

HEALTH LITERACY AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PROGRAM FOR ROMA IN ROMA SETTLEMENTS

for local Roma educators and mediators

- **Module 1: HEALTH LITERACY**
 - **Chapter 2: The concepts and consequences of limited health literacy. How big is the Roma health literacy problem in Europe?**

SUMMARY:

Roma Health Literacy is considered a European problem and challenge affecting a large proportion of the continent's population. This Chapter, explores the extent of the health literacy problem in European Roma communities.

OVERVIEW of Module I: Health Literacy



- **Chapter 1: What is health literacy?**
Exploring the concept and definitions of health literacy. Various aspects of health literacy.
- **Chapter 2: The concepts and consequences of limited health literacy. How big is the Roma health literacy problem in Europe?**
Roma Health Literacy is considered a European problem and challenge affecting a large proportion of the continent's population. This Chapter, explores the extent of the health literacy problem in European Roma communities.
- **Chapter 3: Barriers in communication between healthcare professional and Roma patients.**
Roma patients with limited health literacy often experience barriers in the communication with healthcare professionals and health mediators, experiencing for example – language barrier, mistrust, racial discrimination or simply the use of medical jargon. The Chapter also addresses the challenges concerning the delivery of health information Roma communities in a variety of non-clinical settings, both in-person and via information technology.
- **Chapter 4: Accessing, understanding and appraising health information**
For patients to self-manage their health and disease, it is important that they are able to access, understand, and appraise health information. However, many Roma people experience difficulties doing so and this Chapter is focusing on tools to overcome those difficulties.



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MODULE 1

Chapter 2: The concepts and consequences of limited health literacy. How big is the Roma health literacy problem in Europe?





Health Literacy: What can we do? Educational Video



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- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bINMK-Pb-Pc&ab_channel=HealthyNorthCoast



**Health
Literacy
Affects
Everyone**

- Health literacy is important for everyone because, at some point in our lives, we all need to be able to find, understand, and use health information and services.
- Taking care of our health is part of everyday life, not just when we visit a doctor, clinic, or hospital.
- Health literacy can help us prevent health problems, protect our health, and better manage health problems when they arise.



An integrated model of health literacy



In 2012, Sørensen and colleagues published a systematic literature review of existing definitions and concepts of health literacy as reported in international literature.

The systematic review resulted in several definitions and conceptual models of health literacy, which guided the content analysis and led to an integrated model of health literacy.

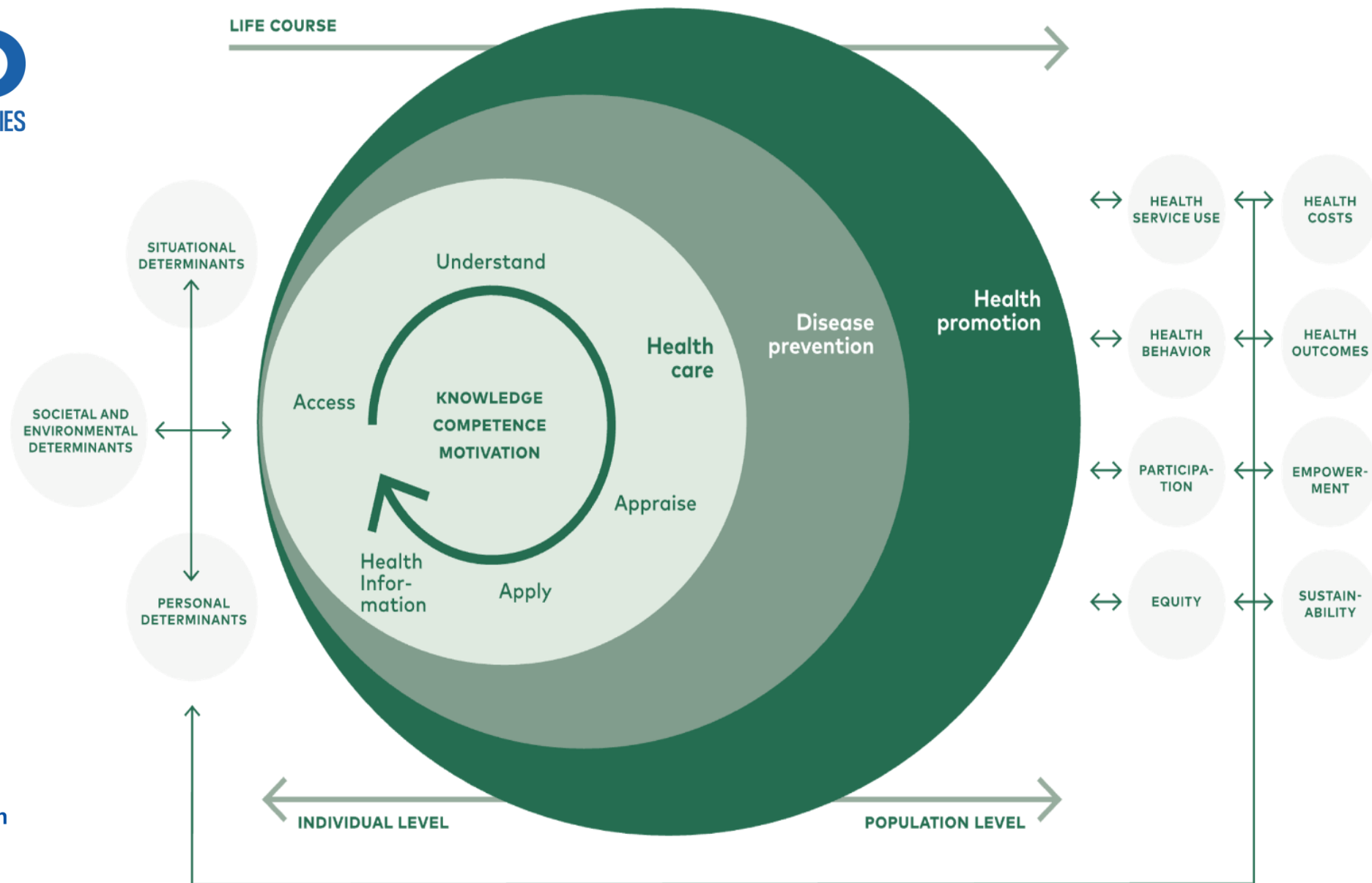
This model outlines the main dimensions of health together with a logical model showing the proximal and distal factors that impact on health literacy, and the pathway linking health literacy to health outcomes.

