



# Public Health Preparedness Summit

## Public Health Communication

### The Convergence of Health Literacy, Culture, & Messaging Transcreation

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# What can we do Without Communication?

- Culturally Tailored Communication is key for Public Health Preparedness

We are not **rational** creatures who **feel**

We are **emotional** creatures who **rationalize**

[Devdutt Pattanaik](#)

- Emotions are cultural data that require cultural training to be able to interpret it
- Culture leads individuals to regulate their emotions
- Culture modulates the link between emotion regulation and well-being



# What Is Health Literacy and Why Is It So Important?



# What is Health Literacy

- **Health Literacy** is a cultural, cognitive and social **skill** which determines the motivation & ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use health related information

WHO.org

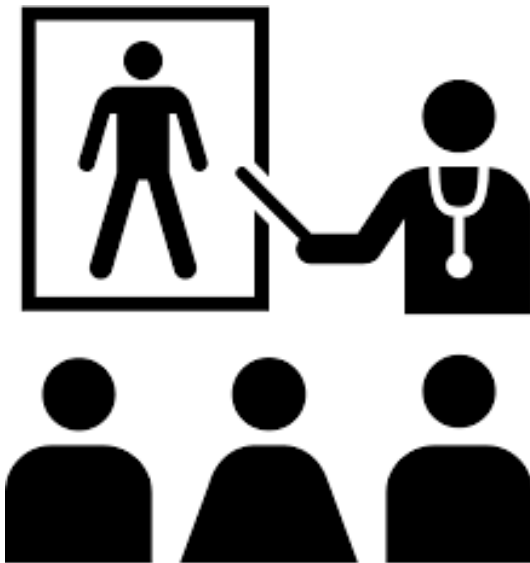


# Health Literacy vs. Health Education

Do not confuse Health Literacy with Health Education

- ✓ Health **Education** is a public health **activity** by which individuals and groups learn health related topics
- ✓ Health Education does **not** address:
  - Personal motivation
  - Cultural background
  - Social skills
  - Providers' and patient's bias
  - Learning disabilities
  - Stigma, etc.

# Health Education Vs Health Literacy



... a multidimensional concept



« A person's knowledge, motivation and competences to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information in order to make judgments and take decisions in everyday life concerning healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion to maintain or improve quality of life during the life course»

WHO. Health literacy. The solid facts. Health, 2016.

# The Health Literacy Challenge

**Demands +  
Expectations**

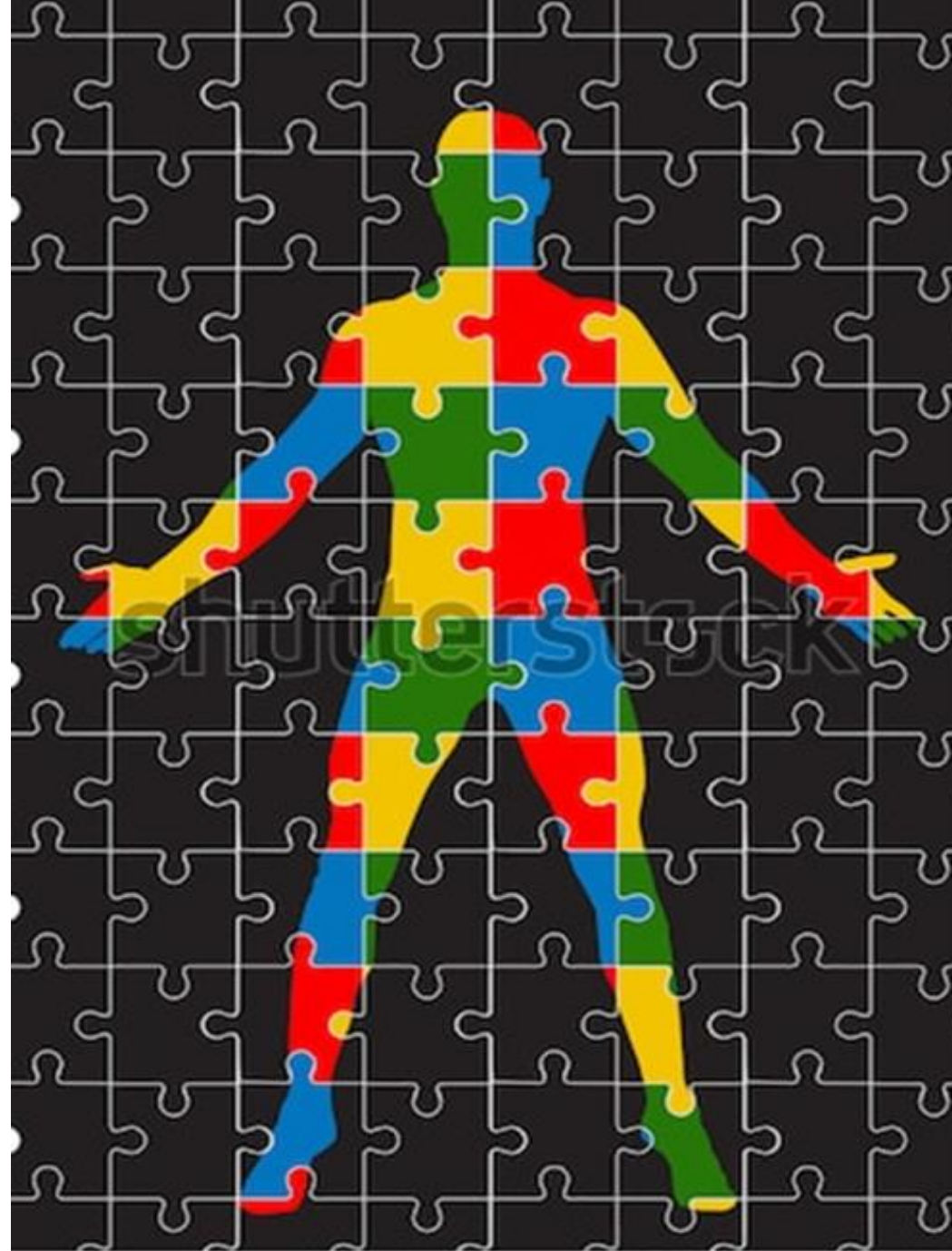
**Individual  
Skills**



**Health  
Literacy**



Health Literacy  
embodies the  
**skills** that each  
individual  
needs to  
develop and  
understand to  
maintain &  
improve their  
health






9 out of 10  
adults have  
**difficulty**  
using  
everyday  
health  
information

LEP individuals do **not** participate  
in national surveys


National Center for Education Statistics

# WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY?

↓ Low **health literacy** is linked with **poor health outcomes** which = ↑ higher rates of **hospitalization**.



