



Health Information for Children and Young People

Health Literacy

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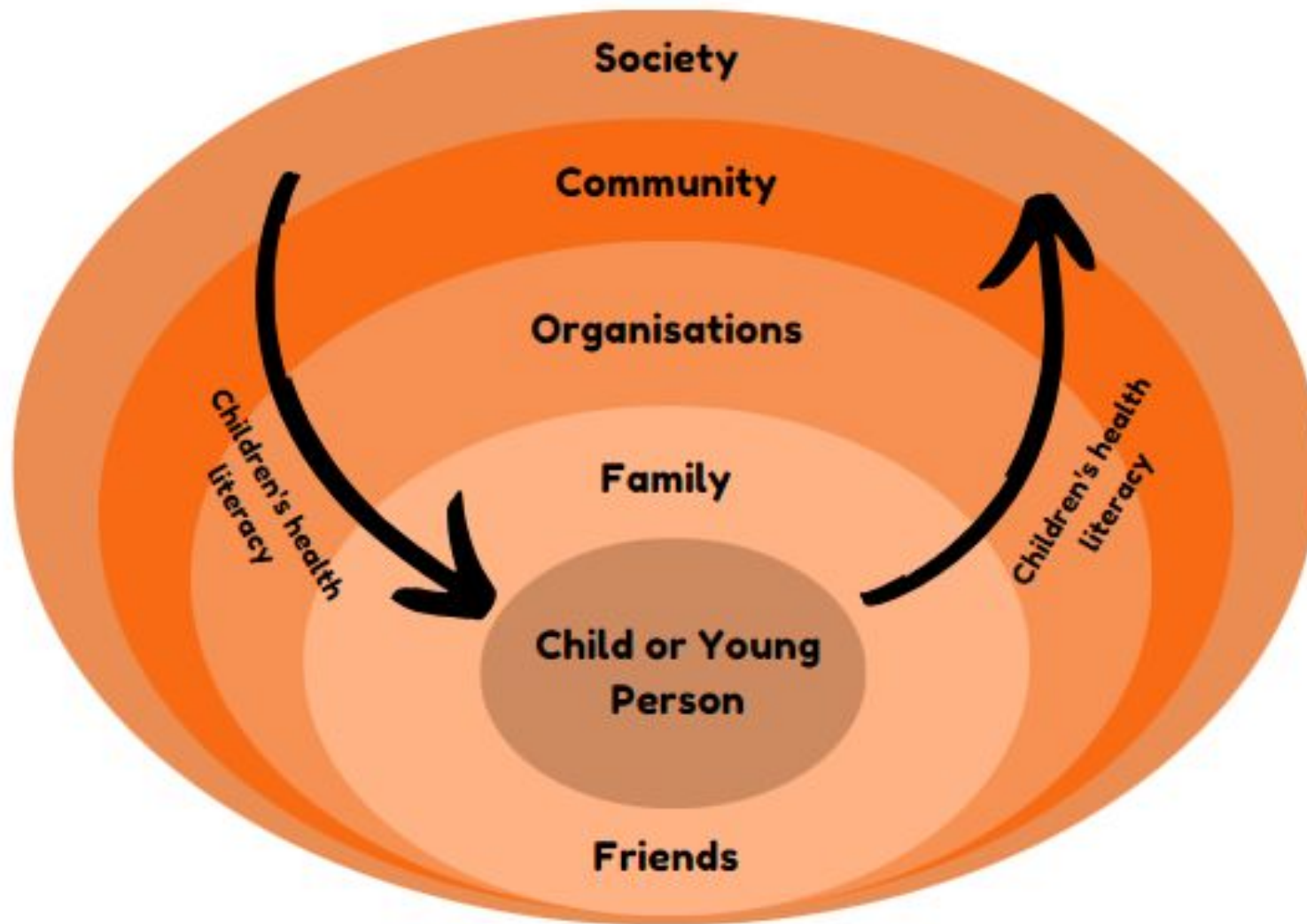
Edge Hill University

Health literacy

“Health literacy represents the personal knowledge and competencies that accumulate through daily activities, social interactions and across generations.

Personal knowledge and competencies are mediated by the organizational structures and availability of resources that enable people to access, understand, appraise and use information and services in ways that promote and maintain good health and well-being for themselves and those around them”.

