

Information sources

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To identify and use different sources of health information
- To assess the reliability of the sources
- To know when to seek professional advice



RESOURCES

- Health magazines, TV/radio magazines, health sections from women's and men's fashion magazines
- Selection of books and leaflets on different health conditions
- Internet access or a printout from a web page showing the date of the information
- Copies of Resource 1

- Caption cards to match pictures on Resource 1 (Activity 1 ESOL)
- Prompt cards prepared from Resource 2 (optional)

RELATED TOPICS

NHS website (Theme 9, Topic 7)

Use the Internet to find information (Theme 8, Topic 2)

HEALTH SKILLS

To find out about their health concerns and conditions, learners need to be aware of the wide variety of information sources available. However, learners should also be aware that not all information is reliable or up-to-date.

Related health information

NHS website www.nhs.uk
websites for specific conditions
e.g. <https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/>
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/>

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

In order to manage their health effectively, learners need to:

- know how to access information
- be able to scan and read information relevant to their needs.

Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

Activities in this topic will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- identify common sources of information
English E3.10 (L/Rt/E2.3)
- understand and use organisational features to locate information
English E3.12 (L/Rt/E3.5)
- scan texts to locate information
English E3.9 (L/Rt/E3.7).

- People like to talk about health and often offer advice based on their experience and traditions. Talking about health conditions often brings out 'old wives' tales'.
- State some 'old wives tales' to do with health (e.g. an apple a day keeps the doctor away; eating carrots improves your eyesight; eating fried onions will soothe a sore throat). Ask 'How can you tell what is truth and what is myth?' 'Should you believe all that you hear?'
- Point out to learners that there are 'old wives' tales' in all cultures and ask learners to share ones they know (e.g. if a woman wears high heels during pregnancy her baby will become cross eyed (Guyana); if a woman eats white food during pregnancy her child will have fair hair (India)). Ask learners how they know if a statement is true or false.
- Turn the discussion to where learners can get reliable health information.

Is all health information reliable?

Who can you trust to give you reliable health information?

Where can you get information about health?

How do you prefer to get information – by reading, listening or watching?

How can you check a source is reliable?

ACTIVITY 1

Compare different sources of information

- Look at Resource 1 together, which shows different ways of getting information about your health. Ask learners to discuss the pictures in pairs. Using the pictures as stimulus, ask each pair what source of information each one shows. List these on the board/flipchart. If appropriate, ask learners to suggest other sources of information (e.g. support groups, notice boards, some pharmacies offer a prescription reminder service via text message, etc.).
- For each information source, discuss what it involves – watching, listening or reading (or a mixture). Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of getting information in this way, and learners' personal preferences.
- Use the prompt cards prepared from Resource 2 as prompts where required.
- Encourage learners to give their personal opinions about the information sources in the pictures (e.g. the Internet is no use if you don't know how to use a computer).
- Refer back to the 'old wives' tales'. Round off the discussion by explaining that not all information is fact. You need to get information from reliable sources, and double-check the information.

Support

- Cut out the pictures on Resource 1 and give these to learners one at a time.
- Read each prompt card on Resource 2 aloud. Provide several copies of the cards so that learners can physically place the relevant cards with each picture.
- Ask direct questions based on learners' own experiences.

ESOL

- Prepare captions that learners can match to the pictures (e.g. searching on the Internet, reading a health magazine, borrowing a book from the library, looking for leaflets, etc.).
- Go through the pictures, encouraging learners to use the words to describe what is happening in each picture.

ACTIVITY 2

Evaluate the reliability of information

- Move the discussion on to the types of information that learners feel are the most reliable, asking them to explain why.
- If the group is familiar with using the Internet, discuss the reliability of websites. Suggest and write up the web addresses of 'trustworthy' sites such as NHS website and specific health sites of particular interest/relevance to learners. Alternatively, discuss the pros and cons of information from specialist books and leaflets (good, probably reliable but can be too detailed and may be out of date).
- Discuss how to check how up-to-date the information is on leaflets, in books or on the Internet. Show learners where publication dates can be found on reading materials (books, magazines), a web page (use a printout from a page if Internet access is not available) or in a TV/radio magazine.
- Round off the activity by reminding learners that if they talk to health professionals and trained people on helplines, they can assume that the information is accurate and up-to-date.
- Discuss how to deal with conflicting information and how to ask for clarification if unsure of the information given. Talk about double-checking information.

Support

- Help learners to scan the texts by highlighting relevant headings and pages that give clues. Support learners as they scan relevant pages for dates.
- Point out the most recent dates (where it says 'updated on' or the latest edition of a book, etc.).

ESOL

Check learners are familiar with the UK convention for writing the date in order of day, month, year.

Can books, leaflets and websites provide reliable health information?

How can you check if information is up-to-date?

What can you do if the information you find tells you very different things?

ACTIVITY 3

Practise locating information in different written sources

- Put the books, magazines, leaflets, etc. on different tables in the room. Where possible, these items should be health related and relevant to the learners.
- Discuss and demonstrate how to locate information using the contents pages, headings and subheadings, index, web links, etc. Highlight particular structural headings in a leaflet/magazine as a good example to show learners.
- Ask learners to move from table to table in pairs, locating information in the different resources that is relevant to their needs/interests.

How do you find information quickly in a book?

How do you find information on a website?

Support

- To avoid information overload, allow learners to look at just two sources. Relate these to learners' health concerns and set specific tasks (e.g. 'Where is the information on breast cancer in this book?').
- Talk learners through the process step by step.

ESOL

- Choose two or three sources that relate to learners' interests. Ask learners to predict the likely content by looking at the title and drawing on their own experience. List ideas they suggest on the board/flipchart.
- Discuss other sources of information that are available in their own language and how to access them.

TIPS

- Find a good example of a leaflet and highlight headings and structural features.
- Point out that contact details are usually found on the cover or at the back of leaflets.

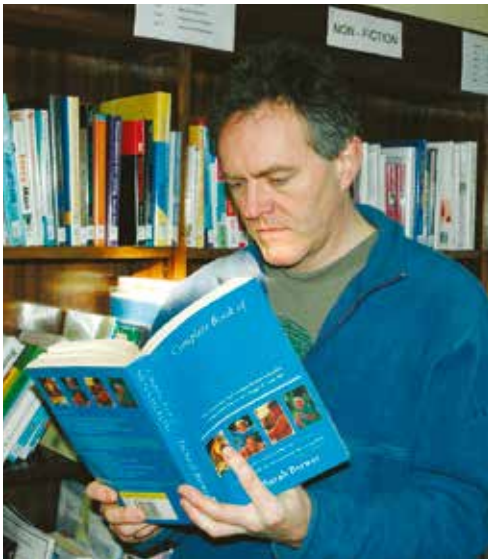
Action

- Suggest that learners use any two of the sources discussed to find out two different facts about a medical condition of their choice.
- Share these facts with the group, with learners explaining where they got the information and giving their sources (e.g. a web address) and the date of the source.

Which medical condition would you like to find out more about?

Information sources

RESOURCE 1



read

find out more

watch

use again

listen

talk to

ask a question and get
an immediate reply