**Health literacy** is the capacity to **obtain, process and understand basic health information** needed to make appropriate health decisions.



**9 out of 10 adults** have difficulty using everyday health information.


**MORE THAN 1 IN 2 ADULTS CAN'T:**

UNDERSTAND A VACCINATION CHART


**OR**

READ A PRESCRIPTION LABEL CORRECTLY


## Steps to Improve Health Literacy




At the doctor's office, ask for clarification if something is not clear.




Repeat back any instructions to confirm understanding to ensure that information does not get missed.



When leaving the doctor's office, ask for health education materials and written instructions.



Bring a friend or a family member to appointments to ensure that information is not missed.



Schedule a follow-up appointment and follow all post-care instructions.

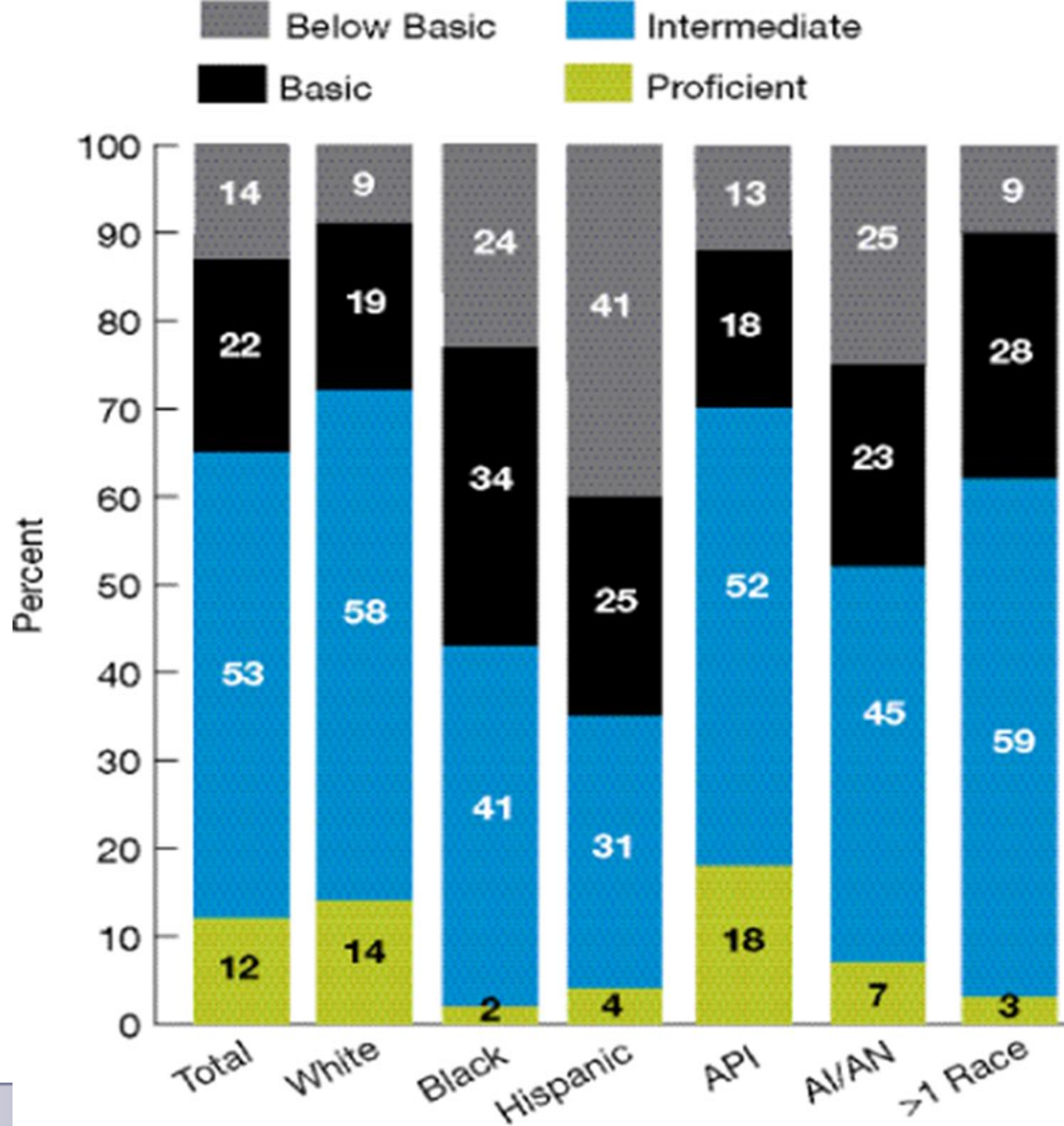
Sources: [www.ITriageHealth.com](http://www.ITriageHealth.com) and [www.health.gov](http://www.health.gov)

**HealthStyle Press**  
Putting Health in Your Lifestyle

Visit [www.healthstylepress.com](http://www.healthstylepress.com) to download our **Health Literacy Checklist**.

