Potential Barriers to Patient Engagement and Behavior Change

Health Literacy
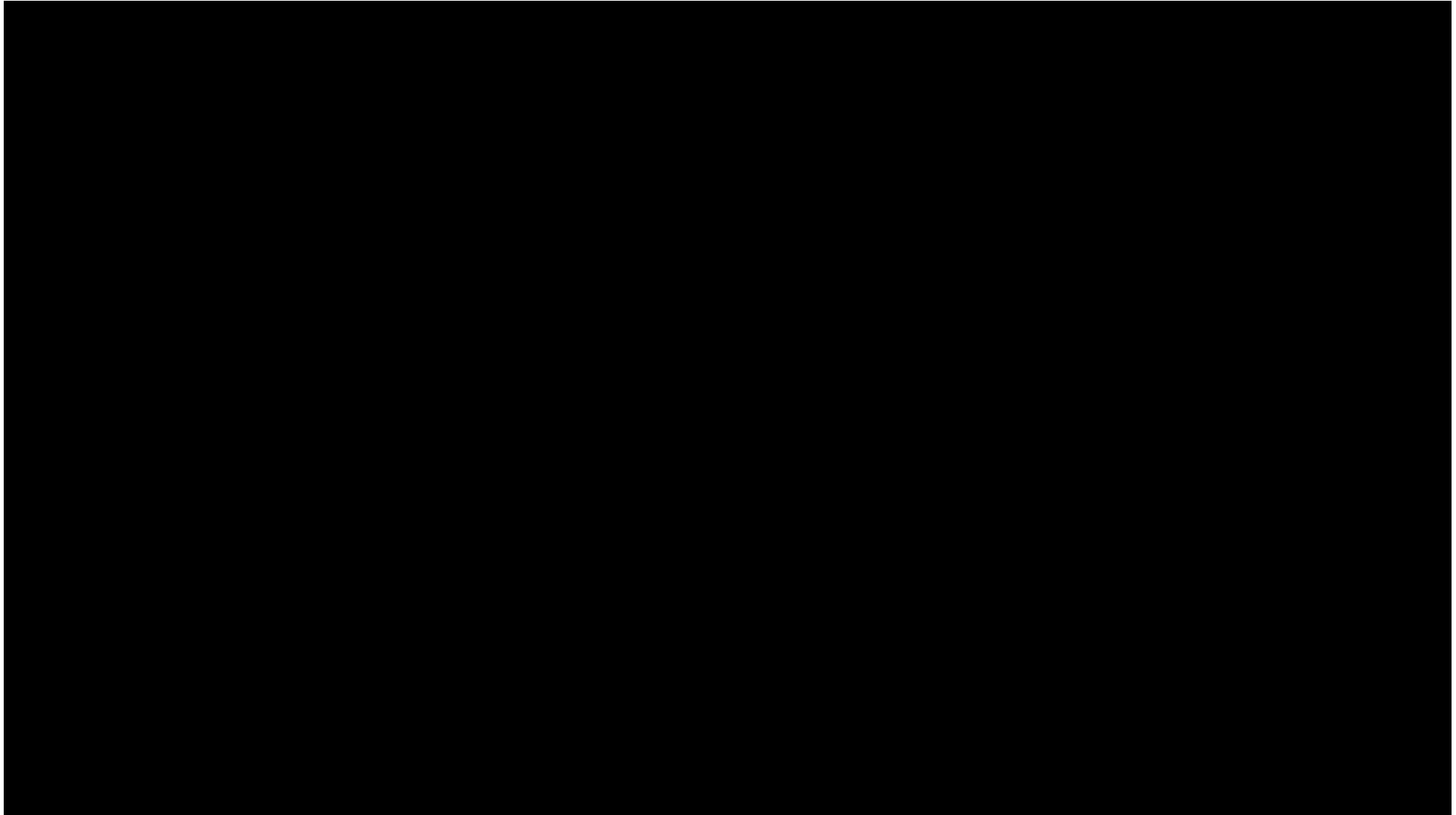
- "The degree to which individuals have the capacity to **obtain**, **process**, and **understand** basic health information and services needed to **make** appropriate health **decisions**."

