

Creating Patient Information Brochures

This practice has been endorsed by the National Patients' Association of Canada & the Alberta Health Services Patient & Family Advisory Group

Brochures are often used to share information with patients and families,
For more effective brochures consider involving patients in their creation!

The Process

Research shows that when patients were involved in the process of designing and creating brochures, patient satisfaction increased, patient anxiety decreased, the information was considered more practical and simpler language was used.

Before you begin!

Engage patients as formal advisors, through focus groups, surveys or interviews to help determine what and how information should be shared.*

1. Assess the need for a brochure.
2. Review current literature & other brochures.
3. Engage patients as formal advisors to participate in the process.
4. Define your audience, key messages, structure & relevant data.
5. *Create the brochure!*
6. Seek some preliminary patient feedback.
7. Revise based on feedback.
8. Distribute the brochure.
9. Evaluate the impact.

Remember: When involving patients in the creation and design of brochures, always be sure to explain their role, your expectations, and be clear about what you intend to do with the feedback received.

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Techniques and tips for great brochures!

Techniques

1. Develop 2-3 simple key messages per brochure, use these as headings to help organize the information.
2. Be sure the *who, what, where, when, why* have all been answered if and when relevant.
3. Use conversational language when possible, e.g. “How can I prevent further complications?” This helps patients quickly identify what is relevant to them.
4. Use illustrations or diagrams to communicate actions or processes. This is one of the best ways to communicate a step-by-step process.
5. Choose images to communicate emotions or ideas. Be sure to adhere to policy for the licensing of images. (ie: Microsoft Office images or those purchased through a stock photo company.)

Avoid these common pitfalls!

- Avoid complex language (write for a Grade 6 reading level).
- Provide references if appropriate, to demonstrate that the information is credible.
- Give full contact information if patients will need to contact someone.
- Balance the amount of information since too much is overwhelming and too little creates uncertainty.
- Engage patients! They are the experts on what information they need and how they want to receive it!

This Practical Wisdom Adapted from:

Haute Autorité de santé. (2008). *How to produce an information brochure for patients and users of the healthcare system*. Retrieved from http://www.has-sante.fr/portail/upload/docs/application/pdf/2009-10/how_to_produce_an_information_brochure_-_methodology_guide.pdf

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