# Health Literacy by Race and Ethnicity

National Center for  
Education Statistics

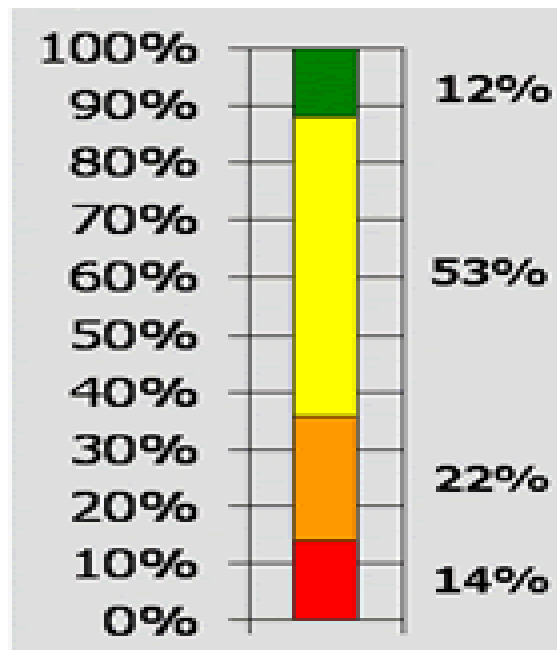


# Poor Health Literacy Leads to:

- Lower use of preventive care services
- Greater use of emergency care
- Frequent hospitalizations
- Poor self-care management
- Unhealthy behaviors
- Poor health outcomes & premature deaths
- Higher health care costs (loss of \$238 billion/yr)

# We need to know the Health Literacy Level of our target population to develop verbal or written communication messages

## Health Literacy in America: Results from the NAAL



Proficient: Define medical term from complex document, Calculate share of employee's health insurance costs

Intermediate: Determine healthy weight from BMI chart, Interpret prescription and over-the-counter drug labels

Basic: Understand simple patient education handout

Below Basic: Circle date on appointment slip, Understand simple pamphlet about pre-test instructions



# patients with low **HEALTH LITERACY...**



Are more  
likely to visit an  
**EMERGENCY  
ROOM**



Have more  
**HOSPITAL  
STAYS**



Are less  
likely to follow  
**TREATMENT  
PLANS**

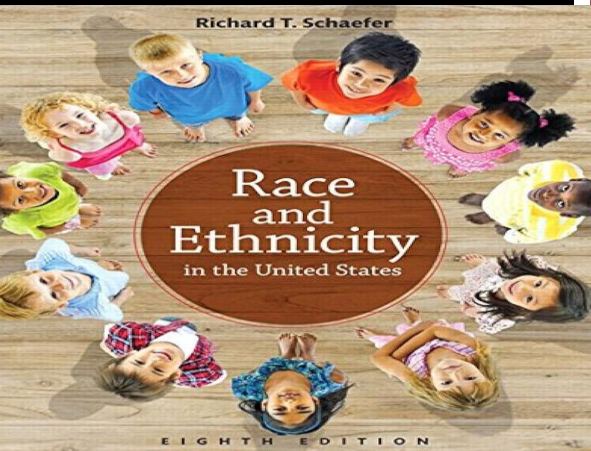
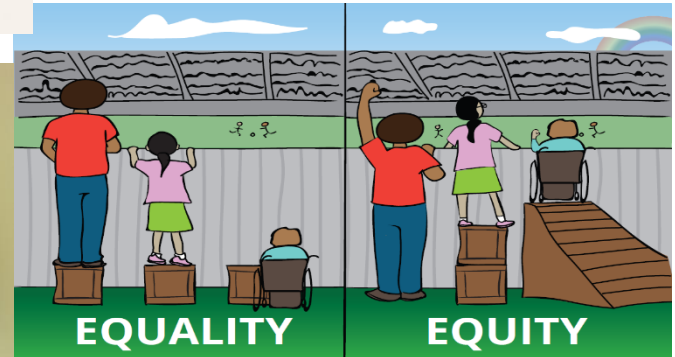
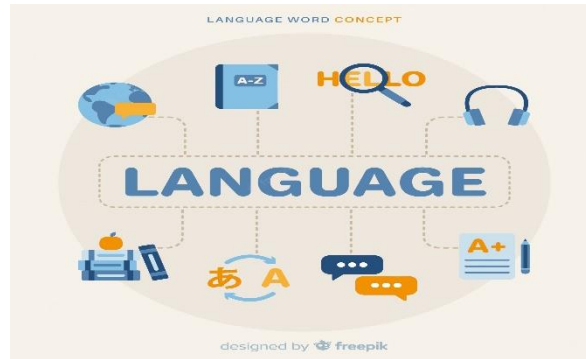


Have higher  
**MORTALITY  
RATES**

[\*\*www.cdc.gov/phpr\*\*](http://www.cdc.gov/phpr)



# Factors that Influence Health Literacy



# Factors that Determine/Influence Health Literacy

Health Literacy-the key to improved health communication is based primarily but **not** exclusively on the following topics:

1. Social determinants of Health
2. Equity and equitable communication, misinformation
3. Culture, language, acculturation, understanding, & trust
4. Cultural competence, cultural awareness, humility, etc.
5. Racial/ethnic diversity, immigration status, work conditions
6. Bias and stigma



# 1. Social Determinants & Health Literacy

- Life is a combination of a genetic Lottery and a geographic accident
- All social determinates of health play a role in effective communication
- Telehealth or telemedicine can **not** be used in geographically disadvantage areas **without** broadband, laptops or cell phones

Figure 1

Social Determinants of Health

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
Employment	Housing	Literacy	Hunger	Social integration	Health coverage
Income	Transportation	Language	Access to healthy options	Support systems	Provider availability
Expenses	Safety	Early childhood education		Community engagement	Provider linguistic and cultural competency
Debt	Parks	Vocational training		Discrimination	Quality of care
Medical bills	Playgrounds	Higher education		Stress	
Support	Walkability				
	Zip code / geography				

## Health Outcomes

Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

# 2. Equity, Health Literacy & Communication

## Health equity is:

- the absence of **systematic** disparities in health between and within social groups that have different levels of underlying social advantages



# 3. Culture-the Challenge to Health Literacy

Health is a cultural concept, culture frames & shapes how we perceive the world and our experiences

Culture defines:

- what patients/doctors believe about the causes of disease
- how life and health are perceived
- how health care information is received
- how rights and protections are exercised
- what is considered to be a health problem
- how people should interact with their neighbors
- who should **provide** advice & treatment
- what type of paths should be followed (politics, beliefs, science, etc.)



