

# Health literacy



## What is health literacy?

**Individual health literacy** is the knowledge and skills people need to find, understand, and use information about their physical, mental, and social wellbeing. It involves consumers acting as partners in the processes of health and health care.

The **health literacy environment** is the infrastructure, policies, processes, materials, people and relationships that make up the health system. They have an impact on the way that people use health-related information and services.

Health literate organisations make it easier for people - including their staff - to find, understand and use the information they need. Health literacy is central to shaping services and remains a focus of quality improvement.

For effective partnerships in health, everyone needs to be able to give and receive, interpret, and act on information such as treatment options and plans. Information needs to suit a variety of audiences and health literacy levels.

When this occurs, there is potential to increase equity and to improve the safety and quality of health care.

## Why is health literacy important?

Almost half of Tasmanians do not have the literacy and numeracy skills they need for life in our fast-paced, technologically rich world. People with low health literacy:

- have poorer health outcomes
- are less likely to take up preventive health behaviours such as screening and immunisation
- find it difficult to get the services they need when they need them
- spend more money on health care
- have more hospitalisations and avoidable re-admissions to hospital.



## What can you do to support health literacy?

- ✓ Connect and partner with health literacy support organisations and implement these strategies to build a culture of health literacy promotion within your organisation.
- ✓ Familiarise yourself with the various industry quality standards including the new National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards 2021 (see over page for a guide).
- ✓ Utilise the teach-back conversational tool to check consumer understanding of information that has been communicated.

## Resources to support health literacy

**FindHelp Tas** [www.findhelptas.org.au](http://www.findhelptas.org.au)

Central online directory of services that support the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian communities

**HeLLOTAS** [www.hellotas.org.au](http://www.hellotas.org.au)

A toolkit for developing your organisation's health literacy

**26TEN** [www.26ten.tas.gov.au](http://www.26ten.tas.gov.au)

Improving adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania

### Primary Health Tasmania Resources

[tasp.hn/resources](http://tasp.hn/resources)

- **Passport to Better Health** - helping people keep track of their healthcare journey
- **After-hours care** - linking Tasmanians to options for after-hours medical advice and care
- **Tasmanian HealthPathways** - access to localised health information at the point of care
- **Shared Transfer of Care** - information to promote a shared approach between organisations, service providers, communities, and healthcare consumers
- **Rethinking Your Medications** - resources to help guide conversations about medications between doctors and patients
- **Community Health Checks** - localised health, wellbeing and demographic information
- **Teach-back video tutorials and fact sheet** - Educational videos to support the teach-back method during telehealth consultations

# Implementing health literacy initiatives in your organisation supports compliance with these industry accreditation standards

National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards 2021	RACGP Standards for General Practices 5 <sup>th</sup> Edition 2020	National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010	National Standards for Disability Services 2013	Aged Care Quality Standards 2019
<p><b>Partnering with Consumers Standard</b></p> <p><b>Partnering with patients in their own care</b></p> <p>2.02, 2.03, 2.04, 2.05</p> <p><b>Health Literacy</b></p> <p>2.06, 2.07</p> <p><b>Clinical Safety Standard</b></p> <p><b>Clinical governance and quality improvement to support clinical safety</b></p> <p>3.03</p>	<p><b>Core Standard 1 - Communication and patient participation</b></p> <p>Criteria C1.1, C1.3, C1.4</p> <p><b>Core Standard 4 - Health promotion and preventive activities</b></p> <p>Criterion C4.1</p> <p><b>Core Standard 5 - Clinical management of health issues</b></p> <p>Criterion C5.1</p> <p><b>Quality Improvement Standard 1 - Quality Improvement</b></p> <p>Criteria QI1.1, QI1.2</p>	<p><b>Standard 1: Rights and responsibilities</b></p> <p>1.4</p> <p><b>Standard 6: Consumers</b></p> <p>6.3, 6.9</p> <p><b>Standard Three - Individual Outcomes</b></p> <p>3:1</p> <p><b>Standard Four - Feedback and Complaints</b></p> <p>4:2</p> <p><b>Standard Five - Service Access</b></p> <p>5:2, 5:3, 5:5, 5:6</p> <p><b>Standard Six - Service Management</b></p> <p>6:2, 6:5</p>	<p><b>Standard One - Rights</b></p> <p>1:3, 1:7</p> <p><b>Standard Two - Participation and Inclusion</b></p> <p>2:3</p> <p><b>Standard Three - Individual Outcomes</b></p> <p>3:1</p> <p><b>Standard Four - Feedback and Complaints</b></p> <p>4:2</p> <p><b>Standard Five - Service Access</b></p> <p>5:2, 5:3, 5:5, 5:6</p> <p><b>Standard Six - Service Management</b></p> <p>6:2, 6:5</p>	<p><b>Standard 1 - Consumer Dignity and Choice</b></p> <p>1(3)(b), 1(3)(c), 1(3)(e)</p> <p><b>Standard 2 - Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers</b></p> <p>2(3)(c), 2(3)(d), 2(3)(e)</p> <p><b>Standard 3 - Personal care and clinical care</b></p> <p>3(3)(a)</p> <p><b>Standard 4 - Services and supports for daily living</b></p> <p>4(3)(a)</p> <p><b>Standard 5 - Organisation's service environment</b></p> <p>5(3)(a)</p> <p><b>Standard 6 - Feedback and complaints</b></p> <p>6(3)(b)</p>



This list is intended to guide your organisation in how health literacy initiatives can support compliance with industry standards. It does not contain all possible compliance standards.