

Language and Communications Access

Progress and Lessons Learned
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Poll

- Getting to Know You
- We want to hear your lesson learned too



- Context: Where we started
- Language and Communications Access Plan Development
- Spanish Language Access
- Plain Language Access



- **AUCD:** Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- **UCEDD:** University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service



- **LEND:** Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities
- **IDDRC:** Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center



“Living without being able to communicate is like being behind four glass walls. You are able to see others and they can see you; but you are ignored, or worse, talked down to until you stop remembering who you are and why you are important.”

-- Rick Creech, AAC User, Testimony Senate Special Committee on Aging Hearing, 4/27/2017

Context and Framing

- [Executive Order 13166](#)
 - Anyone who gets federal money must
 - Look at your services to see if people with limited English need support to access them
 - make a plan to address those needs
 - and follow through with that plan.

AUCD Strategic Map



- Developed in 2018
- Central Office Goals for Each Petal
- Model Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Goals
 - Accessibility
 - Cultural Exchange
 - Language Access

- Trainee records from 2019 showed over 100 languages
 - Spanish
 - Chinese
 - Arabic
 - Hindi
- Puerto Rico UCEDD staff speak Spanish
- Many CAC members and UCEDD staff need Plain Language

Poll

- What are the language needs at your center or program?



Needs

- Staff Turn Over
- Growth



Strengths

- Commitment to access
- Diversity
 - 30% of staff use a different language than English at home

Language and Communications Access Plan Development



- 2019

- Plan developed
- Language and Communications Access Advisory Committee
- Spanish and Plain Language Prioritized
- Gather data through evaluation

- 2020

- Connect with translator
- Work on Spanish and Plain Language Priorities
- Product language available in NIRS



- 2021

- Adapt evaluation into accessible formats
- Incorporate needs assessment into Advisory Committee
- Share progress with network
- Staff language available in NIRS directory

- 2022

- Alignment with ED&I Action Plan Implementation



- Broader than just spoken language needs
- Use existing advisory groups
- Build in accountability
- Commit money and time
- Staff development
- It's a process
 - Look for progress not perfection
- Prioritize



PLAIN LANGUAGE

**Words Matter: Do You Want to Impress People or
Help People Understand**

**Nancy Ward, Master Trainer
Rose Ann Percival, OKUCEDD**

#1: We read the Plain Language Act and Guidelines

We found:

- The Act itself is 2 ½ pages long
- The Guidelines are 118 pages long
- The Guidelines are NOT written in Plain Language

“Shall” is one of those officious and obsolete words that has encumbered legal style writing for many years.

Another useful organizing principle is to put general information first, with specialized information to the general information later.

Regulations frequently address processes. Chronological organization is best for process information.

#2: The group looked at several definitions of Plain Language, Plain English or Easy Read.

We found Plain Language is not a definition, but a process a writer must go through to make sure people get the message. Everyone needs to understand what you said or wrote down.

This is really important when it plays a role in our health.