# Health Literacy- How Culture Affects Health Communications

The influence of culture in health is vast:

- It affects perceptions of **health**, illness, and death
- Beliefs about causes of disease (the 'evil eye', Voodoo)
- Approaches to **health** promotion
- How illness and pain are experienced and expressed
- Where patients seek help (family, pharmacy, traditional healer)
- The types of treatment patients prefer



# Cultural Beliefs, Health Literacy & Communication

- Superstitions, Fake news
- Folk medicine
- Beliefs, myths
- Faith

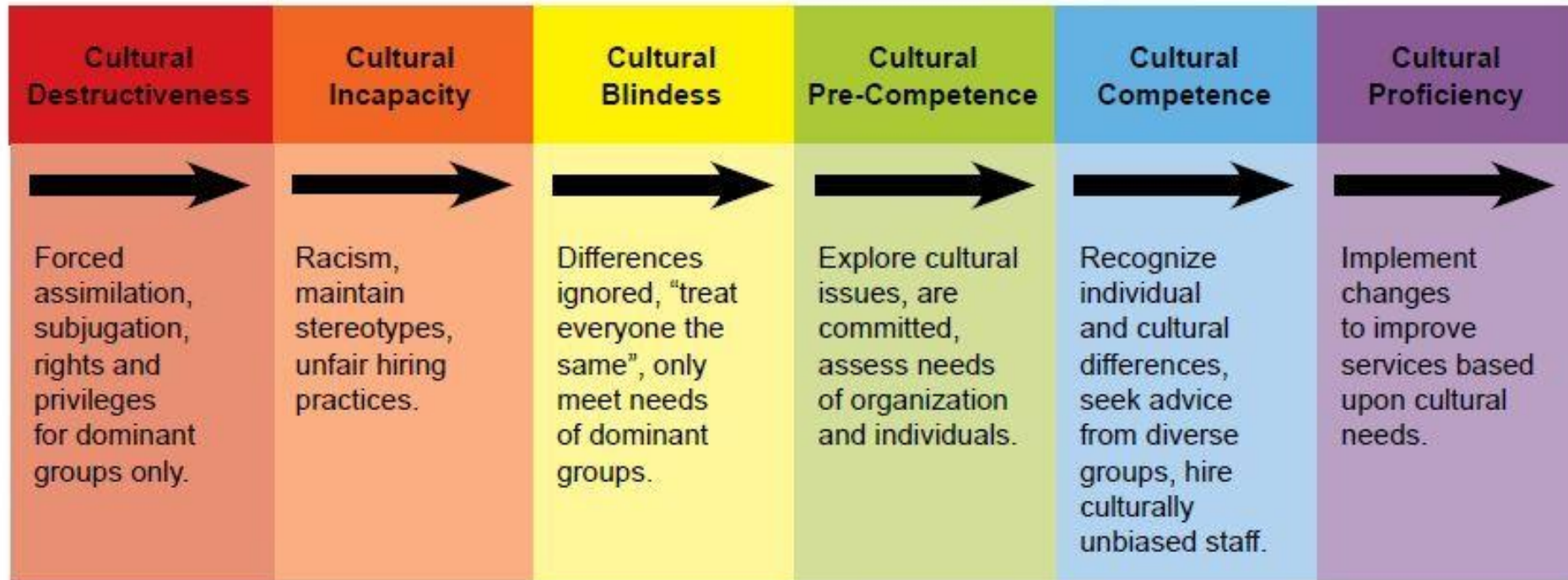




# 4. Health Literacy & Cultural Competence

- Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, & policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in **cross-cultural** situations

Continuum of Cultural Competency



# Folkloric Medicine & Health Communications

Coining

Cupping

Acupuncture

Massage

Sweeping





# Acculturation and Communication

## What is Acculturation?

The process by which an individual or group adopts the practices and values of one culture while still retaining their own culture of origin.



- Typically used in reference to a minority culture adopting elements of a majority culture.

- However, it's also a two-way process, since the majority culture also adopts elements of the minority culture(s).

# 5. Health Literacy-Communications & Racial/Ethnic Disparities-COVID 19

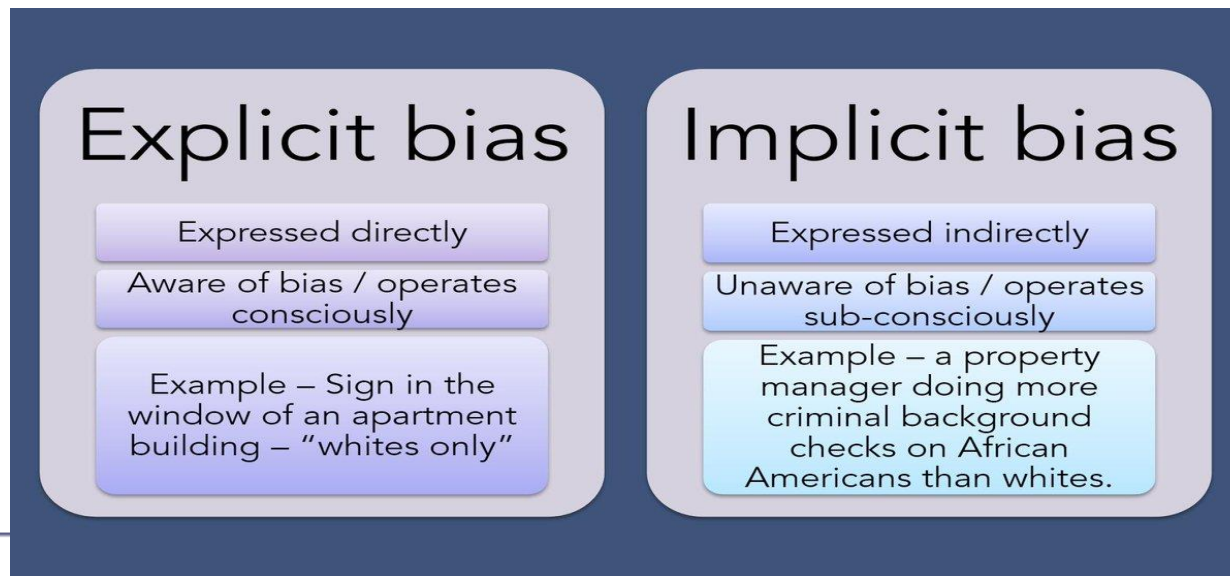
- Nationally, African-American deaths from COVID-19 are 2 times greater than expected based on their share of the population. In 4 states, was **three** or more times greater
- In 42 states plus Washington D.C., Hispanics/Latinos make up a greater share of confirmed cases than their share of the population. In 8 states, was more than 4 times greater (2022)

