REACHING OLDER ADULTS MORE EFFECTIVELY THROUGH PRINT

An Age-Friendly DC Guide for Creating Material for 50+ year olds

Creating printed material for 50+ year old adults also means being reader friendly for all. Following these tips will make a difference in how many take the time to read and absorb your message.

TERMINOLOGY

Use age to identify the group to whom you are referring (e.g. 50+). Avoid using terms such as elder, senior, or older adult. Many adults 50+, even 90+, reject these terms, often due to accompanying stereotypes. Do not use "they" or "them" when referring to 50+ year old adults.

BE SPECIFIC

Keep text short, direct, and positive. An example of this would be to write, "Keep track of your medications," instead of "It is important for people to keep track of the medications they take."

EXAMPLES

Use examples that help connect readers to applicable past experiences. Avoid abstract examples.

FONT TYPES

Serif type face, with tails at the end of letters, creates an illusionary line. These tails guide the reader's eyes across the print. The "We Are DC Style Guide" approves fonts like Times New Roman & Adobe Jenson Pro are serif type face.

FONT SIZES

To ease strain on a reader's eyes, the "We Are DC Style Guide" uses 14 point font. This is recommended, if possible, but 12 point font is the minimum required for 50+ year old adults. With the digital divide in mind, do not assume that all individuals know how to make a screen larger if need be.

SENTENCE CASE

WRITING IN CAPITAL LETTERS CAN BE HARDER TO READ. Reserve capital letters for headers. Limit the use of italics, underlining, and bold text for the same reason. *Italics* are harder to read then Roman letters (upright).

COLOR

Black written on white or on very light colors is the most reader-friendly. This allows a place for the eyes to rest. Using yellow, blue, or red type in close proximity can make words blend together and can be hard to differentiate from the background.

TEXT LENGTH

Avoid long blocks of text. Breaking content up into two columns or a adding a picture beside the text is beneficial.

ASK QUESTIONS

Reinforce points with questions. Research suggests that questions help readers remember key points.

CHARTS

Avoid complex diagrams. Keep charts and graphs simple and clearly labeled.

Remember, readability with 50+ year old adults in mind is reader friendly for all. Since we are all aging, these age-friendly tips are ways that you can ensure that everyone you are trying to reach receives your message.

REFERENCES

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