Access to written information:

An update on the evidence.

Cathy Basterfield

Access Easy English

cathy@accesseasyenglish.com.au

ASID conference Sydney 12 November, 2025

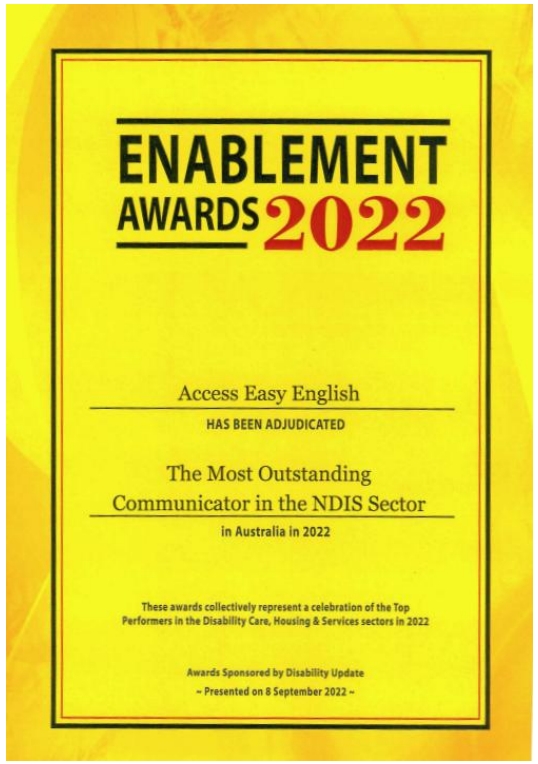
Access Easy English

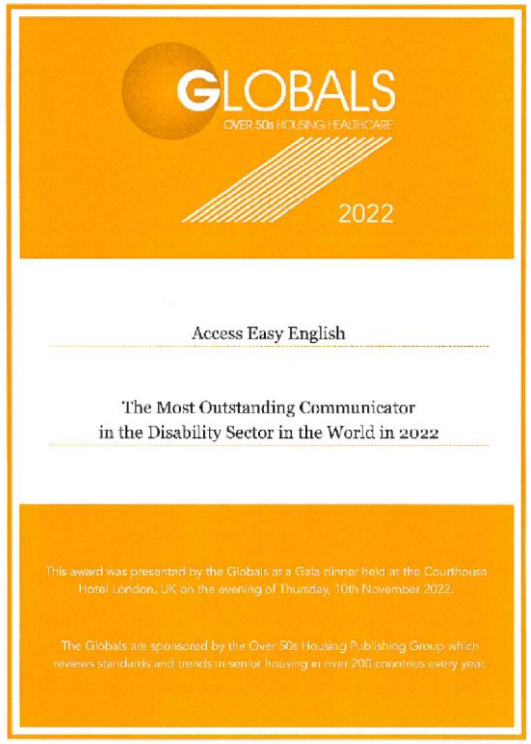
Access Easy English

Access
Easy English

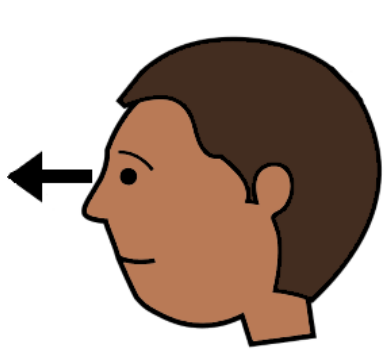
Specialist Easy English Service

.

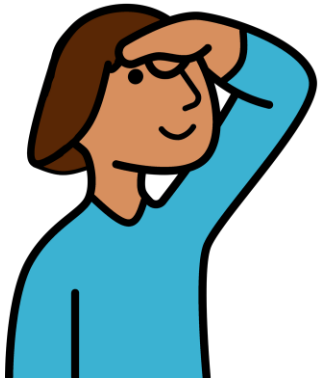




Access
Easy English



A look back



Access
Easy English

Labels - Accessible Information

Aphasia Friendly

Easy English

Easy Language

Easy Read

Easy Reading

Easy to Read

Access
Easy English

Purpose of public information

1. Inform the public
2. Promote transparency and trust
3. Support public participation
4. Ensure safety and preparedness
5. Help people access services

For all the community

Access
Easy English

Access to written information

- to participate
- **not** a reading test.