**THE COLOR OF CORONAVIRUS:  
COVID-19 DEATHS BY RACE AND  
ETHNICITY IN THE U.S.**



# 6. Health Literacy and Bias

- Bias is a **preference** or an inclination, especially one that inhibits **impartial** judgment
- Is a natural tendency among all humans; however, it becomes a concern when it interferes with how we **make** fair **decisions**
- Is disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea or persons, usually closed-minded, prejudicial, or **unfair**



# Health Literacy & Discrimination

- Discrimination is differential behavior or conduct of one person or group toward another person/group based on individual **prejudice** or societal norms that have institutionalized prejudicial attitudes
- Perceived racial/ethnic **discrimination**, is a perception of unfair treatment because of one's race or ethnicity with a range of adverse outcomes, from cardiovascular, to high rates of COVID19





# Health Literacy & Discrimination Types

## Recognising Indirect Discrimination is a Key Issue for Strata Living

### Direct discrimination

- Treating a person less favourably because of their disability
- Telling someone they can't use the pool because their appearance will upset others

### Indirect discrimination

- A person is prevented from doing something a person without a disability can do
- A person with a disability can't open the pool gate without the aid of a proximity device which the OC won't install

# Health Literacy and Stigma

- Stigma is a social opportunistic disease that attaches to many illnesses and **increases** morbidity and mortality rates (HU Stigma Conference)
- Stigma is associated with a **lack** of knowledge about health: how COVID-19 spreads, a need to **blame** someone, **fears** about disease and death, and gossip that spreads rumors and myths

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON **STIGMA**

November 14 to 17 2023

[www.whocanyoutell.org](http://www.whocanyoutell.org)