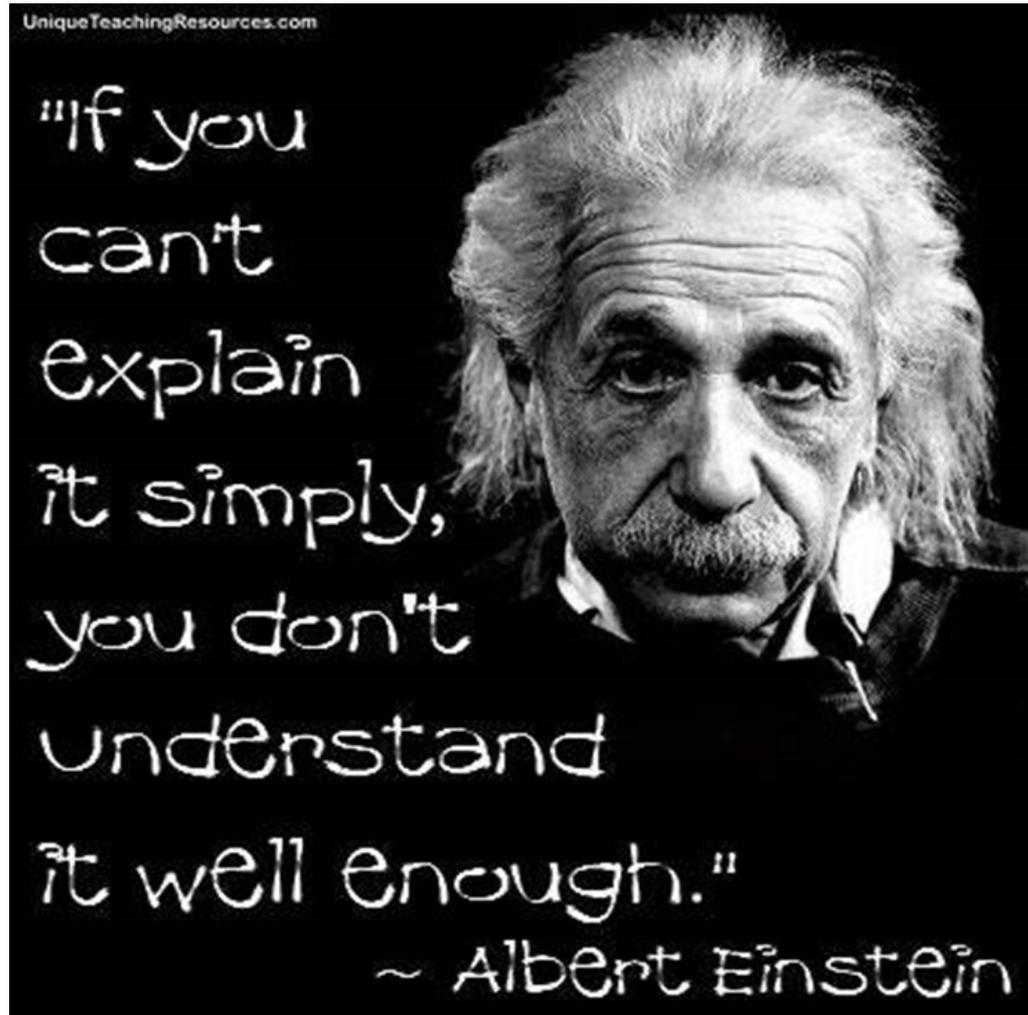


#3: Looked at other groups that said they had information written in plain language. Some of these were not in Plain Language, especially to the people with disabilities serving on the committee.

You have to know who is going to read your information and why they are reading it.

We found what one group thinks is plain language....is not what self-advocates think is plain language.





WORDS MATTER

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.”
Mark Twain



GOALS OF PLAIN LANGUAGE

The goal of plain language is about getting people to understand what you are saying. It is a process of looking at everything you write to see if it is easy to read and understand.

Plain language strives to be:

- easy to read
- easy to understand
- easy to use
- clear and to the point

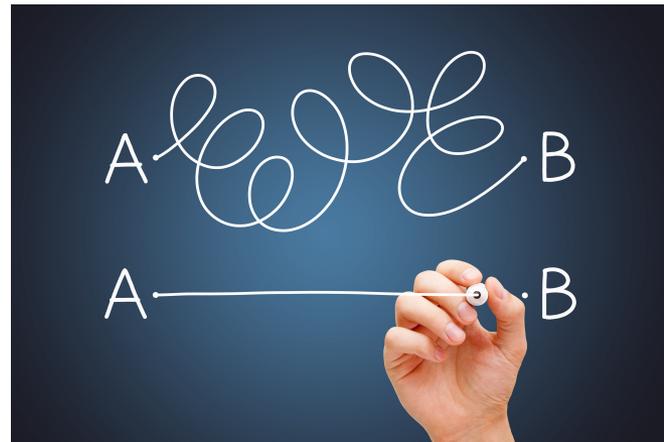
Plain language is not unprofessional writing or a method of "dumbing down" or "talking down" to the reader.

You have to help me by putting things in Plain Language. Self-Advocates want to help and be a part of change, but we struggle understanding policies and laws. There are too many words and too many big words I don't understand. Help me to help you.

You give me policy to review and make comments on, but I cannot understand what it is saying. It takes me a long time to figure it out and sometimes, I just give up.

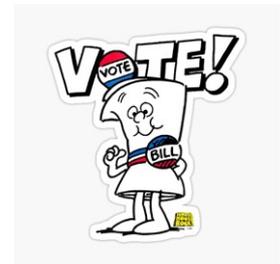


Rules of Plain Language



Here are a few things we feel are important when thinking about plain language. These ideas can be used as a starting place for our work.

1. Write for your audience.
2. Make sure what you are saying is what people want to know.
3. You need symbols and pictures to help people “see” what you are talking about.
4. Make it easy to follow
5. Do not use a lot of extra words.
6. Test your writing





Dietary Guidelines: Losing Weight Safely

Before

- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activity on most days, preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, calisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sports exercise, and dancing.

After

- Do at least 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking, most days of the week.

Before:

If your initial screening evaluation indicates you have hypertension, you will be asked to participate in the second phase of a research investigation.

After:

If your tests show you have high blood pressure, we will ask you to be in the second part of the study.



If it is too simple, it can't be right....right?



- Continue to work with Oklahoma Self-Advocacy Network (OKSAN) and Oklahoma People First (OPF) using self-advocates to provide input on Plain Language project.
- Provide input of OKSAN and OPF to AUCD group
- Continue to research resources on Plain Language

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A University Center for Excellence
in Developmental Disabilities
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center



Developmental Disabilities
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Spanish Language Access

Goals

- Assist
- Learning Community
- Collective Projects

Achievements

- Networking
- Collaboration
- Support areas of need
- Collective Projects
 - Partnership with UnidosUS.

- Producing linguistically competent content is more than just translating.
- We need more representation:
 - Start in our centers, hire more staff and leadership that are Spanish speaking.
 - language-concordant care & services.

- Collective projects.
- Identify best practices to increase social capital.
- Forming alliances between centers to provide support in areas of need.

Questions, Discussion



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