Access
Easy English

Easy English

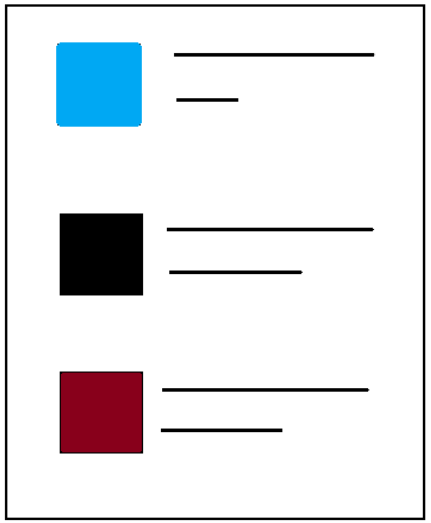
Access
Easy English

Trick or treat.

Be safe.

It is Halloween.

Access
Easy English



Easy English

For anyone with low literacy

- Universal design
- ISO plain language
- Respect where the reader is at
- Apply the evidence.

5 step process.

Measurable & repeatable.

Access
Easy English

Universal Design

Equality

Get the same thing

Equity

Add more for some

Accessibility

Take away barrier

More information https://universaldesignaustralia.net.au

Image https://rockymountainada.org/

Access Easy English

SO 24495-1 Plain language

4 principles

1. The content is what the audience **needs** or wants.

2. The audience can **find** the content.

3. The audience can **understand** the content.

4. The audience can **use** the content.

https://www.iso.org/news/ref2566.html

Access
Easy English

Blog: Plain Language and Easy English.

Shared principles, different audiences.

Readers can understand what they find.

EG: Words your audience knows

- Technical words – dysphagia, palliative, chemical restraint
- Assumed knowledge – abuse, wellbeing, risk, rights
- New words - supported, equipment, fracture, services, funds

https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/blog

Access
Easy English

Easy English - applies evidence

- speech pathology
- reading development
- reading comprehension
- augmentative & alternative communication
- education
- health literacy
- universal design
- plain language

With Easy Read literature

Access Easy English

- graphic d
- cont

With different people with low literacy.

- learni

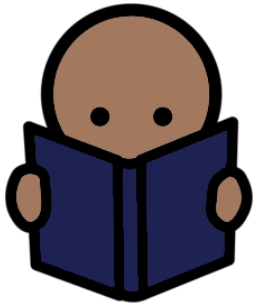
With people w low literacy.

