# Creating Health Literate Patient Education Materials for Gender Affirming Surgeries

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### BACKGROUND

Recognized as a leader in LGBTQ+ healthcare equality and gender affirming healthcare, NYU Langone Health needed patient education materials for its target population. The program serves a diverse, multi-ethnic, multilingual transgender patient population undergoing gender affirming surgery at this large academic teaching hospital.

Currently, none of the available vendor databases at NYU Langone Health provide specific handouts or videos on gender affirming surgeries. The Health Literacy Specialists collaborate with the RN who is the LGBTQ+ Patient Liaison Community Manager, currently one of only a handful of such positions in the country. They convert clinician-authored patient education materials (handouts and video scripts) into plain language, the most effective health literacy best practice.

To date, 8 handouts have been created. Topics include vaginoplasty, phalloplasty and chest surgery.

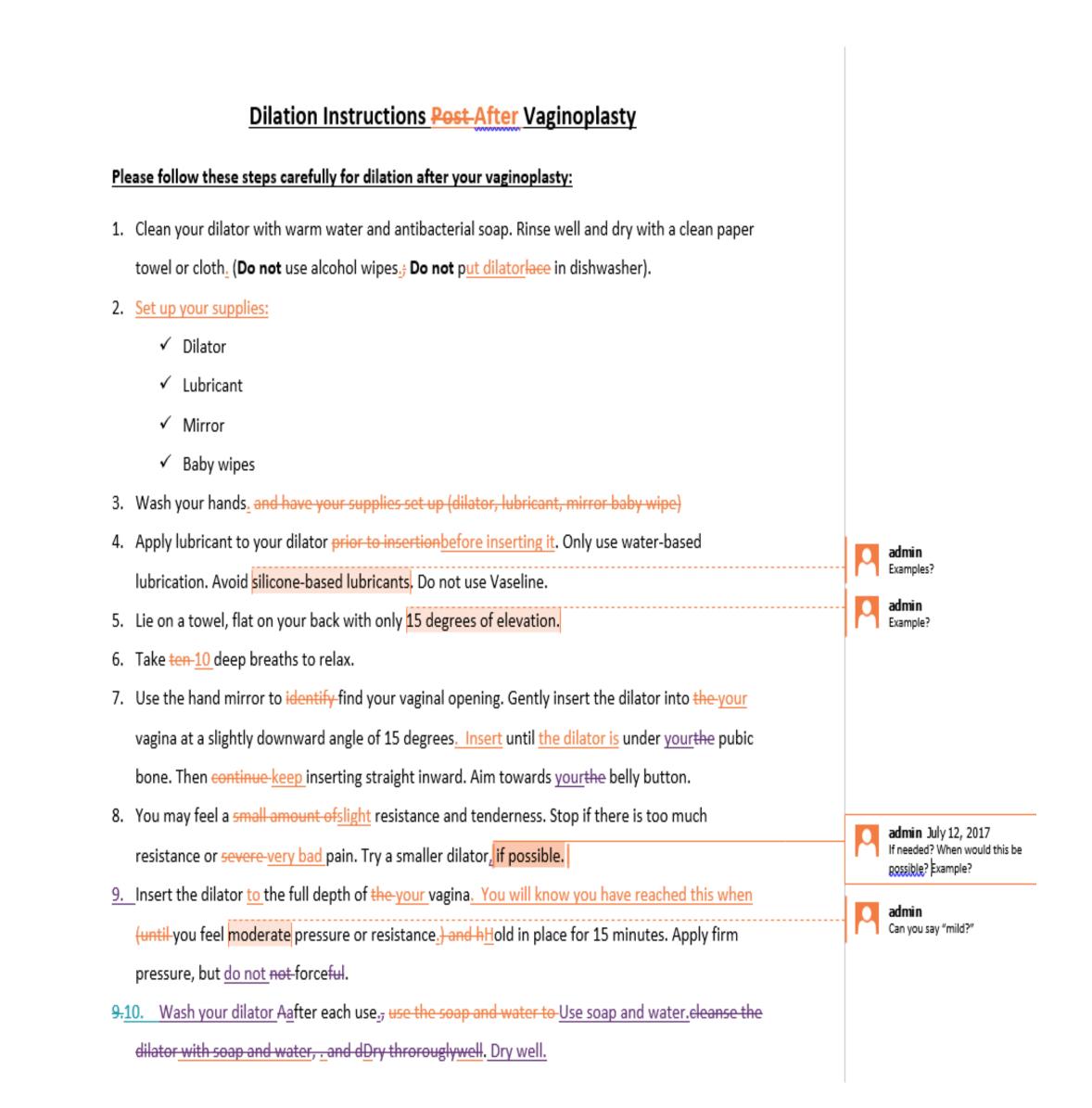
# METHODS

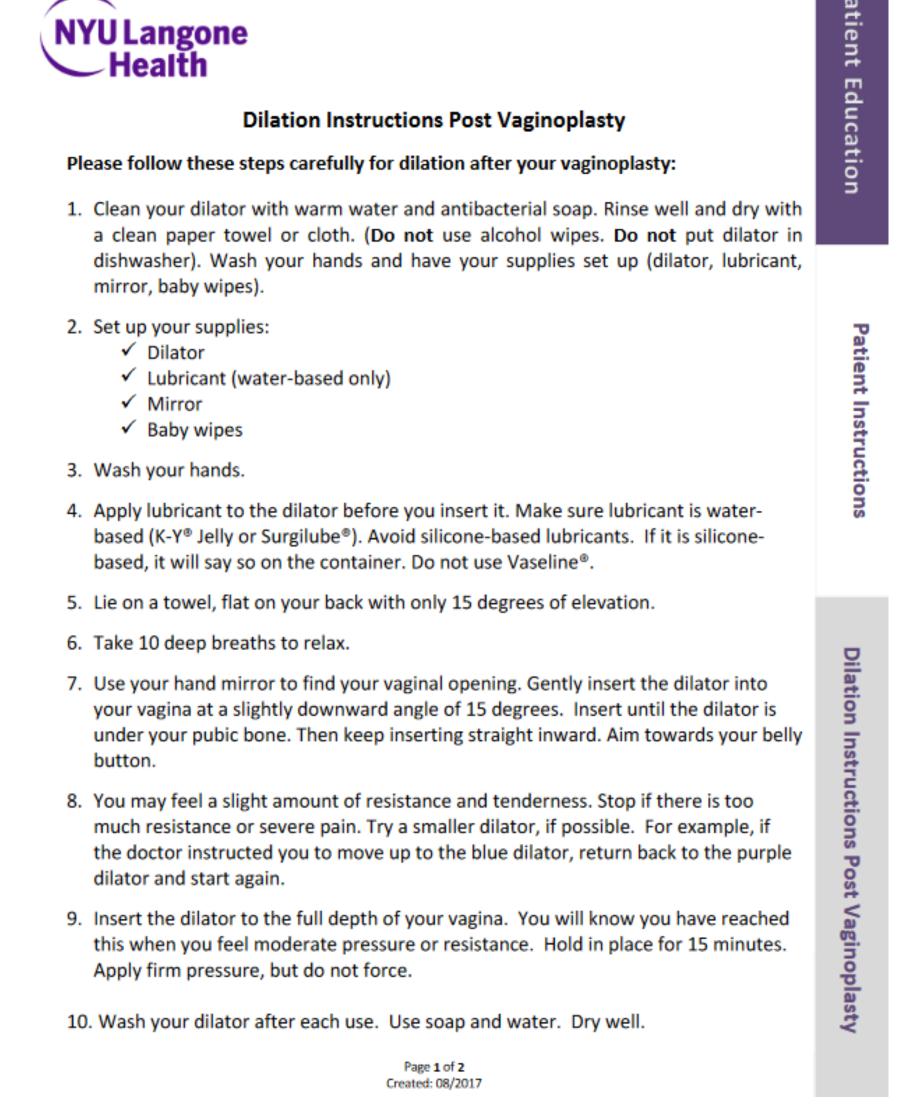
Gender affirming surgeries involve extensive preparation and necessitate a great deal of patient education. They also require a lengthy recovery with needed self-efficacy to manage post-op care.

