What Community Engagement Taught Me About Health Communication

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Overview

• Health literacy and Dr. Lisa

• Dr. Lisa on the Street

• Grapevine Health

• Suggestions from the field

• So what now? Calls to action
When health communication goes wrong

How does someone like me access someone like you on a regular basis?
Digital health research study

- Medicaid patients in Washington, DC
  - Ward 8

- Objectives
  - Assess:
    - Mobile phone ownership
    - Interest in digital health engagement
    - Trusted sources of health information

- Findings
  - Mobile phone ownership nearly ubiquitous
  - Engagement with digital health tools low but interest high
  - People trust health information from friends and family more than doctors

Grapevine Health

- Patient Engagement
- Health Literacy
- Community Outreach
Suggestions from the field
Speak so you can be heard
Health communication feedback

• “If I can’t understand you I don’t trust you.”

• “My doctor has an accent. I have an accent so it’s like I have to translate twice. I can get about 50% of it.”

• “[The doctor] didn’t explain it but he wrote gastroparesis on my paper. I didn’t know that word but I know paresis means something don’t work. My stomach was hurting so was he saying my stomach is broken?”

Image: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/201325045814865855/
Value trust.
It is a currency that matters
Medicaid cancer audit

• Cancer is 2\textsuperscript{nd} leading cause of death in the District*
  • Prostate, breast, lung, colon

• Only 47\% treated in FY’17 and ‘18**

• 20\% have metastasis at diagnosis

*District of Columbia Community Health Needs Assessment, DC Department of Health, 2014
**Health Equity Report for the District of Columbia 2018, DC Department of Health
Show up and engage where people are
Cancer Messages and Misconceptions

- Uniformly fatal, i.e. a death sentence
- Contagious
- Stigmatizing
  - Hushed tones
- Treatment is experimental
  - Clinical trials are scary!
- Screening saves lives
- Importance of family history
Embrace social media
When you wake up in the morning and your legs are covered in hives and you try not to panic. I have two hours to self-diagnosis myself into an anxiety attack before urgent care opens.

Dr. Lisa Fitzgerald: I've called a nurse advice line in the past and this experience of using eTeleHealth was WAY BETTER for the following reasons:

1. When you call the nurse advice line you already don't feel good and you are clearly scared enough to call. So when you are trying to navigate the computer directory to even get to the nurse hotline your weary turn to anxiety that can then turn to frustration. So before you even get to the nurse you can already be in a heightened and negative emotional space. I like the idea of taking advantage of technology in such a way that you can have an eversource to feel like the resource is closer than a phone call or more personal than a voice.

2. And as well-trained a representative from a nurse advice line can be, they are still a stranger. They can't show me their face over the phone, I can't see if they have kind eyes or if they are smiling. And I think when you are feeling sick or have a medical issue the bed side manner is just as important as the medical advice. In this experience, seeing your profile picture during your call reminded me this is a real person and not just an MD and this real person was really concerned about me. I think integrating other social media aspects such as Facebook Live really would bring that to life.

3. When I have called a nurse advice line, I had to describe what was going on and I had to describe what I was feeling. I'm not an expert and I don't know what to look out for. Our interaction was limited by my powers of observation. When I was able to speak to Dr. Fitzpatrick I was about to provide her with photos in real time of my hives. We were able to discuss what was going on AND I was able to provide unbiased evidence of my symptoms. That was boss!

4. Using technology to get medical advice is helpful because it 1) creates easier access to builds off of a platform and or experience that am already familiar with, I don't have to learn anything new.

5. Ok, it's convenient?!

6. This experience is also holding me accountable for looking into this allergy situation because if you were so nice to help me I now have a record of what happened when I had the reaction and 3) since you helped me it is inspiring me to take the next step and find out what is causing this allergic reaction.

7. It was fast and I was able to get the info from my house, which is where you want to be when you are feeling sick or having an allergic reaction.

8. It's just a really great idea! The world is changing, technology is changing and while this experience may not eliminate the need to ever go to urgent care to see a doctor; In person (which you should still do when absolutely necessary) in the future another professional, a learned professional that you can trust. That's how you build a foundation of care.

Now pretty please, make this happen! 😊
There’s a captive audience on social media.
What questions do you have about cancer? Write them below! #cancer #healthliteracy #healthinformation

What if the problem is that you don’t know what to ask given the numerous types but are concerned that that pain may be the beginning stage and all your doctor is doing is prescribing painkillers without adequate testing or that lump may be more than just keloids or muscle irritations but the doctors are doing what patients believe is assembly line medicine.
Putting it to use

• Train organization top to bottom in health literacy
  ➢ What language are we using? Taking for granted? *(includes physicians)*
  ➢ Demystify cancer treatment and research

• Assess barriers to social media use in your organization
  ➢ Real vs. perceived vs. uncharted territory
  ➢ Benefits outweigh risks for delivering health information

• Understand the patient/consumer/customer
  ➢ How do you gauge trust? Does your organization value trust?
  ➢ Find ways to get proximal, view the problem, ask about the solution
Thank you

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Lake Kariba, Zimbabwe
Photo credit: Lisa K. Fitzpatrick