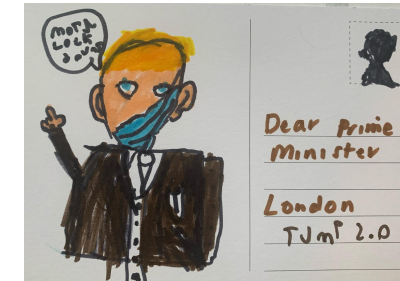
World Health Organisation 2021



Multi-level approach
to developing Health
Information for
Children and Young
People

Key points

- Consulting with stakeholders and your target audience from development through to evaluation will make your information relevant and well targeted.
- Greater involvement makes your resources more credible.
- Involving children and young people can aid dissemination and use of resources. Peer advocates can be incredibly powerful in sharing information.
- Health Information is about service developments that enhance communication as well as information resources.
- Done well, consultation experience benefits children and young people because they gain confidence, feel valued and learn their opinions matter.
- Scoping work is essential to understand your audience and ensure involvement is representative and inclusive.
- Take care to involve children and young people representing groups who might need greater focus to identify and engage.
- Working in a meaningful way involves time and creativity.
- It is important to act on input while being transparent about the limitations of a project.
- A clear safeguarding policy is compulsory.
- Remember to thank children and young people with a letter, prize or certificate, share the end results and share what you changed as a result of their involvement.



Involving children and young people in a meaningful way

Children and young people should not be passive recipients of health information.

- Involvement of children from development through to evaluation will make your information relevant and well targeted.
- Guide provides examples of young person led projects to projects consulting with children.
- Always learn lots – remain open.
- Different groups have different needs - consult and reach out to children and young people who may have specific accessibility needs.
- Authentic and meaningful involvement will benefit the children and young people, adults and the resources created.



Parents/carers

Chapter four: Communicating health information

Pitfalls to avoid

- Making assumptions about children and young people's preferences and abilities without asking them first
- Staff talking to parents instead of to the child or young person
- Using terms children and young people do not understand
- A patronising or disrespectful tone
- Children and young people not being involved in decisions or being given the option to be involved
- Care settings that are unwelcoming or not appropriate.

These difficulties are amplified for children and young people with communication, speech or language differences or those who do not have family support. For instance if they are in care or secure accommodation.

Effective communication is also especially important for young people with long-term conditions moving to adult services. Do not assume they will know everything about their condition.

Tip: Think hard about the tone you use and building rapport with the user. Children like to feel included, encouraged and important.

Parents, families and carers

There is increasing recognition that services should be child-centred rather than family-centred. But the presence and importance of the family and other carers should be acknowledged.

Sometimes it is important to create resources for parents so they feel able to share information with their children. But you cannot assume that all young people will want their families or carers involved.

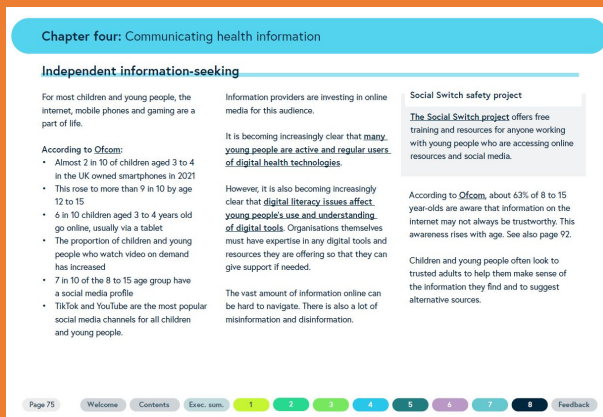
Try to build in opportunities for the child to ask questions and voice their fears.

Prompt sheets can encourage children or young people to identify their information needs and help them to ask questions during consultations. You can see an example of a prompt sheet at edgehill.ac.uk

- Parents and carers are powerful filters of information
 - Children and young people report relying heavily on trusted adults
 - Parents/carers may choose to limit a child's access to information
 - Not wanting to cause worry/anxiety
 - Not knowing what or how to say something
 - Not realising the positive impact of information
 - Parents/carers can be an amazing resource to help a child access and understand health information.
- 43% of the UK working age population cannot understand and use standard health information effectively.
- Parent/carers may need their own resources/information.

Professionals & organisations

- Challenging time within health care and education sectors (time & resources)
- Children and young people still report;
 - not being listened to within health care services,
 - not being involved in decisions
 - lack of understanding of their health and health care services
- As health services how do we prioritise and deliver health information to children and young people and parent/carers?
 - Leaflets, Videos, Teach back, education, do we revisit?
 - Skills in how to engage and challenge?
- Equipping children with skills and knowledge from an early age – not just for transition
- Do the systems within organisations support health literacy?





Society and Mis-information

- In 2021 99% of children went online. For older young people platforms such as TikTok are their most trusted resource.
- How do children and young people learn about credible health information?
- Do the adults around them understand about trusted and credible health information?
- Children and young people and families need actively signposting by professionals to credible good information to combat any misinformation.
- Do we equip children within our society with critical health literacy skills?
- Do we involve them in decision-making at all levels (individual, organisations, societal)?