Access
Easy English h

Hear

Understand

Use

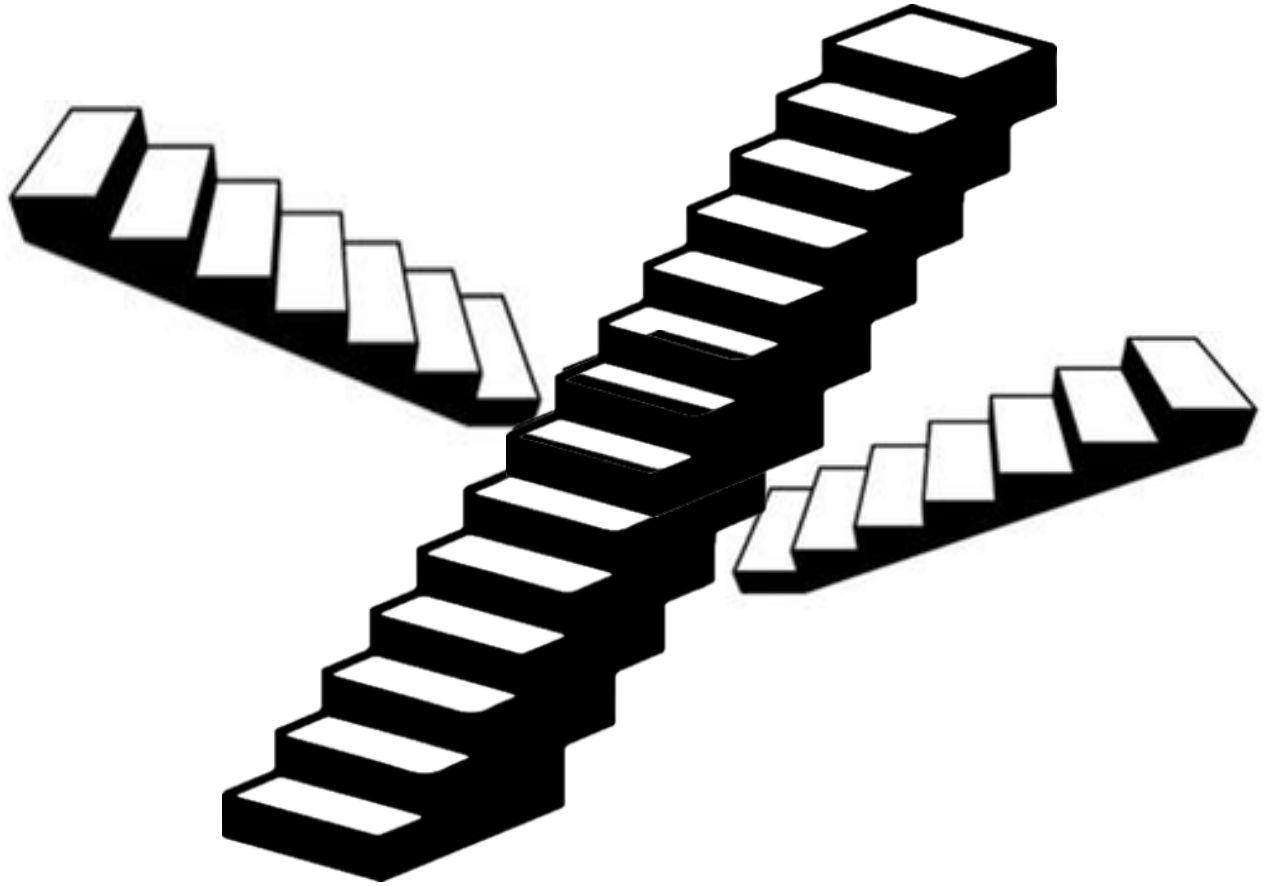


Connect with written language

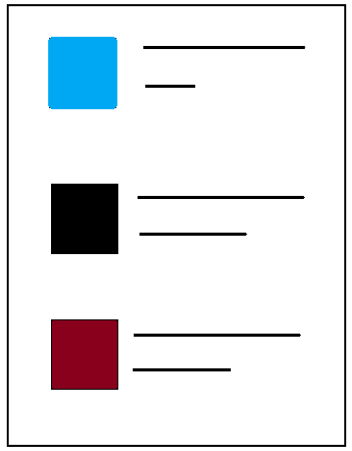
The Snow Report. http://pamelasnow.blogspot.com/

Access Easy English

Learning



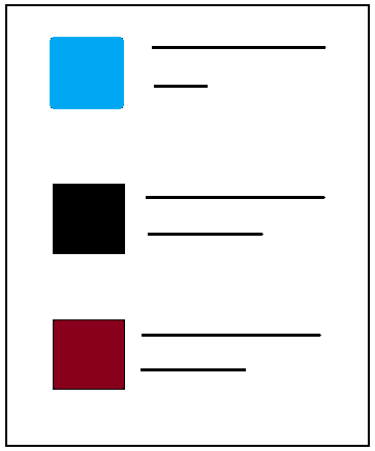
Access
Easy English



Easy English has

- Explicit explanation – nothing to infer
- Words – use readers words →new idea
- Words
  - syllable length
  - spelling rules
  - compound words
- 5 to 8 word sentences
- Grade 1.6 years reading skills.

