



Bridging the Gap Between Doctor & Patient

Delivering Relevant
Health Information

[Outline for Today]

- Health Reference Interview
- Collection Development
- Reaching Out

[Health Reference Interview]

Challenges with Health Questions¹

- Figuring out what someone really wants
- Finding information they can understand

[Unique Considerations]

- Emotions
- Complex Terms & Spelling
- Privacy
- Literacy Skills

[What's the Real Question?]

- Be aware of the person asking the question but don't assume
- Get as much information as you can
- Determine how he will use the information

[User's Needs]

- What format is best?
- What language does she prefer?
- What are her health literacy skills?
- Ask if she has a deadline.

[Be Careful...]

- Listen fully, don't think ahead
- Avoid the “Without Speaking she Began to Type Maneuver” ²
- Avoid the “Unmonitored Referral” ³

[Question Still Not Clear?]

- Paraphrase and listen again
- Move from behind the desk
- Be discrete

[A Vague Question]

- Do you have any books on the brain?

Searching skills are not enough...

- Do you have information on Asperger's Syndrome?

[Follow Up]

- Ask if he found what he needed
- Offer to find another source
- Offer to refer him to another library, organization, or association

[Remember...]

- Don't give medical advice, opinions, or make recommendations
- Don't interpret health information
- Always encourage people to discuss what they find with a medical professional

[Collection Development]

- Evaluating Health Information
- Offline Resources
- Online Resources

[Evaluating Health Information]

- Currency
- Completeness
- Bias
- Authority
- Targeted to audience

[Weeding Guidelines]

- Generally, keep 3 years w/ exceptions
- Prescription drugs and some topics, current plus 1 year only
- Look at each title and topic individually

[Review sources]

- *CHOICE, Booklist, Library Journal*
- Field trips to bookstores & other libraries
- Join professional organizations like Medical Library Association
- Join health information listservs

[Offline Resources]

- Books (Reference and Circulating)
- DVDs, Videos, Large Print
- Bibliographies
 - Pamphlets
 - Bookmarks
 - Handouts

[Online Resources]

- 80% of Internet users have looked for health info online.
- Three-quarters of those do not consistently check the source and the date to determine accuracy. ⁴

[Steer away from Search Engines]

- Maintain web pages for currency and accuracy
- Select and highlight Internet links and databases
- Highlight “Favorite Books”, news feeds, or current events
- Catalog excellent, reliable sites

[Reaching Out]

- Be a presence at health fairs, neighborhood block parties, festivals
- Give-aways lure them in
- Flyers, bookmarks, handouts of information in Spanish and English
- Issue library cards, make it easy!

[In-House]

- Classes for the public – keep it simple
- Training for Library Staff
- Displays

[bibliography]

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4. Fox, Susannah. "Online Health Search 2006". Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2006. www.pewinternet.org

[Thank you]

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