## HOW STIGMA IMPACTS RECOVERY



### STIGMA CAN...

**REDUCE** WILLINGNESS TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

**CAUSE** RELUCTANCE TO ATTEND TREATMENT

**LIMIT** ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT

**DIMINISH** SELF-ESTEEM

**EXACERBATE** DEPRESSION

**AFFECT** PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT A TIME THEY'RE NEEDED MOST

# MESSAGING Transcreation

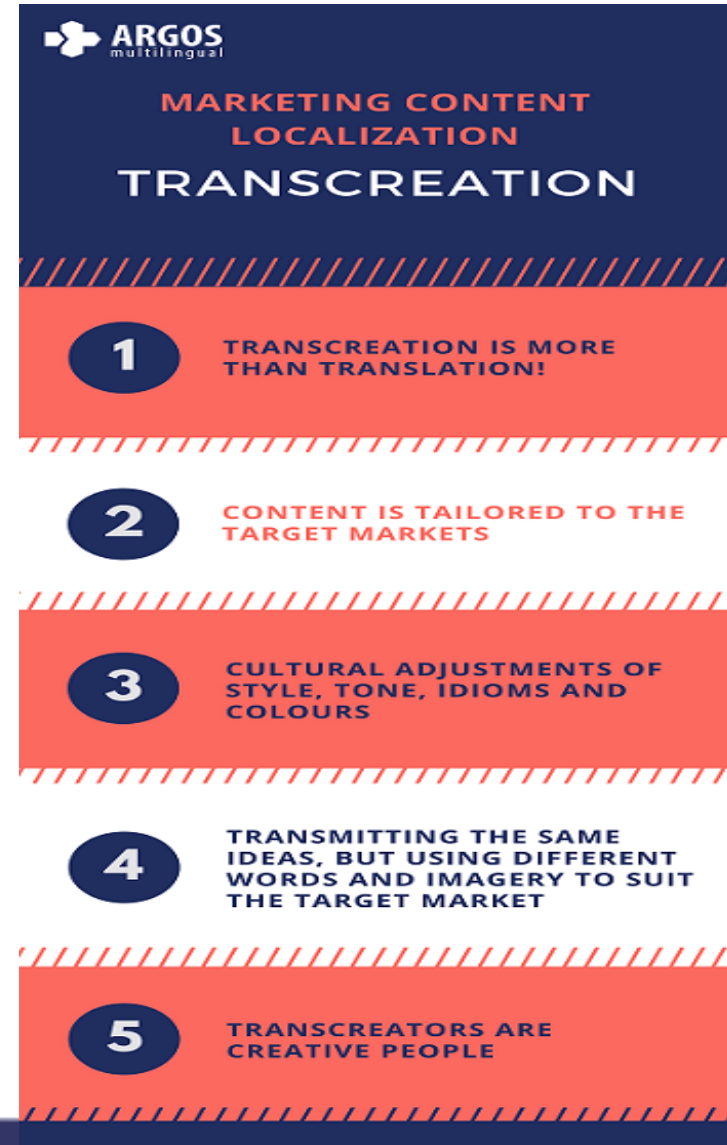
**TRANSCREATOR:  
WHAT THE ROLE  
ENTAILS AND THE  
SKILLS REQUIRED**



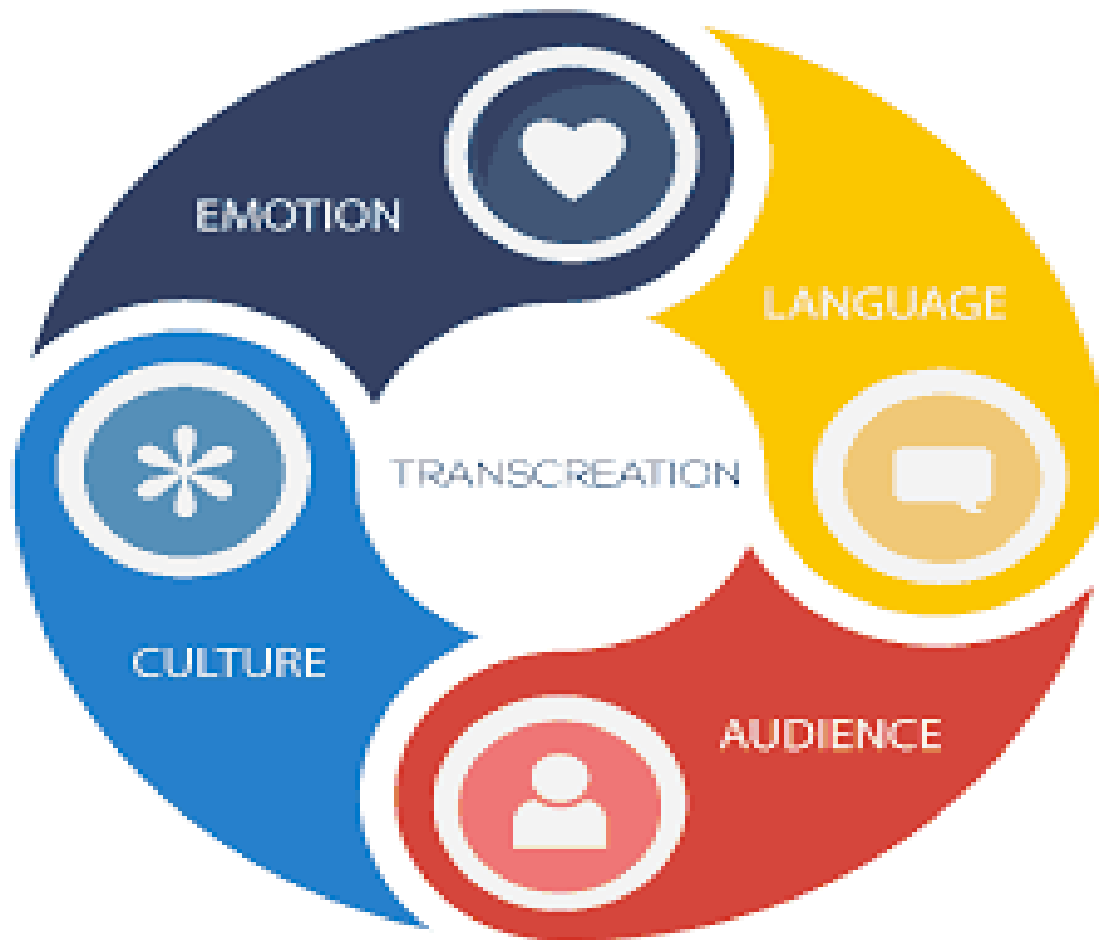


# Messaging Transcreation-the Key to Improved Communications

- The transfer of **ideas** from one language or culture to another
- Transcreation is a technique used in the field of **health communication**, to adapt a **message** from one language or culture to another
- Transcreation is the cultural process of adapting content from one language or culture to another while maintaining the existing tone, intent and style



Translation: **words** from one language to another  
Transcreation: **ideas** from one language or culture to another



# Messaging Transcreation-Communication

- Translation focuses on replacing the **words** in one language with corresponding **words** in a new language
- Messaging transcreation focuses on conveying the same message, **idea & concept** to another language and culture
- One example is transcreation of messages according to cultural understanding of health and life of senior citizens (baby boomers' culture, or for LEP populations)