Access
Easy English

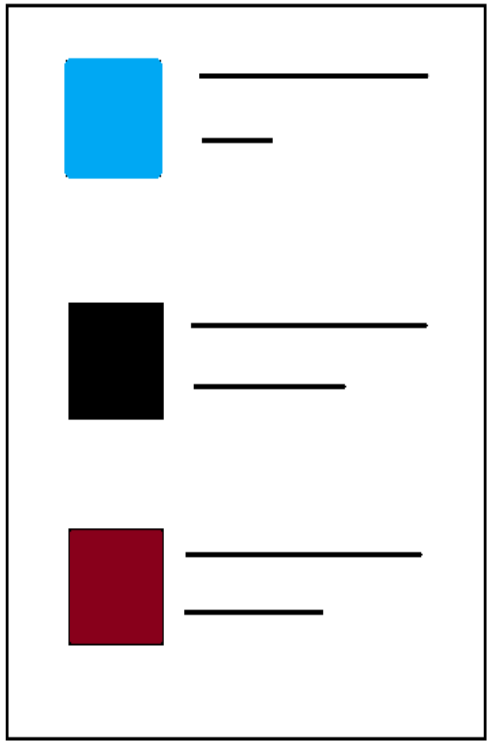


Easy English has

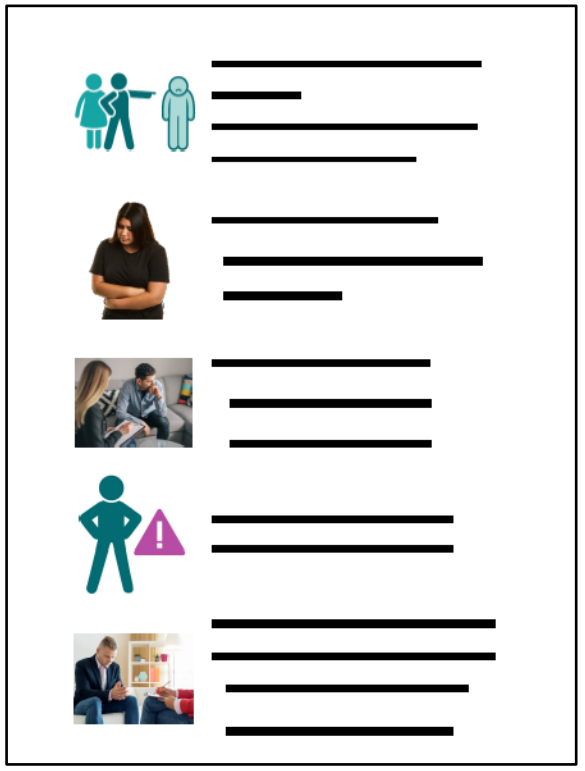
- Images clear highly guessable
- Images – maximum 4 per page
- White space
- Consumer – community – not advisor
- How to find.

Access
Easy English

Different.



