Inclusive Healthcare Partnership Project

Better health through patient-provider partnerships for adults with developmental disabilities.

Plain Language Checklist

- ☐ Puts most important information first.
- ☐ Focuses on need to know, not nice to know.
- ☐ Avoid jargons and acronyms. If you can't avoid jargon, explain what the jargon means!
- ☐ Has words that are 3 syllables or less.
- ☐ Uses short sentences. One idea per sentence.
- ☐ Has less than 15-20 words per sentence.
- ☐ Uses common, "living room" words.
- ☐ Uses active voice. (Person + action + object).
  Tom painted the house. ~~The house was painted by Tom.~~
- ☐ Uses words that are culturally appropriate.
- ☐ Repeats important words and phrases.
- ☐ Is direct and clear.

Did you use graphics, pictures, or symbols to help explain the message? Place pictures to the left of text. Use pictures with your main points. You do not need a picture for every sentence. We recommend 4 to 5 pictures per page.
Ask others to review your choice of images.

Did you follow these accessibility rules?

1. Font type does not use Serifs (size 14 or larger).
2. No ALL CAPS.
3. Use of **bold** is okay (but avoids <u>underline</u> and *italics*).
4. Has accessible spacing (1.5 is good).
5. Uses lists. Numbers work better than bullets.
6. Uses color choices with high contrast.
7. Has lots of white space.
8. Avoids columns.
9. Does not write out numbers (say "4" instead of "four").
10. Avoids text over graphics.
11. Uses headings.
12. Has wide margins (at least 1 inch).
13. Text lines-up on the left.
14. No contractions. Use "do not" instead of "don't."
15. Uses page numbers.
16. Uses stories instead of graphs and statistics.
17. Does not use a hyphen to split a word at the end of a line.
18. Keeps all of the sentences of a paragraph on the same page.

Check readability and aim for 6th grade reading level.

Get feedback from people with disabilities. Ask the reader how they would say it!

Big thanks to the Green Mountain Self-Advocates for the original "Plain Language Checklist" that inspired this document.