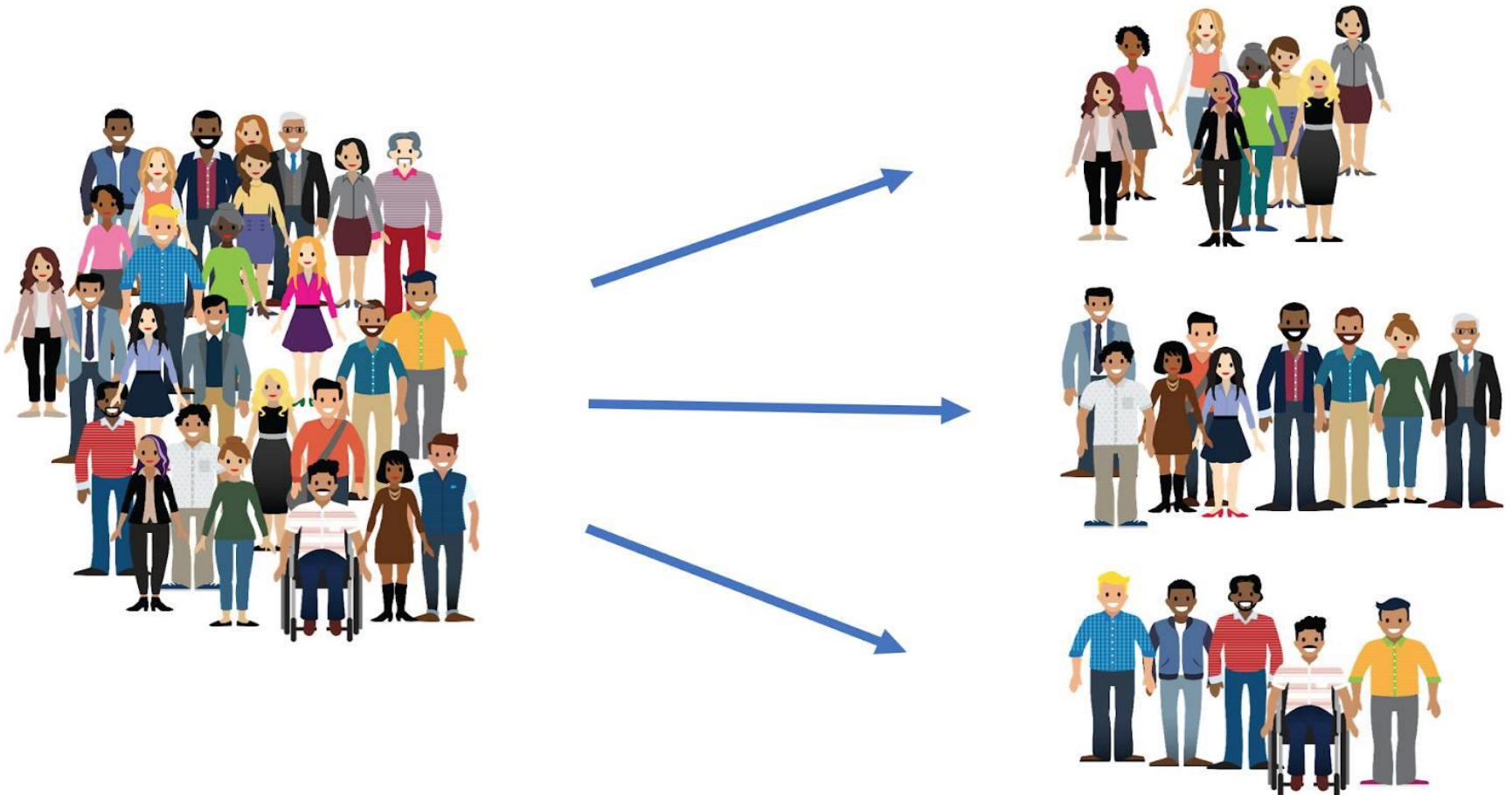


# Limited English Proficient-Communication

- **Language**, and culture, can create barriers to communication, compliance and lead to **health inequities**
- Interpreters & Translators must be **trained** in how to assess health literacy in English/Spanish (other languages when available)
  - **Interpreter** is a person specially trained to convert **oral** messages from one language to another
  - **Translator** is a person specially trained to convert **written** text from one language to another



# Messaging Transcreation & Population Segmentation





# Messaging Transcreation & Population Segmentation

## THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### GEN ALPHA

EARLY 2010S-2020S

The most materially endowed and tech-savvy generation. Born into the age of iPads, these are "screenagers" who cannot be away from screens.



### GEN Y / MILLENNIALS

1981-1996

Considered book smart and tech-savvy, have the mentality of "fun first, work later".



### BABY BOOMERS

1946-1964

Makes up about 73 million of the U.S. population. Considered an economically influential generation because of their economic success.



### GEN Z:

1997-2012

Social natives who are always digitally connected. Probably the most "woke" generation, always discussing global and social issues.



### GEN X

1965-1980

They are known to be street smart, though highly skeptical. They are not in the mood for drama and always strive to get things done.



### SILENT GENERATION

1928-1945

A generation that was born into the Great Depression and political instability. Known to be thrifty, respectful and loy.



Gender



Age



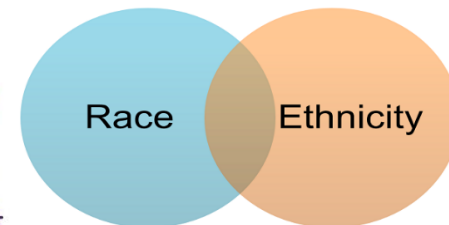
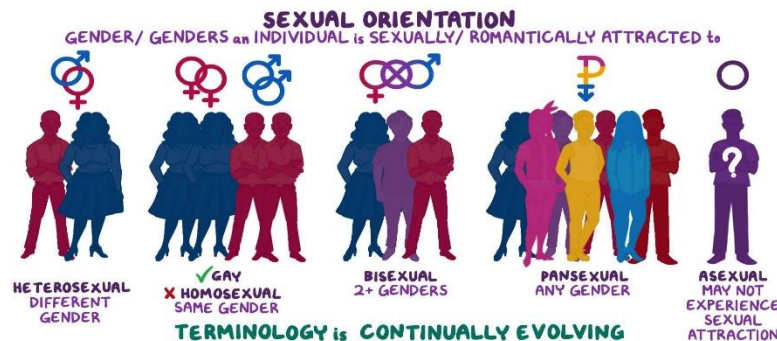
Ethnicity



Disability



Sexual Orientation



CITIZEN**SIDE**.COM

# Transcreation & Population-Segmentation

- Population/Audience segmentation is a key element for culturally tailored communication
- It is the process of **dividing** a large audience **into smaller** groups of people - **or segments** - who have **similar needs, values or characteristics**
- The 4 main types are: **Demographic, Psychographic, Behavioral and Geographic**
- For each of the 4 population segmentation types we need to address & incorporate:
  - Health literacy skills
  - Low literacy and/or illiteracy
  - Culture & behavior
  - Language (LEP)



# Messaging Transcreation and Population Segmentation - a Key Communication Step

The most commonly used segmentation types:

**Demographic:** Describe the outward-facing attributes of a person. For example, their age, gender, or marital status

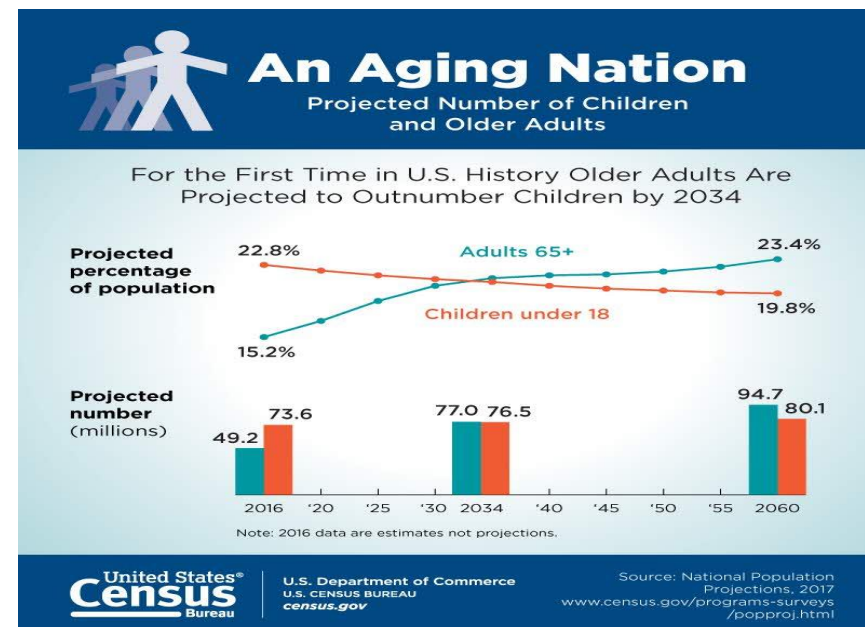
**Behavioral:** The actions they take. This could be reading or listening, online habits, social media sites they visit, or what devices they use

**Psychographic or attitudinal:** Clues into perceptions, interests and mindsets. For example, why they like or dislike certain brands, their lifestyle choices or values (vaccinate, use of masks)

**Geographics:** Where your target population is located. Can be as expansive or narrow as you like, from state, rural, urban, to zip code