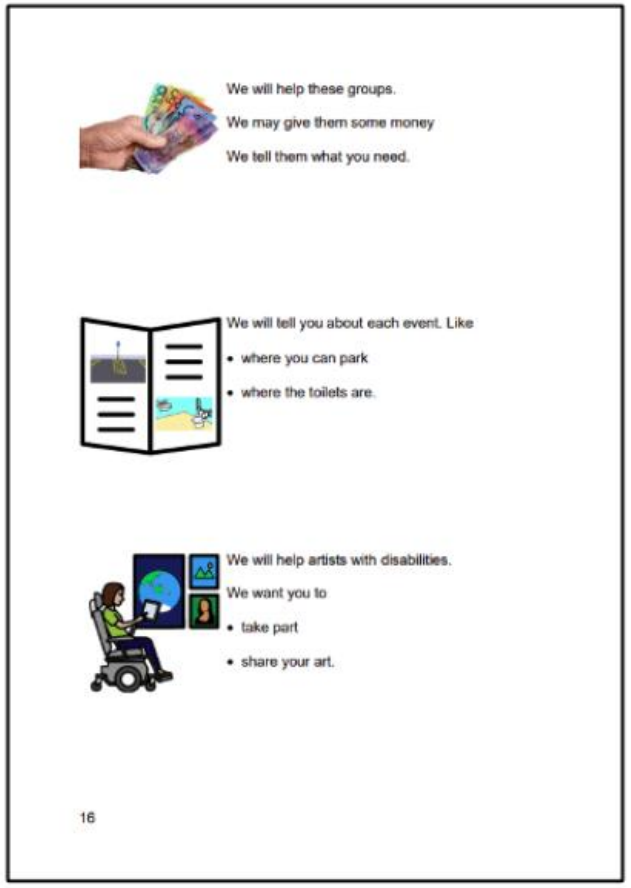
Easy English



Easy Read

Access Easy English

Easy English



Our disability plan. 2024 to 2028.
City of Adelaide with Access Easy English.
July 2024.
Retrieved from www.cityofadelaide.com.au

Easy Read

Access and inclusion plan 2023 to 2028.
Easy Read version.
May 2023.
Retrieved from www.wa.gov.au

Layout

Words

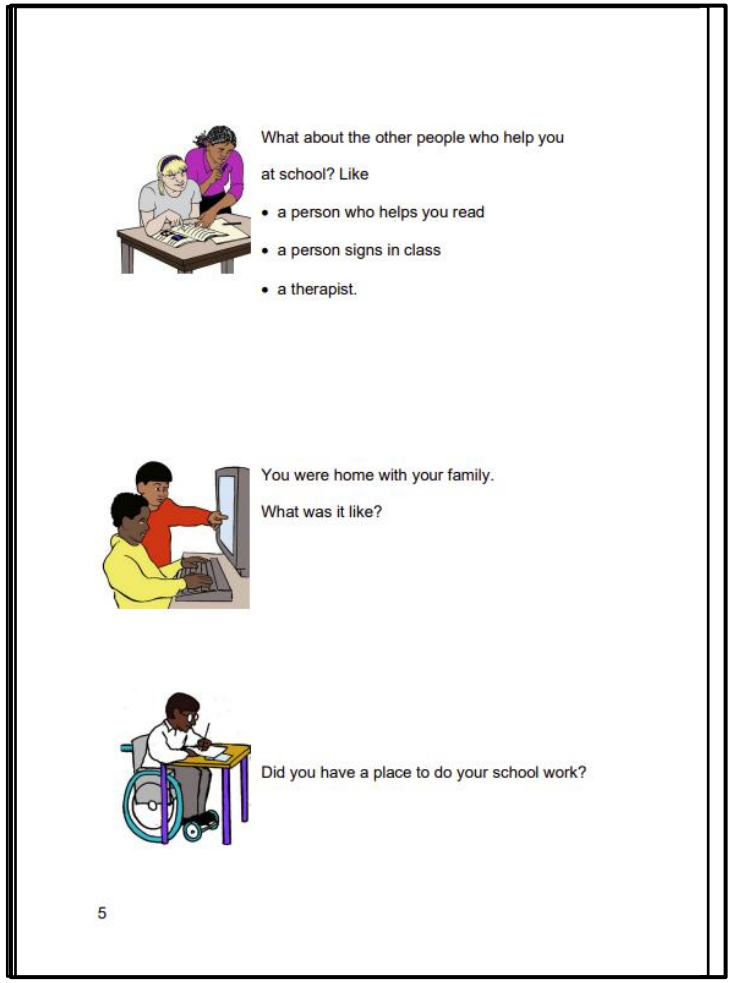
Sentences

https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/easyenglishvseasyread

Access
Easy English

2022 findings

Easy English



What about the other people who help you at school? Like

- a person who helps you read
- a person signs in class
- a therapist.

