

Clear Language & Design Checklist for Client Resources

The following points are guidelines only. Use check marks or n/a (not applicable) in the blanks provided. Extra space may be inserted for comments as needed. General writing guidelines and a reference list are also attached.

A. Content

- ___ Title clearly identifies the topic or content
- ___ Purpose clearly stated at the beginning
- ___ Divided into short sections
- ___ Logical, easy to follow sequence of information
- ___ Evidence and best practice based
- ___ Limited to necessary information
- ___ Includes actions recommended for clients
- ___ Encourages clients to take an active role in health
- ___ Most important points are highlighted or summarized
- ___ Other sources of information or support are listed

B. Writing Style

- ___ Familiar language suited to target population
- ___ Sentences average about 10 to 15 words
- ___ No run-on sentences
- ___ Gender neutral, inclusive wording
- ___ Technical or medical terms are avoided or defined
- ___ Acronyms and abbreviations are avoided or defined
- ___ Active voice
- ___ Positive tone
- ___ Conversational rather than formal or clinical
- ___ Redundancy is avoided

C. Clear Design

- ___ Format suited for intended use
- ___ Font styles simple and easy to read (see identity guidelines)
- ___ Larger font size for headings
- ___ No block capitals or underlining
- ___ Point form with bullets when possible
- ___ Typical line length is 75 – 100 characters
- ___ Minimum 1 inch margin
- ___ Columns used as appropriate
- ___ Text is left-justified, without hyphens
- ___ Adequate white space
- ___ Important text may be emphasized with bold font or in a box
- ___ Dark font on light background

D. Illustrations

- ___ Captioned and labeled as needed
- ___ Simple, clear lines
- ___ Appropriate to target audience

E. Development Process

- ___ Content reviewed by Clear Language & Design Committee
- ___ Material tested with clients whenever possible
- ___ Final version approved by department manager; clinical forms approved by SHR Clinical Forms Committee: <http://infonet.sktnhr.ca/clinicaldocumentation/Pages/Resources.aspx>
- ___ Form number assigned
- ___ Final version shared with Clear Language & Design Committee and saved in forms folder on i/public health general by department

Appendix 1 - General Writing Guidelines

Acronyms

- Never use acronyms in the first reference or in a headline
- Do not use SHR – use Saskatoon Health Region in the first reference; then Region or Health Region may be used

Capitalization

- Capitalize Aboriginal, First Nations, Inuit and Métis
- Capitalize formal names of programs and services
- Do not capitalize a title that is descriptive

Numbers

- Use words for numbers 9 and under
- Use digits for numbers 10 and over

Punctuation

- Use one space after a period
- Colons indicate that a list follows
- Use commas between items in a list
- Use semi-colons between items only if there are commas in one or more of the listed items
- Use apostrophes for contractions or possessives only
- *It's* is the contraction for it is; *its* is possessive

Spelling

- Use U.K. spellings for most words (e.g., colour, behaviour)

Gender

- Use gender neutral wording whenever possible

Visual Identity

- Purpose is consistency and branding
- Italic Palantino Linotype font for all main titles of documents – not bold
- Bold Century Gothic font for all secondary titles, slightly larger than body text
- Century Gothic for main body text

Source:

Saskatoon Health Region Writing Guidelines 2009

For further information:

The Canadian Press Stylebook and *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling Guide* are available from the Population and Public Health Library for further reference.

Online thesaurus: www.thesaurus.com

The SHR Communications Department may be able to assist with questions regarding content, writing style, grammar, design and illustrations.

Appendix 2- Links to Key Documents

Clear Language & Design Committee - Department Representatives
..\Membership\PLC membership_Mtg Dates 2015.doc

Clear Language & Design Checklist
<..\Clear Language and Design Checklist\Clear Lang Checklist Draft revision Nov2014.docx>

Clear Language & Design Committee Terms of Reference
<..\Terms of Reference>

Clear Language & Design in Client Resources Policy
..\Manuals - PPH\PHS Admin Manual\25-038_Clear Language_Design in Client Resources 04_14.pdf

Clear Language & Design Committee Submission Form
<..\CLAD Submission Form.doc>

SHR Visual Identity Guidelines
<https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/about/visual-identity/Pages/Home.aspx>
http://infonet.sktnhr.ca/communications/Documents/Resources/SHR_identity_guide_logo.pdf

SHR Writing Guidelines
http://infonet.sktnhr.ca/communications/Documents/Resources/SHR_Writing_Guidelines.pdf

SHR Tips for Writing for the Web
http://infonet.sktnhr.ca/communications/Documents/Resources/SHR_Web_Writing_Tips.pdf

SHR Guidelines for Writing Media Releases
http://infonet.sktnhr.ca/communications/Documents/Resources/SHR_Media_Release_Writing_Guide.pdf

SHR Clinical Health Record Form Standards 7311-20-002
<https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/about/RWPolicies/7311-20-002.pdf>

SHR Copyright Policy 7311-50-005
<https://www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/about/RWPolicies/7311-50-005.pdf>

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