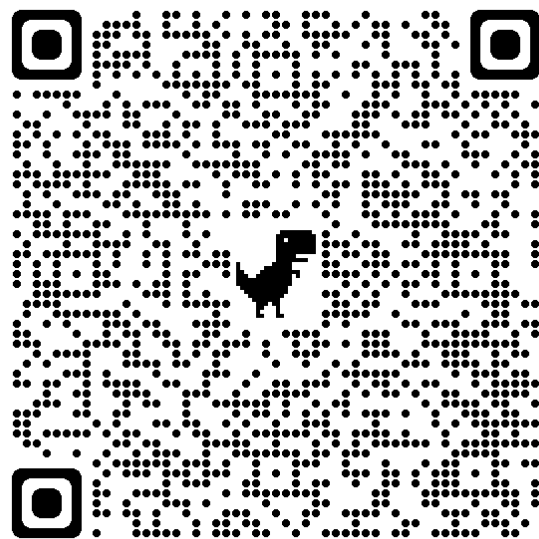
Offers advice on good nutrition, including eating calcium-rich foods and avoiding sugary snacks and drinks.



Oral Health Advice for All Ages

The kit provides age-appropriate oral health advice. This includes information on:

- How to clean a baby's gums
- How to brush a toddler's teeth
- When children are old enough to brush on own
- When a baby should see a dentist
- Ways to prevent tooth decay
- How to find a dentist and affordable dental care



↑ L&L about New Parent Kit
& order instructions

WHAT'S IN THE KIT

The kit comes in a reusable shopping bag and contains these items:

- California Parent Guide
- What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick book
- Touch and feel baby/toddler book
- Poison Control brochure and magnet
- Paid Family Leave brochure
- Brain development card and brochure



Tobacco Cessation for CA Dental Providers:

Objective 4

1

Tobacco Cessation Toolkit for California Dental Providers



2

Tobacco Cessation for California Dental Providers: Webinar



Elizabeth T. Couch, RDH MS
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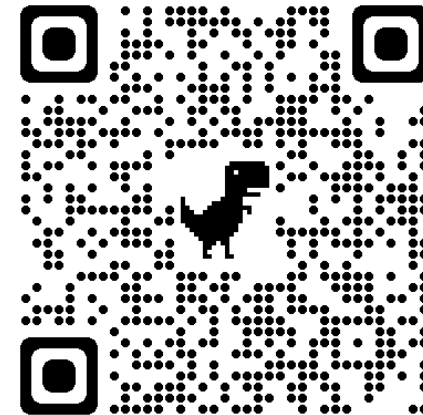


OR visit: <http://tiny.ucsf.edu/quittobaccotoolkit>

Oral Health Literacy Toolkit



5.2a Develop action plan to support and sustain an oral health literate workforce



Additional Resources

CA Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC) website:

- <https://oralhealthsupport.ucsf.edu/resource-center>

California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center


COVID-19 Our Programs CDPH OOH Oral Health Literacy Toolkit **Resource Center** News & Events About Us

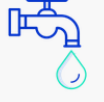
Home > Resource Center


Resource Center


The California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center (COHTAC) Resource Center is a searchable database that is continuously updated to provide a wide selection of dental public health resources.


Search for a resource... **SUBMIT**


Educational Resources



Fluoride Prevention Programs



Health Literacy and Cultural Competency



Linkages to Care Delivery


Medical and Dental Integration


Planning Deliverables


Rethink Your Drink


School and Screening Programs


Tobacco and Vaping Cessation


Recently Updated Resources

Challenges in Implementing School-Based Oral Health Programs: Short- and Long-Term Impact of COVID-19

School and Screening Programs • Planning Strategies

COVID-19 Resources

Access all of our COVID-19 related resources on our dedicated page.

Browse by Audience

See all Audiences >

Browse by Topic

See all Topics >

Browse by Type

See all Types >

Browse by Objective

See all Objectives >

Let us know what you think

[Send a message](#) to help us improve the website.