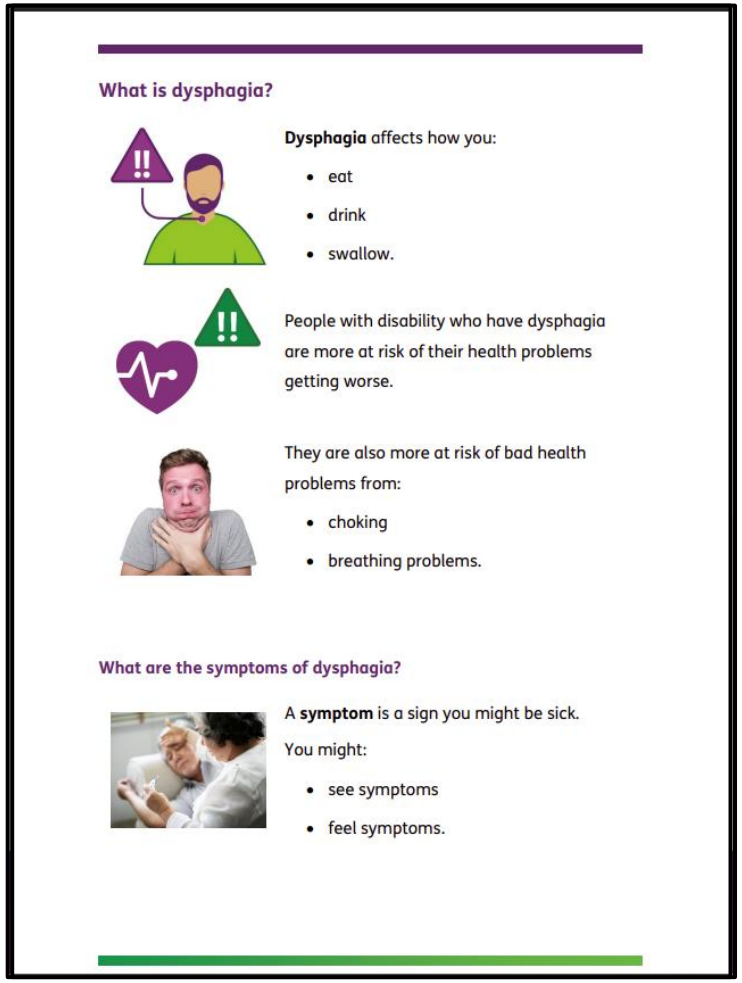
You were home with your family.

What was it like?

Did you have a place to do your school work?

5

Easy Read



What is dysphagia?

Dysphagia affects how you:

- eat
- drink
- swallow.

People with disability who have dysphagia are more at risk of their health problems getting worse.

They are also more at risk of bad health problems from:

- choking
- breathing problems.

What are the symptoms of dysphagia?

A **symptom** is a sign you might be sick.

You might:

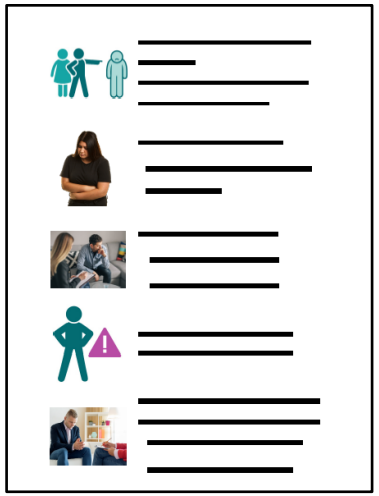
- see symptoms
- feel symptoms.

Access Easy English

2022 findings – Documents with less than 500 words

	Easy English	Easy Read
Reading skill required	Grade 1.6 years Ave: grade 0 to grade 3	Grade 6.5 years Ave: grade 4 to grade 12
Length of sentence	5 to 8 words	12 to 14 words
Word endings	Ave: 1.8 per document	Ave:14.25 per document
Types of words used	Every day of audience. Language & literacy know	Introduces hard words. Uses throughout content,
If … then statements	Never	Always
Images	Always for headings. Max. 4 per page.	Never for headings. At least 5. Common to have 7 or 8 per page.
Front cover	Always. Includes text & image about content	Sometimes. Often corporate text & unclear image

Access
asy English



Easy Read

- People with ID – who?
- Summary

- **Hard words**. Cognitive load
- Need to learn many images
- **Visually cluttered**