# Barriers to Communication Summary

- Population changes
- Cultural values and understanding of health
- Technology gaps (telehealth)
- Inability to understand health information
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Misunderstood faith-related beliefs
- Low literacy or illiteracy
- Developmental gaps
- Populations with disabilities
- Difficulties navigating the health care environment



# Recommendations to Improve Communication

- **Assess** cultural values, misunderstandings, and fears
- **Assess** Health literacy skills of target populations
- **Value** traditional medicine & community traditions
- **Develop** verbal or written communication based on health literacy, language, & culture of your target population
- Population **segmentation** is key for improving communication
- Pilot **test** messages with your target population before dissemination
- Remember “One size does **not** fit all”

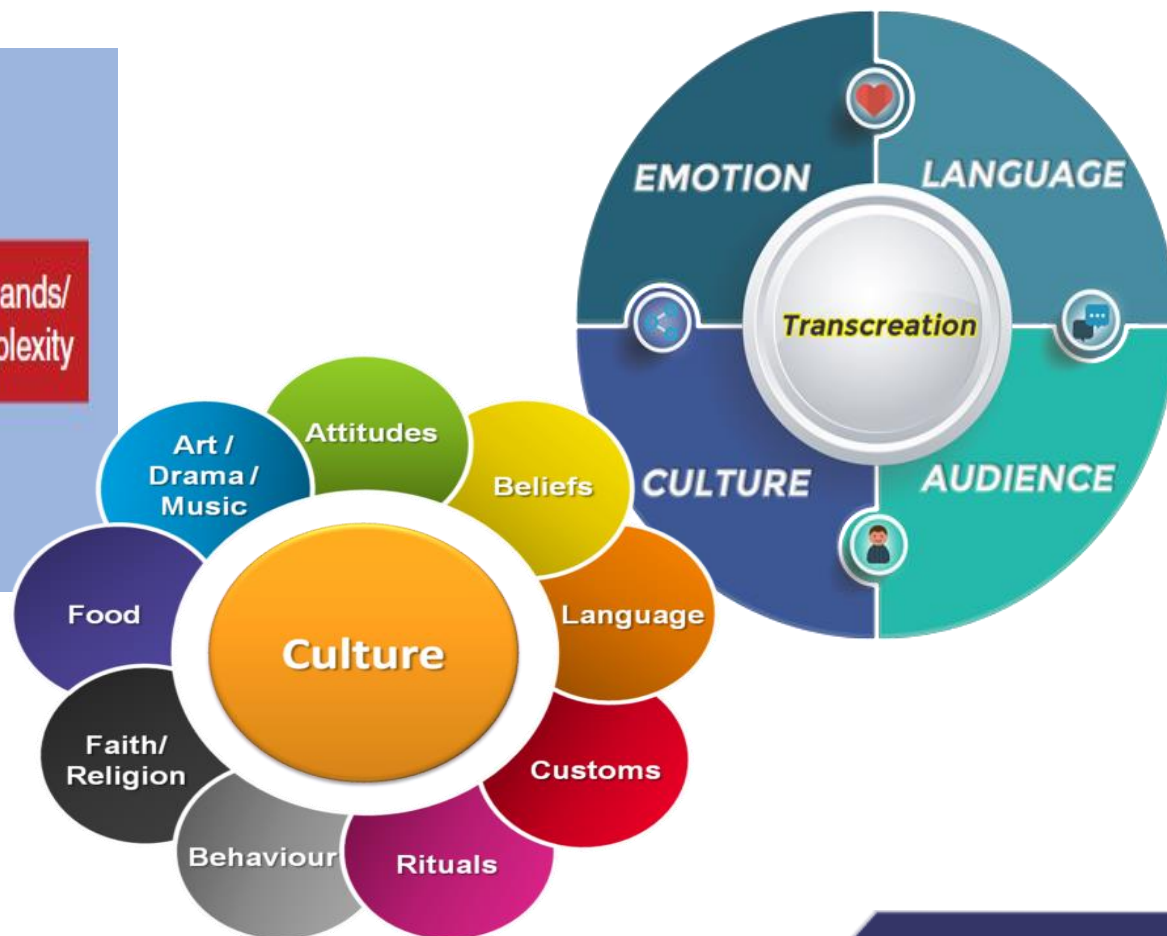
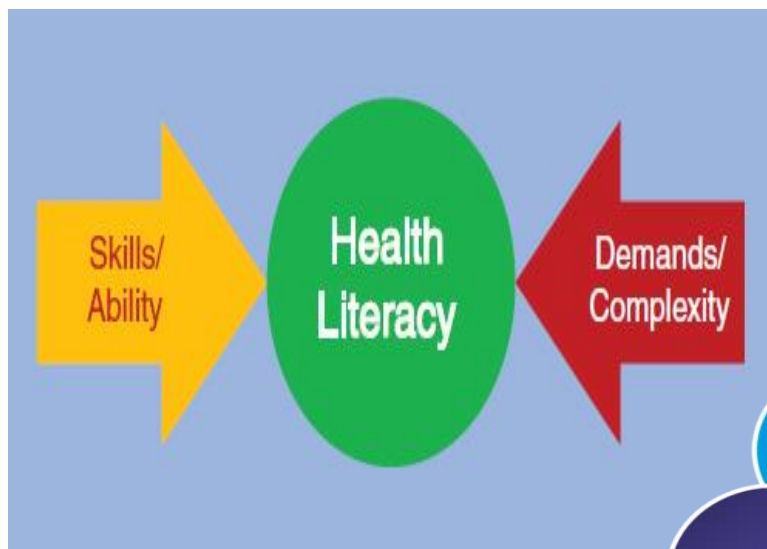


# Summary

- Health literacy is critical to positive communication outcomes
- Culture and Language are basic concepts for communication
- Use messaging transcreation-Not translation (obsolete)
- Plan to design **4 versions** in each language/culture, based on health literacy skills of your target population



# Public Health Communication Convergence of:





# Hands on Culturally Tailored Communication - Messaging Transcreation

A Hurricane arriving in 48 hours

- What do you say?
- Which channels do you use?
- Who delivers the message?
- Comments

Group 1 - “Evacuation” message for baby bloomers

Group 2 - “Evacuation” message for low literates

Group 3 - “Evacuation” message for LEP

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