

# Identifying Clients with Limited Literacy Skills

**Many factors may be associated with limited literacy including:**

- Difficulties speaking English
- English is a second language
- Aged adult
- Non completion of high school
- Low income/situation of poverty

**Literacy difficulties can be apparent from clients' *behaviour*. Clients may:**

- Frequently use health-related services
- Routinely miss scheduled appointments
- Arrive for appointments without completed forms
- Never refer to written information they have received
- Avoid filling out forms and questionnaires
- Rely on others to read material for them
- Bring family members to appointments as a surrogate reader
- Claim to have vision or other problems to avoid reading
- Ask a lot of questions ... or do not ask any questions at all
- Ignore or misunderstand advice/instructions (e.g. medications)
- Read slowly with obvious effort
- Read something faster than expected with no comprehension
- Never jot down instructions
- Exhibit facial signs of frustration or anxiety while reading
- Attempt to read material upside down
- Have problems understanding how to access appropriate services