

**Job Aid**

## **A Checklist for Creating Easy-to-Read Written Materials**

### **General content**

- Limit content to one or two key objectives without providing too much information or trying to cover everything at once
- Limit content to what patients really need to know by avoiding information overload
- Use only words that are well known to individuals without medical training
- Make certain content is appropriate for age and culture of the target audience

### **Text construction**

- Write at or below the 6th grade level
- Use one- or two-syllable words
- Use short paragraphs
- Use active voice
- Avoid all but the most simple tables and graphs. Clear explanations (legends) should be placed adjacent to each table or graph and also in the text

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The content for this material was excerpted from the Health Disparities Collaborative website and is available at:  
<http://www.healthdisparities.net>.

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### Fonts and typestyle

- Use large font (minimum 12 point) with serifs because serif text has little horizontal lines that appear at the bottom of letters, as in the title of this table
- Don't use more than two or three font styles on a page to ensure consistency in appearance
- Use uppercase and lowercase text  
ALL UPERCASE TEXT IS HARD TO READ

### Layout

- Ensure a good amount of empty space on the page. Don't clutter the page with text or pictures
- Use headings and subheadings to separate blocks of text
- Bulleted lists are preferable to blocks of text in paragraphs
- Illustrations are useful if they depict common, easy-to-recognize objects
- Avoid complex anatomical diagrams by showing images of people, places, and things that are age appropriate and culturally appropriate to the target audience