

Connecting Mind and Body: Implementation of Online Health Literacy Tool for People With



Serious Mental Illness



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Introduction: Individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) die, on average, 25 years earlier than the general population. Higher rates of smoking, alcohol consumption, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, obesity, lack of preventive healthcare, and other modifiable risk factors, as well as side effects associated with certain antipsychotic medications, place individuals with SMI at high physical health risk. Many report feeling frustrated, overwhelmed, and confused using the Internet to find health information. And, web design accommodations for this population have been recommended, but not generally applied. This poster reports initial findings from an NIH/NLM-funded project, the goal of which is to create an interactive web-based resource targeted to individuals with SMI, to promote health literacy, facilitate access to health information, and reduce health disparities.

Results from focus groups with individuals with SMI:

Sources of information: Google searching, followed by specific websites (WebMD) and health professionals such as pharmacists
Criteria for choosing the right website: sites with "authority," websites that sounds "familiar". Type of needed information will influence the choice
Limitations of existing websites: websites containing information that is overwhelming, confusing and anxiety inducing. Websites lack of holistic information
Top searched info topics: medication side effects and interactions
Practical suggestions & The perfect website: Websites including holistic information with coping strategies on how to manage mental health issues daily; info on local sources of specialists; sensitive to people with SMI – no stigmatizing, no preaching tone and considering their potential limitations in certain areas.

Results from focus groups with professionals, researchers, providers and librarians:

Sources of information: prefer curated sites such as MedlinePlus and NAMI.
Criteria for choosing the right website: concern that patients do not have the full skills needed to assess the reliability and trustworthiness of a website.
Limitations of existing websites: text language often at a high grade reading level and/or heavy use of abbreviations or medical terminology without clear definitions
Top searched info topics: similar to patient, but with additional supporting information
Practical suggestions & The perfect website: Carefully consider dissemination of this new site. Get "in front of the eyes" of professionals (psychologist, psychiatrists, medical librarians, public librarians) to maximize exposure

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Stages of implementation: The implementation process consisted of four stages: 1. Environmental scan, 2. Needs assessment, 3. Data analysis and content development and 4. Design of the website and usability testing

I. Environmental scan of available resources: following an initial literature review, we: a) developed a survey instrument, based on an existing validated health literacy tool, b) distributed the tool to expert users of existing eHealth information resources (n=72)

II. Needs Assessment: Conducted six IRB-approved focus groups (n=42) with individuals with SMI and health information providers (librarians, researchers and practitioners) with the goal of embracing user experience and required/desired design accommodations.

III. Data analysis and content development: Through the results of the focus groups and the survey, we identified central themes regarding the general usage of online resources among people with SMI as well as themes identifying the specific needs and requirements of this population. We implemented these findings in the context of new web-based resources and materials.

IV. Design of the website and usability testing: Following an existing health literacy model, a multidisciplinary team designed the website and implemented the various materials. Usability testing will include assessing contents and usage with people with SMI. It is anticipated that the full site will be publically launched in late 2018.

Initial Design of Web Site home page



MY HEALTH Connect
Your Mind, Your Body

Conclusions and practical considerations:

- *Designing a health literacy online platform for people with SMI is a complex and multi-phasic process, including reviews of existing websites, expert surveys and needs assessments.
- *Through the results of the focus groups, we identified central themes regarding the general usage of online resources among people with SMI as well as themes identifying the specific needs and requirements that this population have in gathering information
- *People with SMI lack literacy skills on how to appropriately select and use online health information
- *There is a need of more online tools, who are specifically designed to individuals with SMI, offering more holistic and practical information how to cope with the challenges of their disease on a daily basis
- *Some practical suggestions on how to design useful online tools includes clear and simple contents that induce hope and positivity; emphatic tone; use of images and videos that can facilitate and engage people with SMI