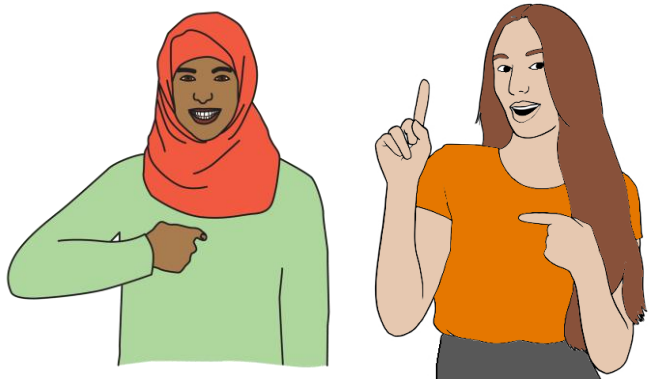
Access
Easy English h

Easy Read – readability & useability

Range reading equivalence	
Simple Easy Read	Grade 2 USA
Complex Easy Read	Grade 14 USA
Understanding words age	9:04 years
Reading age	7:01 years

Buell: (2019) Do participants with ID respond more accurately to questions that require literal or inferential information taken from an ‘easy read’ health text? J Appl Research Intellectual Disability Vol 00: pp1-13.

Access Easy English



Development of Easy Read

Little consensus on best practice

Guidelines

Widespread definition of

- intended audience
- context of when used
- how used.

Chinn. 2019 Talking to producers of Easy Read information for people with intellectual disability: Production practices, textual features, and imagined audiences. JIDD Vol 44. No.4 410 – 420

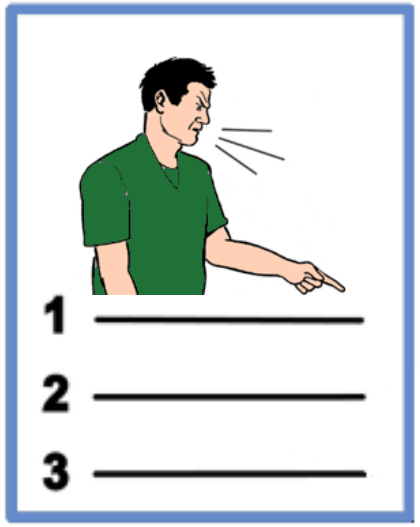
Access Easy English

Work with us. . . to make it more accessible’. What women with ID want from infant-feeding health resources: an exploratory study

- did **not** find the Easy Read easy to understand
- metaphorical images → confusing → misunderstand
- disliked the mix of photographs and line drawings
- **not** all infant feeding options were shown or explained
- liked happy photographs of ladies breastfeeding

Douglass, E., Johnson, C., Lucas, G. and Dowling, S. (2023), International Breastfeeding Journal, Vol. 18 No. 1, p. 67,

Access Easy English



The Ten-Point Treatment Programme: developing & evaluating an easy-read version for people with ID

PwID liked resource

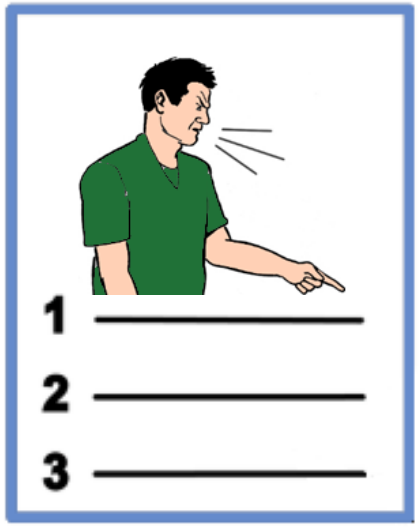
But

Researchers do **not** know if it improved understanding. Some could **not** read the text

Photosymbols did **not** depict staff roles well.

Amiola, A. J., Wilson, H., Patteril, E., Chester, V., & Alexander R. (2025). *Advances in Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities*. 19 (2): 109–124.

