Duke Clinical & Translational Science Institute
Recruitment Innovation Center

Plain Language Mini-Consult

The Recruitment Innovation Center now offers free mini-consultations to develop a Plain Language Summary (PLS) you may use for patient-facing materials.

How the free mini-consult works:

1. **Submit a request via the RIC [Request](#) System.** You will need to upload a description of your project (consent, protocol, research summary, etc.).
2. **In the next 7-10 days, a member of the RIC team will draft a PLS** and send it to you for review. You can review and send back for one round of edits.
   - ❖ The PLS will commonly include the following:
     - ➢ Language you can use to create your Concise Summary for your Consent Form
     - ➢ Language that could be used for a MyChart Research Invitation (if applicable)
     - ➢ Language or "calls to action" that can be used in other advertising materials, websites, or social media (if applicable)
3. **Use the PLS to create your recruitment material content**. The PLS a great tool to use in developing the right level of content for your recruitment materials.

Specific Ways to Use the PLS:

- ❖ **Develop new recruitment materials:** Use the PLS to create consent forms, fliers, brochures, social media ads, and other recruitment materials. Your PLS will provide the most common types of information included in recruitment materials, making it easy to create outreach and engagement materials that are easy for your participants to understand.
- ❖ **Simplifying existing recruitment materials:** Use PLS to update existing recruitment materials. If the content in your recruitment materials is too complex, the PLS can help you simplify it.

Note: you must obtain IRB approval of any materials prior to use.

Some facts about literacy in America:

Literacy is the ability to understand, evaluate, use and engage with written text to participate in society, achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge potential.[i]

Numeracy is accessing, using, interpreting, and communicating mathematical information and ideas as well as engaging in and managing mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life.[ii]

Health literacy is about obtaining, processing and understanding basic health information and services in order to make appropriate health decisions.[iii]

- ❖ 41% of American adults have basic or below basic literacy skills.[iv]
- ❖ About 50% of Americans read at or below grade 8.[v]
- ❖ 77 million Americans have basic or below basic health literacy. Only 5% of American adults age 65+ have proficient health literacy.[iii]
- ❖ Research participants frequently do not understand fundamental concepts required for participation.[vi]

Readability is a measure of how easy a piece of text is to read and comprehend. It includes not just your choice of words, sentence structure and content. It also includes font, layout and length. Our plain language and health literacy consultations can help ensure your research communications are accessible to the audience you need to reach.

[i] National Center for education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/literacy.asp

[ii] National center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/numeracy.asp

[iii] America's Health Literacy: Why We Need Accessible Health Information. US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. https://health.gov/communication/literacy/issuebrief/

[iv] National Assessment of Adult Literacy: https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006483

[v] Paasche-Orlow MK, Taylor HA, Brancati, FL. Readability Standards for Informed-Consent Forms as Compared with Actual Readability. N Engl J Med 2003; 348:721-726.

[vi] AHRQ Informed Consent and Authorization Toolkit for Minimal Risk Research: https://www.ahrq.gov/funding/policies/informedconsent/index.html