See the figure on the next slide.



An integrated model of health literacy

Sørensen et al., 2012)





Health Literacy: Who is challenged?

Even people who read well and are comfortable using numbers can face health literacy issues when:

- They aren't familiar with medical terms or how their bodies work.
- They have to interpret statistics and evaluate risks and benefits that affect their health and safety.
- They are diagnosed with a serious illness and are scared and confused.
- They have health conditions that require complicated self-care.
- They are voting on an issue affecting the community's health and relying on unfamiliar technical information.



Why Health Literacy is so Important? Educational Video



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- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YLXoLMFmFk&ab_channel=Alliance Health](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YLXoLMFmFk&ab_channel=AllianceHealth)



Why is the impact of health literacy?

- Health literacy is linked to the process of accessing, understanding, appraising, and applying health information generates competencies and skills, which enables a person to navigate, make judgements and decisions in everyday life within the three domains of healthcare, disease prevention, and health promotion.
- Health literacy can influence health behaviour and the use of health services, which can affect health outcomes and the health costs in society.
- Advancing health literacy will progressively allow greater autonomy and personal empowerment, and the process of health literacy can be seen as a part of individual development towards improved quality of life. In the population it may also



Health literacy as a complex set of skills and a lilelong learning process

- Individuals' health literacy level is the product of a complex set of skills and interactions on the part of the individual, the health-care system, the education system, and the cultural and societal context.
- As contextual demands change over time, and the capacity to navigate the health system depends on cognitive and psychosocial development as well as previous and current experiences, the competencies and skills of health literacy develop during the life course and are linked to life-long learning.



What about limited health literacy?



Researchers noted that most individuals will encounter health literacy barriers at some point.

Limited health literacy and limited literacy are not the same, but they are related.

Strong literacy and numeracy skills do help people understand and use health information and services, but research shows that most people still say that information and services are unfamiliar, complicated, and too technical.



Why does Limited Health Literacy needs to be addressed? Educational Video



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- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFKmpHzl0GQ&ab_channel=CornerstoneCare

Due to deep-rooted and long-lasting marginalization and social exclusion, members of the Roma communities in Europe have been facing a number of obstacles on their path to equal inclusion in society.

Such marginalization, which results in multidimensional deprivation, unfavourably affects the field of health and health care, which is why there is a large gap in health status between Roma community members and the general population.

Numerous studies conducted over decades strongly indicate that this is a chronic and multi-layered problem which is strongly linked to health literacy due to a multitude of social causes and determinants.

Roma Health Literacy Challenges (I)



- Poorer education, which on average characterizes European Roma, is also a factor that increases the likelihood of disease occurrence and statistically contributes to shortening of life expectancy.
- Roma people with a lower level of education have lower health literacy and do not have sufficient knowledge about the causes, methods of prevention and protection against disease, as well as effective methods of treatment.

Roma Health Literacy Challenges (II)



- Limited health literacy is a proven to be related to deficient reading skills and is an issue in all European Roma settlements.
- Deficient reading skills are most prevalent among those with a limited educational background, but considerable research shows that limited reading skills exist even among those who have completed a formal education.
- Other risk factors for limited Roma health literacy include poverty, membership in an ethnic minority group, advanced age, and other sociodemographic characteristics.



The impact of health literacy in Roma communities



- Current research confirms that health literacy in Roma communities is an important factor related to the health status of each household member, the incidence of long-term diseases, unhealthy habits, childhood diseases included in the vaccination program, chronic diseases, and women's reproductive health.
- Health literacy is a systematic protective factor in Roma and at the same time is closely related to other socioeconomic factors that affect health. It is reasonable to assume that a higher level of education implies a higher level of health literacy, as well as a stronger motivation to adopt healthy habits and medical recommendations related to disease prevention and health protection.
- It is often related to the adequacy of housing, which is one of the most important indicators of the socioeconomic status of an individual and a family.



Confused about Health Information? Educational Video



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- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x6DLqtaK2g&ab_channel=TEDxTalks



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Module 1: HEALTH LITERACY

CHAPTER 2: The concepts and consequences of limited health literacy. How big is the Roma health literacy problem in Europe?

CONCLUSIONS

- Health literacy is still a challenge for many Europeans, especially those who suffer social, economic and cultural marginalization. Some of the most important aspects impacting health literacy are the general literacy skills; the education level, personal and family income, ethnic background, or any other socio-demographic variable.
- Roma communities in Europe are facing a number of health literacy challenges
- Poor health literacy is a common problem for Roma people in Europe – posing serious implications for health status. Limited health literacy can be addressed by educating persons to become more resourceful (for example, increasing their personal health literacy) and by making the task or situation less demanding (for example, improving readability of the system and the health information provided).

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