Access Easy English



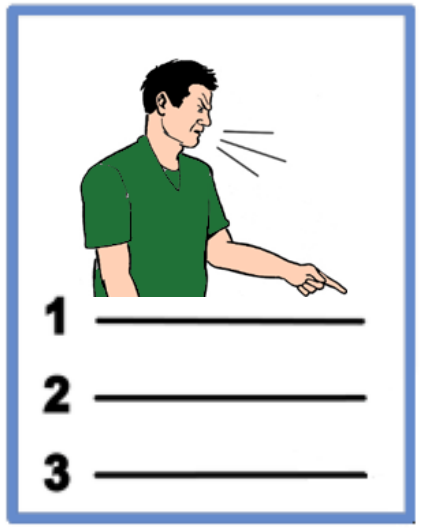
The Ten-Point Treatment Programme: cont'd

Some issues

- Sentence structure too long & too complex
- Hard words – did not know, had never heard of, and could not connect to the new content

Amiola, A. J., Wilson, H., Patteril, E., Chester, V., & Alexand R. (2025). *Advances in Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities*. 19 (2): 109–124.

Access Easy English



The Ten-Point Treatment Programme: cont'd.

Easy Read → sociopolicitical role in promoting PWID's self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy and inclusion?

But

No robust evidence Easy Read improved understanding or behavioural change.

Amiola, A. J., Wilson, H., Patteril, E., Chester, V., & Alexander, R. (2025). *Advances in Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities*. 19 (2): 109–124.

Access Easy English

Photos or Clipart

Inspired Services 2012

- Not be childish
- Higher literacy – wanted photos
- Lower literacy- clipart or other illustration.

- Can modify illustration to be specific to text
- Can remove clutter to be specific.

- Higher literacy- clipart first – positive response.

https://medium.com/@accesseasyenglish/some-thoughts-on-images-7207077d13ed

Access Easy English

Literature review Dec 2024

33 Easy Read papers

- PwID ‘like it.’
- Make & use it differently
- Not everyone uses PwID to create it or checking it
- Most researchers. Worry too difficult & not good quality
- **Not enough strong evidence** to prove it helps PwID understand & use the information

Wilson, H., et al Easy Read health information for people with intellectua disabilities: a systematic review of the evidence. Dec 2024 SEATTLE Uk

Access Easy English

Further reading

Easy English Easy Read

- Webpage – links to research and fact sheet

https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/easy-english-easy-read/

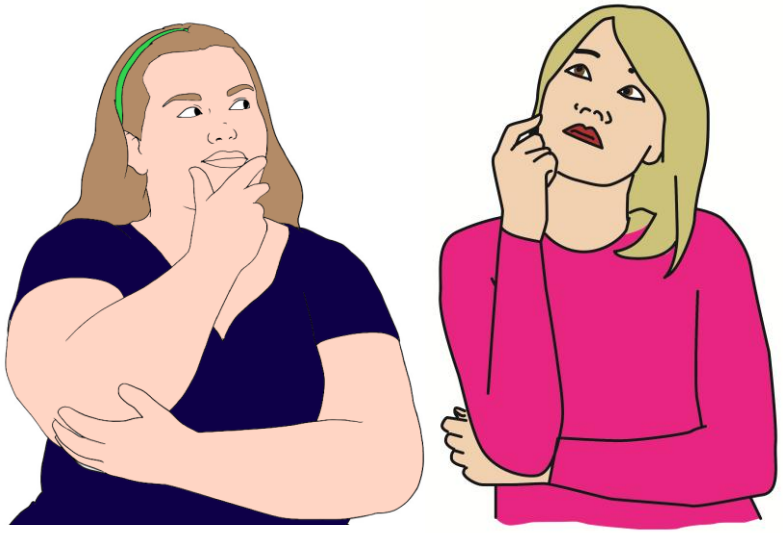
- Conferences papers and posters

  https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/conferences-and-papers/

- Blogs https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/blog Eg:

- Discussion about the easy read of the updated national disability strategy
- Buyer beware
- Reading is a complex process
- Reading comprehension: the overlooked partner to reading

Access
Easy English



Let’s change our thinking

Ever wished there was something

- harder to read?
- had new words you need to learn?

So why is this the premise for people with ID?

Access
Easy English

Access
Easy English

Cathy Basterfield 0466 579 855

cathy@accesseasyenglish.com.au

www.accesseasyenglish.com.au

www.readee.com.au

Access
Easy English