

## General information on Training in Health Literacy Focused Communication

During the period 2012-2015 the European IROHLA project was conducted with the aim to improve health literacy among the ageing population in Europe by developing a comprehensive approach on interventions improving health literacy. As part of the IROHLA project a study was conducted to develop the Health Literacy Focused Communication Training with health professionals from multiple disciplines participating from the Netherlands, Ireland and Italy.

The following information on the health literacy focused communication training is included:

1. The research summary from the IROHLA EU End report.
2. Key messages from the IROHLA EU End report
3. General information on the training
4. Overview of training competencies, learning outcomes and training program.

### 1. Research Summary

*Objectives:* To describe the development and assess the feasibility and acceptability of an evidence based training on health literacy (HL) focused communication tailored to the context of European health professionals (HP's).

*Methods:* We conducted a literature study, focus group discussions and collected questionnaires to develop and pilot test an evidence based HL focused communication training in the three countries Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands. In total 13 to 16 health professionals per focus group round from multiple disciplines provided their perspectives on the training.

*Results:* The development process yielded a modular training focused on knowledge and awareness of health literacy and communication skills to address functional, interactive and critical health literacy. The pilot testing showed promising learning outcomes across health settings and in multiple disciplines. The training raises awareness and increases knowledge, self-efficacy and communication skills of HP's in a simulated practice session. Based on the contribution of HP's, the training was finalized.

*Conclusion:* The modular training in health literacy focused communication as developed is feasible and acceptable to HPs and has promising learning outcomes.

### 2. Key messages

1. Core components of the modular training program in health literacy focused communication are knowledge of health literacy, identification of health literacy problems and interpersonal communication strategies to facilitate the development of functional, interactive and critical health literacy skills of patients.
2. Health professionals preferred experiential learning in a safe and supported environment, using role play and recorded interactions and perceived that this enhanced their skills in health literacy focused communication.

- The training in health literacy focused communication as developed in three European countries is feasible and acceptable to health professionals across health settings and in multiple disciplines. Learning outcomes are promising and the training increased awareness, knowledge, self-efficacy and skills of professionals in a simulated practice session.

### 3. General information on the training

The overall training model of health literacy focused communication is shown in Figure 1. Health literacy focused communication is defined as a person-centred approach to enhance functional, interactive and critical HL and promote health by effective self-management. HL is promoted by tailoring communication and improving information exchange to enhance functional HL, shared decision making to enhance interactive HL and enabling self-management skills to enhance critical HL. The final aim of the training is to promote health by effective patient self-management. The health literacy levels interact, for example, a patient can experience problems with functional HL but has sufficient interactive HL to actively participate in treatment. Health professionals can influence health literacy through the application of communication strategies. The communication strategies interact as well and are used when appropriate.

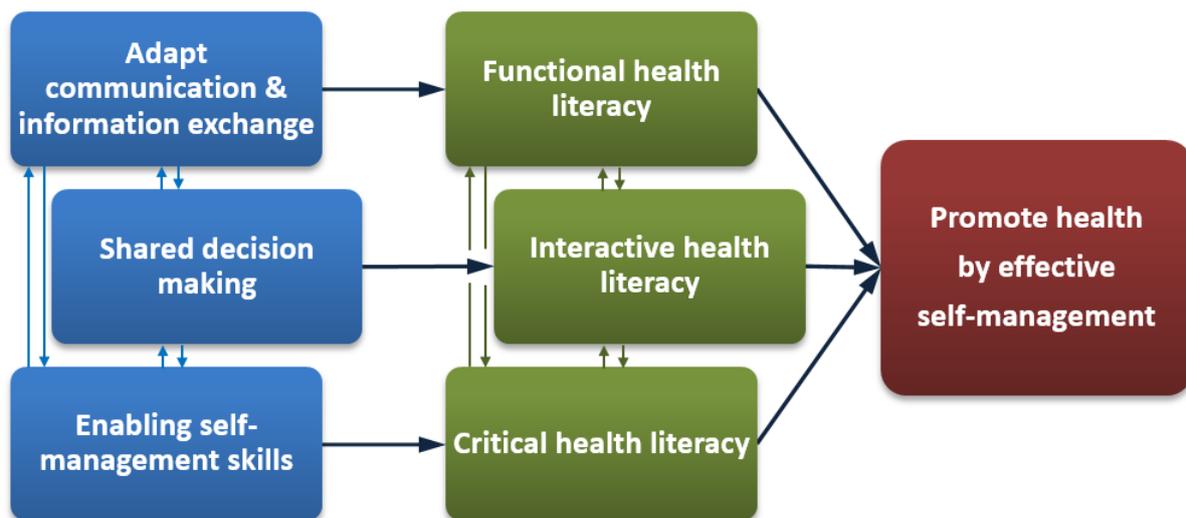


Figure 1. Model of training in Health literacy focused communication

### 4. Overview of training competencies, learning outcomes and training program.

The current training consists of three competencies: 1) to increase knowledge and awareness, 2) to teach skills and 3) to sustain skills and behavior change. The learning outcomes and workshops are structured around those three competencies, which are presented in Table 1. The health literacy communication training is 13 hours in total, including 5 workshops of 2-hours and 3 hours of self-study. The first workshop increases knowledge and awareness of health literacy. Workshops 2-4 increase communication strategies in a simulated session by interactive presentations and roleplays,