- Surgeon and RN select needed topics and create first drafts
- Health Literacy Specialists convert documents into plain language, applying health literacy best practices and current research, while following institutional branding guidelines and style guide formatting instructions
- Editing is an iterative process. The editors request clarity on clinical procedure and the clinician authors confirm that plain language conversions are accurate. This process continues until a final version is approved by the clinician authors.
- When drafts become finalized, handouts are formatted into the official patient education template. They are then archived and added to the internal centralized access point (Handouts Document Library). This document library can be retrieved from the Applications Catalog and added to Favorites.
- Video scripts are advanced to the proper point person for the next steps in production.
   Translations are arranged on demand.

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# PLAIN LANGUAGE CONVERSION – BEFORE AND AFTER





### **EVOLVING HEALTH LITERACY BEST PRACTICES**

# Images

Research suggests that images help patients follow instructions. However, high quality copyrighted images are often cost prohibitive. For this reason, the RN takes relevant photos (e.g., incision care, and scar management and drain care) to include in the patient education handouts as visual aids.

Make sure to measure fluid in milliliters (ml) on the measuring cup and not on the bulb

# Readability Levels and Other Criteria

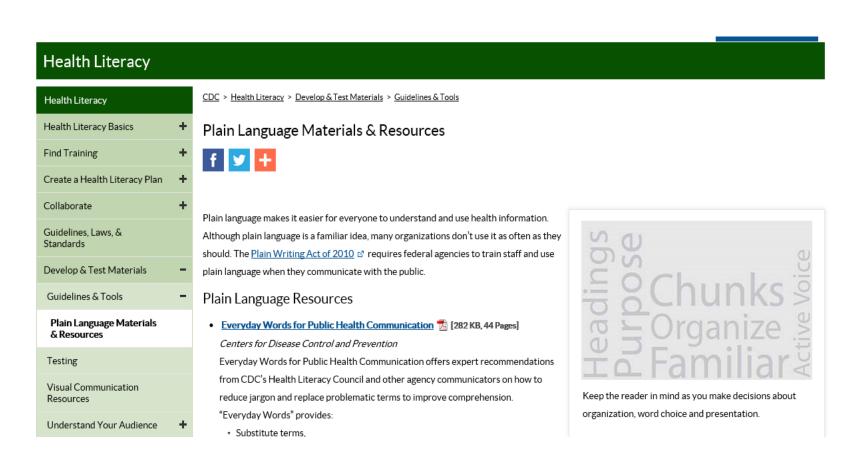
While readability formulas remain important tools for assessing health literate materials, there is a shift away from using them as the primary focus. The trend is toward using other criteria that go beyond simply using algorithms which count syllables and paragraphs to gauge grade reading levels. Examples are:

- ✓ word choice & style address patient as "you" for active voice and gender neutrality
- ✓ content actionability start each instruction with an action verb and limit key messages
- ✓ layout & design use headings and subheadings, bulleted lists and include plenty of white space
- ✓ numbers express in numeric form
- ✓ organization put the most important information first
- ✓ visual aids include relevant images that enhance the content

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Below are some of the resources we refer to when working on health literate, culturally sensitive materials for patients and families of the NYU Langone community, including our transgender patients:

- A Progressive's Style Guide (especially the section on gender):
   SUMOFUS\_PROGRESSIVE-STYLEGUIDE.pdf
- Everyday words for Public Health Communication, a plain language glossary from the CDC www.cdc.gov



- Plain Language.gov an online resource with tips and word suggestions - plainlanguage.gov/
- The Institute for Healthcare Advancement's listserv. This listserv community which includes clinicians, community health workers, educators and others working in the field of health literacy is a valuable source of information, ideas, best practices and emerging trends. Sign up at: ihahealthliteracy.org