

CDC's Clear Communication Index

A tool based in communication & related sciences that public health professionals can use to develop and assess communication products

Introductory questions [Who, what, and why?]

1. Who is your primary audiences?
2. What do you know about the health literacy skills of your audience?
3. What is your primary communication objective?
4. What is the main message of the material?

Core items apply to all materials

Main message and Call to Action

1. Does the material contain one main message statement?
2. Is the main message at the top, beginning, or front of the material?
3. Is the main message emphasized with visual cues?
4. Does the material contain at least one visual that conveys or supports the main message?

Language

5. Does the material include one or more calls to action for the primary audience?
6. Do both the main message and the call to action use the active voice?
7. Does the material always use words the primary audience uses?

Information Design

8. Does the material use bulleted or numbered lists?
9. Is the material organized in chunks with headings?
10. Is the most important information the primary audience needs summarized in the first paragraph or section?

State of the Science

11. Does the material explain what authoritative sources know and don't know about the topic?

If material includes one or more behavioral recommendations

12. Does the material include one or more behavioral recommendations for the primary audiences?
13. Does the material explain why the behavioral recommendation is important to the primary audience?
14. Does the behavioral recommendation(s) include specific directions about how to perform the behavior?

If material includes one or more numbers related to the topic

15. Does the material always present numbers the primary audience uses?
16. Does the material always explain what the numbers mean?
17. Does the audience have to conduct mathematical calculations? (if yes, score as zero for this item)

If the material presents information, including numbers, about risk

18. Does the material explain the nature of the risk?
19. Does the material address both the risks and benefits of the recommended behavior?
20. If the material uses numeric probability to describe risk, is the probability also explained with words or a visual?

You can go to this website for more information about CDC's clear communication index
www.cdc.gov/ccindex

