

CASE STUDY: Health Literacy in Children's Health Redland Hospital

Refers to: NSQHS Standard 2 Partnering with Consumers

Keywords: Consumer Health Information, Health Literacy

Introduction

Redland Hospital Library (part of Metro South in the Queensland Health network) is working on a health literacy initiative to connect paediatric patients and their carers with information to understand their stay in hospital, to answer questions that may arise and to provide an overall more informed experience with the health service.

The idea was sparked from a request on an e-list about picture books for children coming into hospital and through a conversation with the Director of Paediatrics about kids not washing their hands. From there the idea grew into the health literacy initiative it is today.

Method

'Health Topics for Children' are brochures designed for health professionals to give to families for further reading on particular health topics. Each health topic brochure contains a list of recommended reading resources for children. The content is aimed at readers aged 4 – 12 years old. The guides also include some recommended reading for adults. There are 20 topics, comprising 6 guides currently available with a further 14 in development: http://msh-qld.libguides.com/health_topics_for_children/redland_hospital

Current topics:

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| 1. Asthma | 11. Operations/Surgery |
| 2. Autism Spectrum Disorders | 12. Nut Allergies |
| 3. Colds, Flu, Bronchitis, Tonsillitis | 13. Personal Hygiene |
| 4. Constipation and Faecal Incontinence | 14. Pet Allergies |
| 5. Epilepsy | 15. Diabetes |
| 6. Food Allergies | 16. Second Baby |

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| 7. Broken Bones | 17. Explaining Death to Children |
| 8. Fussy Eaters | 18. Multiple Birth |
| 9. Going to the Hospital | 19. Visit to the dentist |
| 10. Infection Control/Germs | 20. Taking Medication |

There are two versions of the brochures; the first version is specific to Redland Hospital, Cleveland Queensland. These are for staff at the hospital to print and give to patients. They link the recommended resources to the local public libraries. The second version is a generic one that is available to any person to download or print to use as recommended reading material.

As permanent children's books are not allowed in the ward due to infection control concerns, the concept is that the brochures provide parents with a list of resources to follow up after their child's consultation. Patients and parents awaiting elective procedures can be given the brochure to help with pre-reading on a topic.

The hospital librarian liaises with the acquisitions librarian at the local Redland City Council public library. When she creates a new topic she emails the brochure to the public librarian who looks at the list and purchases any of the books the public library does not have. When the books have arrived and have been processed she notifies the Redland Hospital librarian who changes the master copy on the LibGuide to place more 'holdings' icons beside the books. The Redland City Council has been very supportive of the project and happy to purchase more books.

The brochures were designed by a medical librarian and input came from a variety of places. The listed resources were chosen by a medical librarian (who was a former primary school teacher and teacher librarian for 12 years). Another medical librarian wanting to try something similar could collaborate and consult with a primary school librarian if they were unsure of the quality of the content. The Redland Hospital-specific brochures contain localised information with links to the Redland Public Library catalogue and an icon indicating they hold the item.

Before being distributed the brochures are checked by the local "consumer read" committee. Here they are given the tick of approval if the design, reading level etc. are appropriate. The 'Health Topics for Children' brochures use Creative Commons images, and include a disclaimer that this is a guide only and does not constitute professional medical advice.

An initial list of topics was jointly developed by the medical librarian and the paediatric department. From this start, a wider range of departments have put forward many further topics. This includes

Dietetics asking for a “fussy eating” brochure, Occupational Therapy wanting “constipation and faecal incontinence” and Pharmacy asking for a “taking medication” brochure.

Results

‘Health Topics for Children’ brochures are available in multiple places throughout the organisation and at the Redland Public Libraries. Within Redland Hospital they can be found in paediatrics, emergency (e.g. the “broken bones” brochure) and relevant outpatient clinics e.g. fracture clinic, medical imaging. The brochures are also showcased in waiting room screens in relevant areas e.g. having a second baby, multiple births in the antenatal clinic. In August 2016 the Librarian was given an award for the initiative by the Hospital.

Evaluation

Statistics can be generated from the LibGuide to see how many times the page has been visited. There is discussion with the public library to gather usage statistics showing how many times these items have been borrowed from their collection. In addition, the Library maintains counts of the number of brochures used to replenish supplies around the Hospital, and how often the stocks are re-filled.

Discussion

The project is still in its infancy; however there is also talk about ways in which the program can grow. This could be through adding a sticker to the books housed in the public library, adding additional topics, reaching out to other health service providers in the area and promoting more broadly the generic versions which are freely available to all to use and download. 'Health Topics for Children' are scheduled to be reviewed every 2 years or more often if required. This ensures currency of content allowing new resources to be added.

This project shows a clear link to NSQHS Standard 2 (Partnering with Consumers). Not only is the project tailored to Redland Hospital but also the generic versions allowing Specialist Clinics, General Practitioners and other organisations to download brochures and distribute. Redland Hospital Library is also keen to share the brochures with other hospital libraries to adapt and rebrand for themselves. This initiative demonstrates that projects can be taken on and successfully achieved by those working in a solo librarian position.