including a recorded interaction. The fifth workshop focuses on applying and sustaining the communication strategies by a practical format.

**Table 1. Competencies, learning outcomes and training modules of HL focused communication**

Competencies & Learning outcomes	Effective learning Strategies
<p><b>Competency 1. To inform and educate:</b> <i>Professionals know about and be aware of HL problems, the impact of HL and know how to use interventions to tackle HL problems.</i></p> <p><b>Learning outcomes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can tell about the impact of limited health literacy on health:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. explain what health literacy is;</li> <li>b. understand the impact that limited health literacy has on patient’s health;</li> <li>c. identify ways to recognise patients with limited health literacy in practice.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Apply strategies that identify low health literacy and HL related problems in a simulated session.</li> <li>3. Evaluate your own identification strategies in a simulated session and explain how this experience can improve communication with clients</li> <li>4. Describe one change you can make to your practice to improve identification of low HL.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Preparation workshop 1: Read HL factsheet</b></p> <p><b>Workshop 1 (2h): Knowledge and awareness of health literacy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show video on definition of HL and review HL factsheet.</li> <li>• Impact of low HL: Show video of a patient with low HL and group discussion.</li> <li>• Recognition of limited HL</li> <li>• Assessment on written education materials on HL focused communication.</li> <li>• Communication exercise on patient with low HL.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Competency 2. To teach skills:</b> <i>Increasing skills of professionals to mitigate health literacy related problems of patients with limited health literacy and facilitate HL focused communication.</i></p> <p><b>Learning outcomes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain HL communication strategies that promote the development of health literacy skills of patients.</li> <li>2. Apply HL communication strategies that promote the development of health literacy skills of patients in a simulated session.</li> <li>3. Evaluate your own HL communication strategies that promote development of</li> </ol>	<p><b>Preparation workshops 2-4: Read factsheet HL focused communication and review visually recorded interaction.</b></p> <p><b>Workshop 2 (2h) Communication to enhance functional HL.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interactive presentation on gathering of information (open questions, observing non-verbal communication)</li> <li>b. Roleplay round 1 to practice gathering of information.</li> <li>c. Interactive presentation on providing information (clear communication, teach back).</li> <li>d. Roleplay round 2 to practice providing of information.</li> </ol>

<p>health literacy among LH patients in a simulated session and explain how this experience can improve HL communication skills with clients</p> <p>4. Describe one change you can make to your practice to improve communication and relationships with clients.</p>	<p><b>Workshop 3 (2h) Communication to enhance interactive HL.</b></p> <p>a. Interactive presentation on involving and educating patients on shared decision making</p> <p>b. Roleplay round 3 to practice involving and educating patients on shared decision making</p> <p><b>Workshop 4 (2h) Communication to enhance critical HL</b></p> <p>a. Interactive presentation on participation and health literacy regarding enabling self-management skills and educating patients on self-management.</p> <p>b. Roleplay round 4 to practice enabling self-management skills and educating patients on self-management.</p>
<p><b>Competency 3. To support behavior change and maintenance:</b> <i>The training encourages and motivates professionals to adopt, change and maintain behaviors to mitigate health literacy problems.</i></p> <p><b>Learning outcomes:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Share and value his or hers performance of HL focused communication on conversation with (simulation)patients with low HL together with other students.</li> <li>2. Create a tool for the organization were sustainability of health literacy focused communication skills for professionals are secured.</li> <li>3. Hold on and increase motivation, self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards applying health literacy focused communication strategies with patients with low HL.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Preparation workshop 5: Reflect on visually recorded interaction.</b></p> <p><b>Workshop 5 (2h). Sustaining health literacy focused communication</b></p> <p><b>How can you use HL focused communication?</b></p> <p>a. Sharing experiences on (videotaped) roleplay in groups of 2-3 persons &gt; option to review video in group.</p> <p><b>Practical assignment on sustaining and developing HL focused communication?</b></p> <p>b. Develop a practical tool or action plan to apply in daily practice with patients with limited HL, pitch your findings.</p>