  - - Ratzan and Parker, 2000 / Healthy People 2010

Objective:

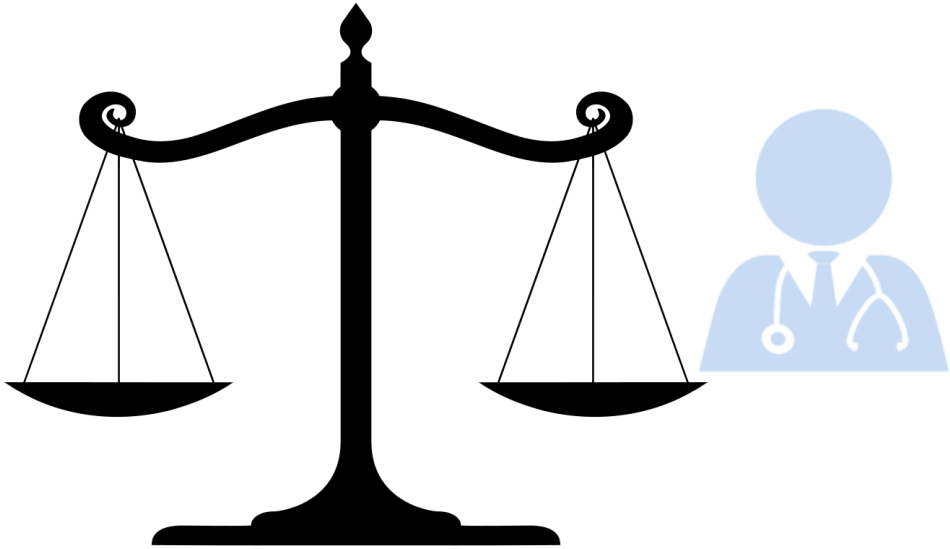Identify barriers to patient engagement and behavior change.
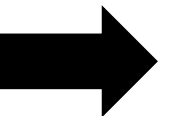
Health Literacy – AMA

Health Literacy

A **patient's ability** to obtain, understand and act on health information.

A **provider's capacity** to communicate clearly, educate about health and empower their patients.

Impact on Self-Management

21% of the U.S. adults read **below the 9th grade level**

Impacts
- Reading prescription labels
- Finding their way in a health care system
- Fully understanding written materials

Functional Health Literacy

Literacy is not only about reading and writing

- **Listening** for understanding
- **Evaluating** if the message sent was the same as it was received
- **Speaking**
- The ability to **ask questions**

(Arnold and Boggs, 2017)

GNINAELC – Ot erussa hgih ecnamrofrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitrap. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi lohocla. Eb erus on lohocla sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa ti sdnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos, ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, lliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.

Why are patients at risk?

Reliance on the written word for patient instruction

Increasingly complex healthcare system

More medications

More tests and procedures

Growing self-care requirements

Esoteric language

Who is at risk?

- Elderly
- Ethnic and racial minorities
- Limited education
- Immigrants
- Low socioeconomic status
- People with chronic disease

**Poverty is shown to influence health outcomes, with unmet social needs, environmental factors, and barriers to accessing health care contributing to worse health outcomes for people with lower incomes.
Those who qualify as impoverished may have more difficulty obtaining health insurance or paying for expensive procedures and medications.
Children comprise the largest age group experiencing poverty and childhood poverty is associated with developmental delays, toxic stress, chronic illness, and nutritional deficits.

- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
    - cmslists@subscriptions.cms.hhs.gov

Case Study Discussion

- Jonathan is a 14-year-old adolescent recently discharged from a mental health unit. This was his fourth admission over an 18-month period. His mother assumed responsibility for seeing that he took his medications as directed. His mother knew the names of his medications and faithfully monitored his taking of them. But Jonathan's behavior began to deteriorate again.