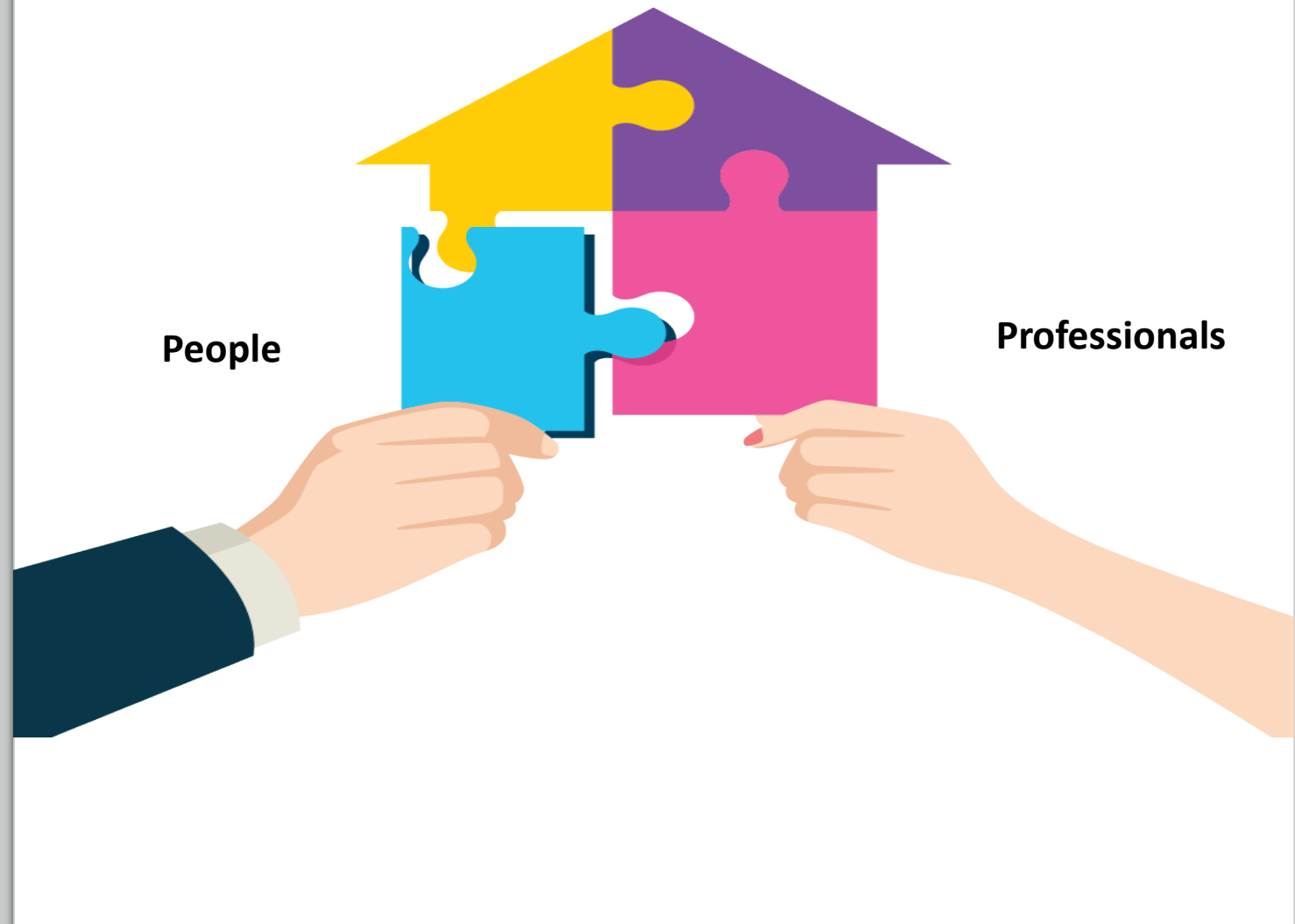


Improving Oral Health Communications

Developing Oral Health Literacy

Professionals:

- Awareness of needs
- Cultural humility
- HL communication methods
 - Plain language
 - Teach-back





The “Universal Precautions” Health Literacy Approach

- Treat everyone as if they have limited health literacy skills.
 - Helps reduce communication errors.
 - Ensures needs of all community members are met.

Begin with Empathy

Empathy makes us ask:

- With whom are we communicating?
- What are their main concerns?
- What is their daily life like?
- What questions will they have?



Cultural Humility

Approaching community interactions with cultural humility means:

- Accepting that you are a learner not an expert.
- Being aware of your own attitudes.
- Recognizing potential power imbalances.
- Accepting that it is an ongoing process.