Chapter six: Evidence and misinformation

Key points

- Ensure clinical accuracy and relevance through research and by involving healthcare professionals and other experts.
- Explain any uncertainties where research findings are not clear.
- Be aware of misinformation and disinformation about your topic. Knowing what is out there, and where, can help you to combat it with trustworthy information.
- New research, resources and courses about tackling misinformation and disinformation are becoming available.

Clinical accuracy and relevance

To aid in informed decision-making and participation, health information must get its facts right. This means it must be based on the best, most up-to-date and relevant evidence.

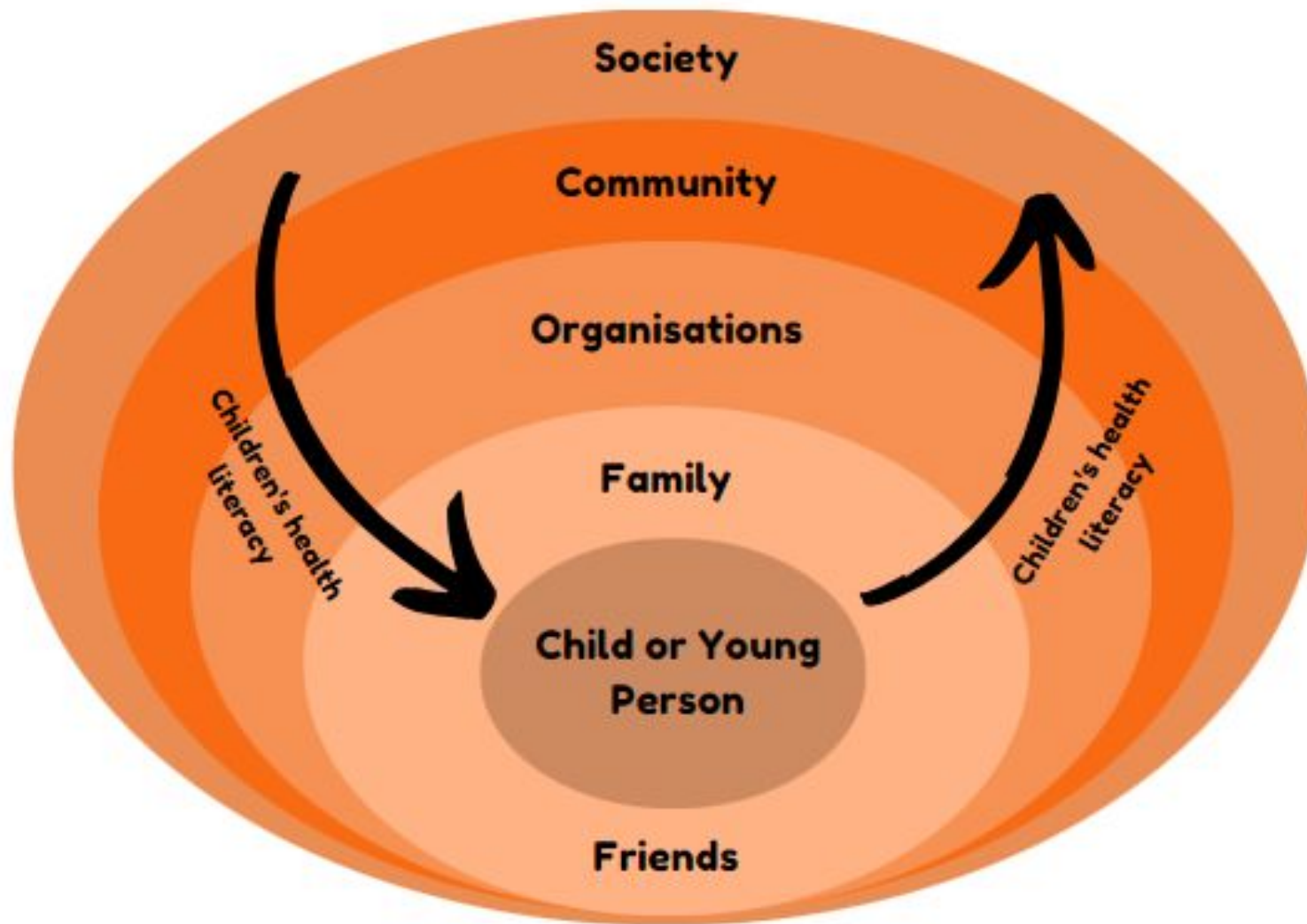
Many children and young people find it hard to work out whether health information is reliable. They may call on parents and other trusted adults to help them in this task.

If the information you are offering is based on evidence, it can help people decide whether to trust and use that information.

Often the evidence is not clear because there has not been enough research, or credible research has come up with conflicting results.

If so, do not be tempted to go with one view or the other. It is important to be unbiased and to tell your users about any uncertainty.

There are different sources of evidence, as seen in Table 1 on page 89.



Multi-level approach to developing Health Information for Children and Young People



Thank you

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