- At one of Jonathan's follow-up visits, the nurse asked him to show her the meds he was on, and how he was taking them. It turned out that Jonathan's mother couldn't read, got the meds mixed up, and was administering the daily med three times a day, and the TID medication once daily.
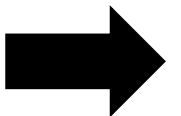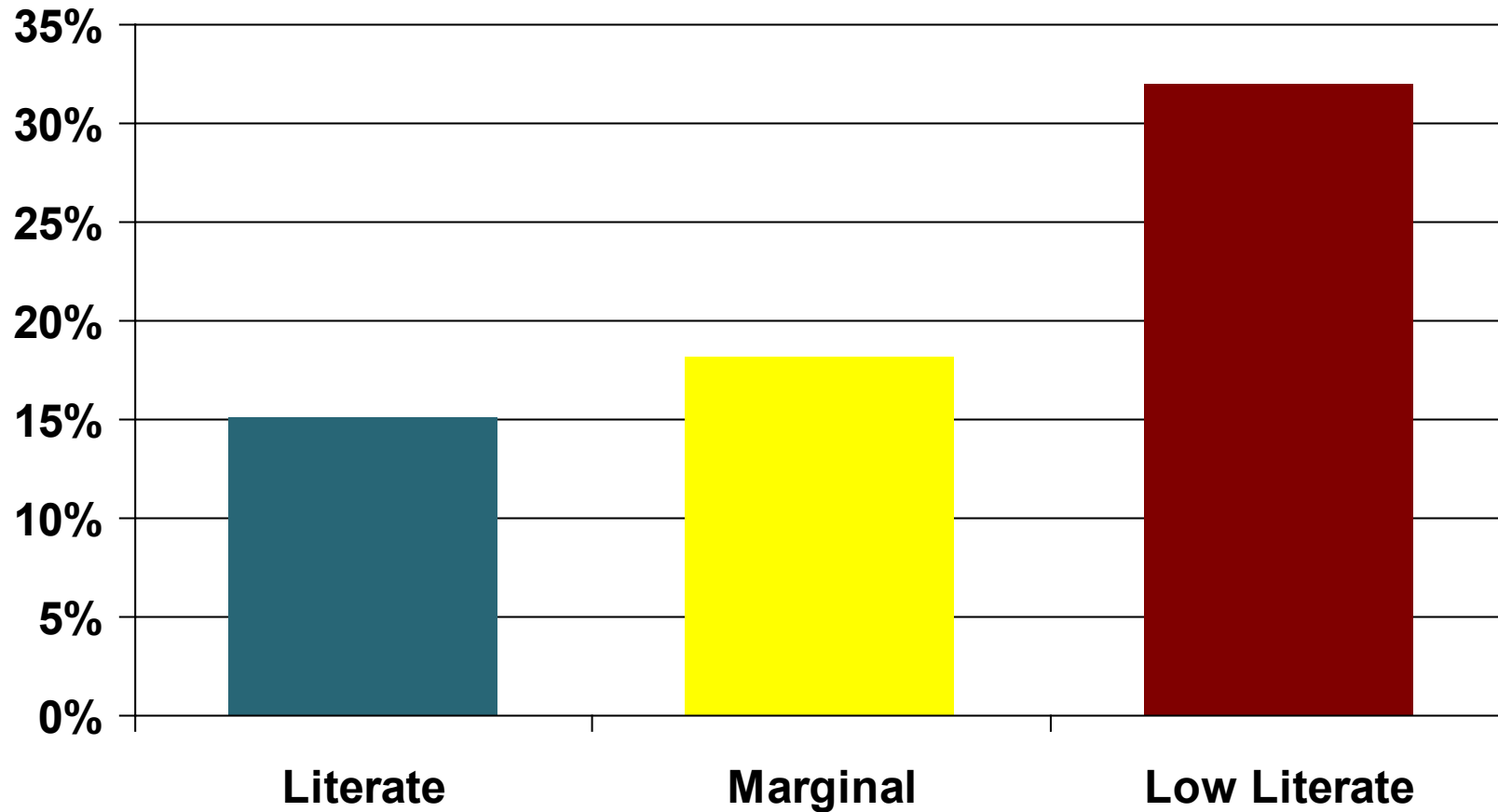
Economic Impact

Low health literacy increases US health care costs by **$50 billion**

$73 billion annually*

Low Literacy Leads to Re-hospitalization

Recognizing the Red Flags

Making Excuses

Frequently Missed Appointments, Tests

Non-adherent with meds or treatment

Perceived Resistance

Has No Questions

Creating a Shame Free Experience

Convey an attitude of helpfulness, caring and respect – by all staff

- Ask questions to help patients open up
- Listen
- Encourage patients to ask questions
- SMILE ☺