Cultural Humility

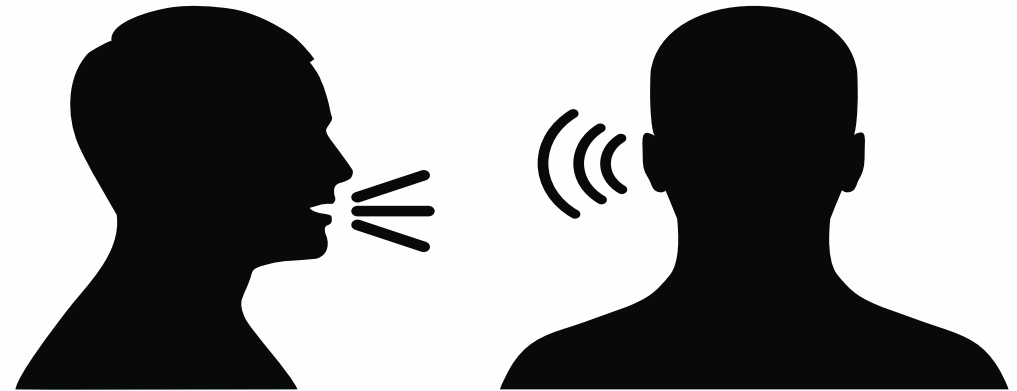
- Ask whether personal identity or background is important to them.
- Provide a humble self-assessment of familiarity with those mentioned.
- Acknowledge discomfort and express gratitude.
- Ask them to make you aware of any inappropriate assumptions or statements you may make.

Patallo, Brandon J. "The multicultural guidelines in practice: Cultural humility in clinical training and supervision," 2019

Oral Health Literacy Best Practices

Oral communication

- Use plain language
- Avoiding or explaining jargon
- Use “teach-back”



What Is Plain Language?

- Not always clear what is and is not plain language.
- Doesn't mean to write less precisely or "dumb down."
- Not just writing to a grade level.
- Doesn't mean to leave out necessary technical terms.



Using Plain Language

- Simple, everyday words
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Give context

Substitute short, simple words

- Choose simple everyday words.
- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Use as many words as you need to make it clear.

Longer	Shorter
geriatric	older, elderly
medication	medicine, drug
examination	exam
febrile	feverish
regarding	about
approximately	about
determined	found, learned
physician	doctor

Exercise

- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Your entries in the chat.

• Advocacy

Exercise

- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Your entries in the chat.

- Advocacy
- Help to get you something that you want or need.

Exercise

- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Your entries in the chat.

•Chronic disease

Exercise

- Replace or define complicated terms using simple language.
- Your entries in the chat.

- Chronic disease
- A health problem that can't be cured, or that goes away and comes back.



Problems with jargon

Jargon:

- Creates an “In group” and “Out group”
- Is often unintentional and not always easy to recognize
 - E.g. “common” abbreviations and acronyms

Avoid jargon

- Acute
- Benign
- Relapse
- Vaccine

Avoid jargon

- Distress
- Infuse

Avoid jargon

- Distress
 - Is it emotional stress or health crisis?
- Infuse
 - Soak or administer gradually via IV?

Give context

- Start with why listeners should pay attention to your message.
- Put the “why” where it will make the strongest impression.

Example

- Gives the why first.
- Lets reader understand the importance of your message right away.

- **To keep your baby's mouth healthy, you'll need to wipe their gums after meals.**



Choose the right tone

- Ideal tone for health-literate communications is friendly, approachable, conversational.
- Helps audience receive your message.
- Not too formal, not too informal.
- Finding the right balance is a bit tricky, but you “know it when you hear it.”

What Is Teach-Back?

- Speaker explains or demonstrates.
- Asks listener to repeat in own words or demonstrate
 - Confirms understanding
 - Tests how well you explained a concept
- Re-teach and repeat.



Teach-Back Techniques



1. Organize what you want to say.
2. Explain the first part.
3. Ask the listener to explain it back.
4. If they don't understand, explain again in a different way.
5. Ask them to explain once more.
6. If they understand, move on to the next part.

Practicing Teach-Back

1. Show that you're listening.
2. Use simple, clear explanations.
3. Ask gently:
e.g., "I want to be sure I explained everything clearly"



Teach-Back Phrases

- We've gone over a lot of information. I want to be sure that I explained everything clearly. Please explain it back to me in your own words.
- I want to make sure we are on the same page. Could you explain this to me?
- Will you tell me how you would explain this to your partner or family when you get home?
- I know we discussed a lot just now. It would help me to know I'm being clear if you could tell me what I just said.
- I want to be sure I've described everything clearly. What is one thing you can do this week to start to improve your oral hygiene?

Contact

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Thank you!