

7. Print Resources for Teaching Health to Adults

A word about adult literacy textbooks

A wide variety of life skills-oriented adult literacy textbooks contain health units. However, issues of access to care, specific health conditions, preventive care and U.S. health care culture tend not to be covered in much depth, if at all.

Health books for adult literacy learners

The following are an assortment of books on health topics which are suitable for ESOL and/or ABE instruction. Some are in workbook format, others are works of fiction which introduce important health topics, and others are simplified non-fiction on health. All go into more depth on topics of importance to learners than is traditionally the case in health units of adult literacy textbooks.

- Brems, M., Devonshire, T., & Jones, J. (1994) *Take care of yourself: A health care workbook for beginning ESL students*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall-Regents. While definitely not for ESL beginners or other learners with beginning literacy, this workbook provides readings and activities on a variety of health topics, such as exercise and nutrition, emergency services, vision and dental care, childhood diseases, AIDS, and baby care. Grammar and communication activities are incorporated.
- Channing Bete. (1997) *Stress management: Self-care handbook*. South Deerfield, MA: Channing Bete. Distributed by Channing Bete and Grass Roots Press.
- Dodd, J. D., et al. (1997). *Beyond prescriptions: Meeting your health needs*. Prince Edward Island, Canada: Women's Network, Inc. Distributed by Grass Roots Press. A workbook which helps learners gain a holistic understanding of personal health.
- Dodd, J. D., et al. (1997). *Is it hot in here?* Prince Edward Island, Canada: Women's Network, Inc. Distributed by Grass Roots Press. A reader-friendly, informative handbook on menopause for women and their families.
- Faine, M. (1993). *Lan is sick*. Available from Peppercorn Press. This Canadian reader is a simple, repetitive story on health for low literacy

readers, basic but with enough content to promote discussion of a range of health and access to care issues.

- Gould, L. (2000). *Stress*. Edmonton, Canada: Grass Roots Press. A beginning literacy reader for adults about one woman's stress and her efforts to cope with it.
- Johansen, E., O'Connor, J., and Stackhouse, D. (1998). *You and your health*. Portland, Maine: Walch Publishers. Reproducible, leveled (beginner and intermediate) ESL activity books on assorted health topics, such as nutrition, balancing work and leisure, finding a doctor, and preventive health practices.
- Kimball, R. (1999). *Things to know about medicine and health*. Portland, Maine: Walch Publishers. This book contains reproducible readings, dialogues, problem-solving and discussion activities designed for intermediate and advanced ESOL learners. Broken down into "teacher pages," "activity pages" and "reading pages," the book contains lessons on different kinds of health care, accessing care, healthy behaviors, health conditions and health issues across the life span.
- Reiff, T. (1992). *Handle with care*. Parsippany, NJ: Globe/Fearon. This story of a nursing aide who has problems reading medical signs and writing information in her job illustrates the importance of reading and writing accurately in health care situations. Readability level 4. Available from Globe/Fearon (Pearson).
- Reiff, T. (1995). *Emergency*. In *That's life*, Book 1. Belmont, CA: Lake Education. A combination story/cartoon book about a family that finds themselves in a health care emergency. Introduces opportunities to discuss a variety of issues, including financial concerns relating to health care. Due to frequent use of idiomatic expressions and humor that might be considered culture-specific, the book is probably best used with native speakers of English. The author cites a readability level of 3-4. Available from AGS/American Guidance Services.
- Reiff, T. (1995). *In a Family Way*. In *That's life*, Book 4. Belmont, CA: Lake Education. A combination story/cartoon book about a family awaiting an unplanned baby. Introduces opportunities to discuss topics such as prenatal nutrition and check-ups as well as budgeting. Due to

frequent use of idiomatic expressions and humor that might be considered culture-specific, the book is probably best used with native speakers of English. The author cites a readability level of 3-4.

- Rose, R., & Elrich, T. (1993). *Heart to heart: A learner-centered curriculum sample*. Snow Camp, NC: Peppercorn Press. Samples of lessons and writings from a senior adult literacy class's study of heart disease and prevention, illustrating students' personal experiences in relation to the disease. The curriculum sampler offers easy-to-replicate ideas for a simple, participatory approach to studying health conditions with adult literacy learners.
- Silc, K. (1997). *ESL for farm safety*. Arlington, VA: Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs. Available from publisher. A low literacy text that teaches farmworkers about pesticide and farm safety.

- **New Readers Press Health Literacy Series**

New Readers Press publishes the following titles on health topics. All were written in collaboration with medical professionals for between 4th and 6th grade reading levels.

- *About Cancer*
- *The Childbearing Year*
- *Eating Right*
- *Getting Good Health Care*
- *Having a Baby*
- *Managing Stress*
- *Women's Health*
- *You Can Give First Aid*

- **What To Do series:**

This series from the Institute for Healthcare Advancement is written for readers between 3rd and 4th grade reading levels. The language is jargon-free and texts are organized simply in a question and answer format. Available from publisher.

Barnett, A.; Rushton, N.; & Mumaw, L. (2001). *What to do for senior health*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Mayer, G., & Kuklieris, A. (2000). *What to do for teen health*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Mayer, G., & Kuklieris, A. (2002). *What to do when your child gets sick*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Mayer, G., & Kuklieris, A. (2001). *What to do when you're having a baby*. Whittier, CA: Institute for Healthcare Advancement.

Books on culture and health:

Deng, F. M. (1972). *The Dinka of the Sudan*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. Describes the cultural beliefs and traditions of the Dinka, including beliefs on illness, the life process, and dying.

Fadiman, A. (1997). *The spirit catches you and you fall down*. New York: Noonday Press. A fascinating account of the cultural misunderstandings that led to tragic results in the 1980s in California, where a Hmong infant was being treated for seizures.

Galanti, G. (1997). *Caring for patients from different cultures*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Relates 172 case studies of cultural conflicts that occurred in U.S. hospitals.

Kassindja, F., & Bashir, L. (1999). *Do they hear me when I cry?* New York, NY: Dell. The true story of a young African woman who sought asylum in the United States to escape the common practice of female circumcision in her native country.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pierce, J. (Eds.). (1996). *Ethnicity and family therapy*. New York: Guilford Press. Covers the cultural considerations of mental health and family dynamics for more than 40 ethnic groups.

Pipher, M. (2002). *The middle of everywhere: The world's refugees come to our town*. New York: Harcourt. While this book is not specifically about health, it reveals a lot about refugee psychological adjustment to resettlement, and different aspects of the life cycle for refugees.

Winberg, C. (1999). *Teaching primary health care*. Available from Peppercorn Press. This South African health education book is potentially interesting to

ESOL teachers because it reveals public health interests and health education practices as they are conducted in a different, less affluent, less technologically advanced society. It gives a little perspective on similarities and differences in health perceptions between the U.S. mainstream health care system and systems in other countries.