Provide assistance confidentially

Strategy:
Improve interpersonal communication

Slow down
- Take your time

Use plain, non-medical language
- "Living room" language

Strategy:
Improve interpersonal communication

Use analogies and pictures
- Charts
- Models
- Diagrams
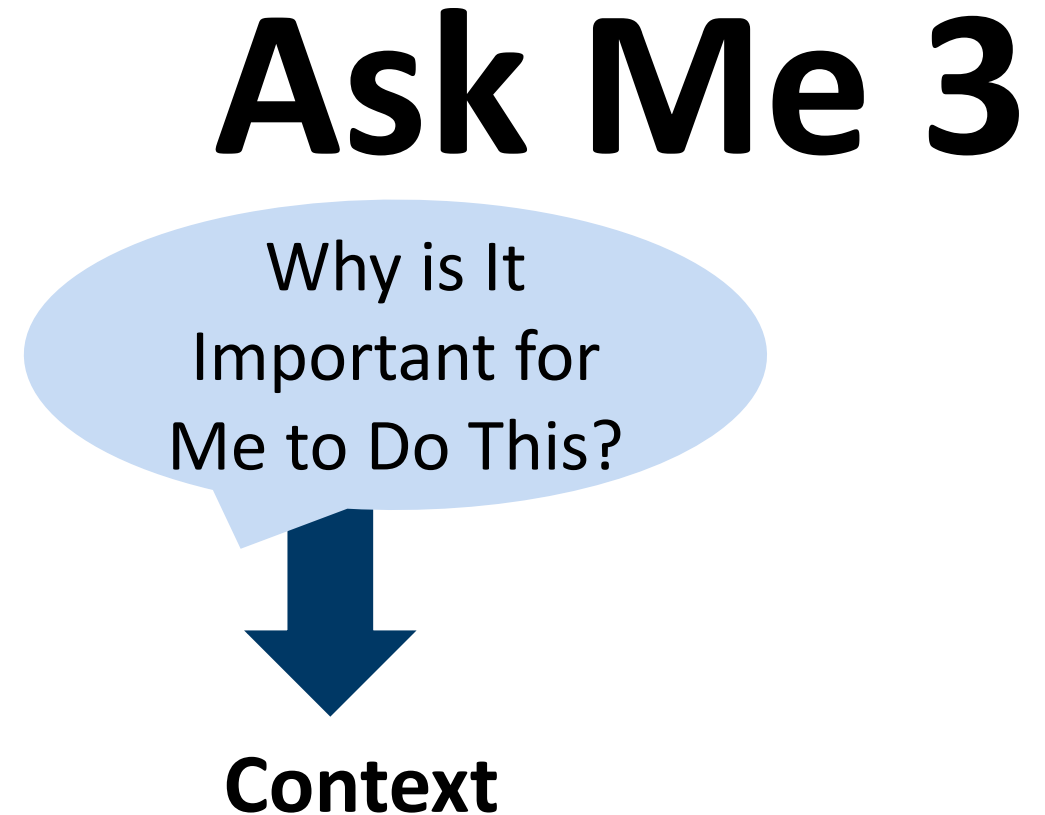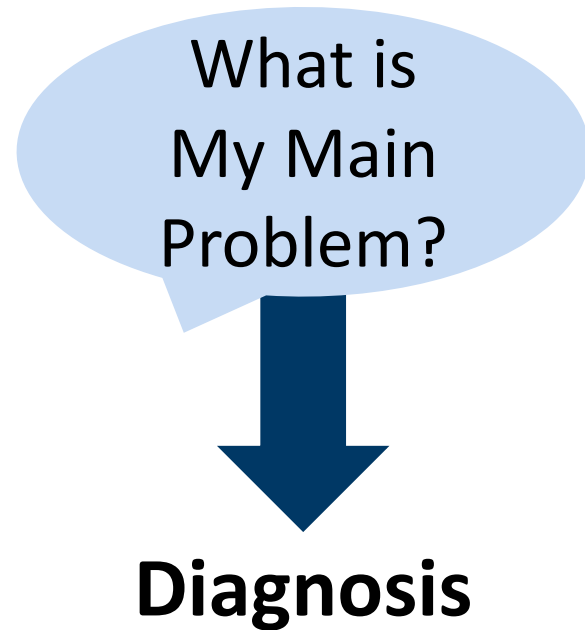
Limit to most important concepts
- Focus on 1-3 key messages

Repeat them

Strategy:
Empower patients

What is My Main Problem? → **Diagnosis**

What Do I Need to Do? → **Treatment**

Ask Me 3
Why is It Important for Me to Do This? → **Context**

Strategy:
Use teach-back method

Asking patients to demonstrate understanding:
- What will you tell your spouse about your condition?
- I want to be sure I explained everything clearly, so can you please explain it back to me so I can be sure I did?
- Show me what you would do.

Chunk and check:
- Summarize and check for understanding throughout, don't wait until the end.

Do NOT ask…
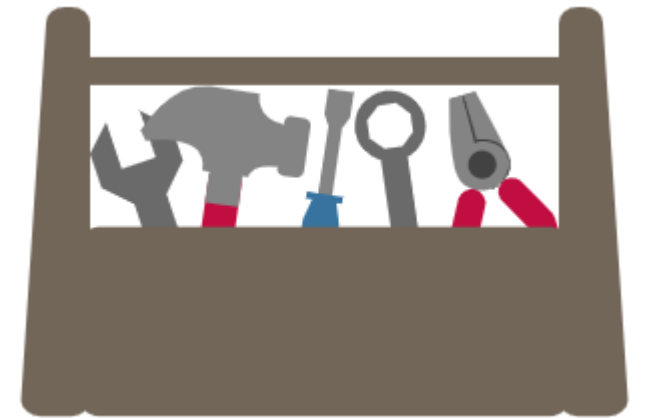- Do you understand?

"Understanding is a two-way street."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Strategy:
Identify Assessment and Support Tools

Tips

- Medi-Babble Application (http://medibabble.com/)
- Living Room Language Dictionary (see hand out)

Key Takeaways

- Health literacy is a barrier to patient engagement and behavior change

- Recognize who is at risk and red flags to spot health literacy

- Create a shame-free atmosphere to assess health literacy and address the patient's needs

- Utilize strategies to check for patient understanding