

Creating Easy Read Psychiatric Clinic Letters for Patients with Intellectual Disabilities



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BACKGROUND

Psychiatric clinic letters are a vital communication tool between patients, psychiatrists, and GPs.

Clear, accessible communication promotes patient safety, understanding, recovery, and strengthens therapeutic relationships.

Communication must be patient-centred and adapted to individual needs — especially for patients with intellectual disabilities.

Standard clinic letters often contain complex language and formatting that may not be accessible.

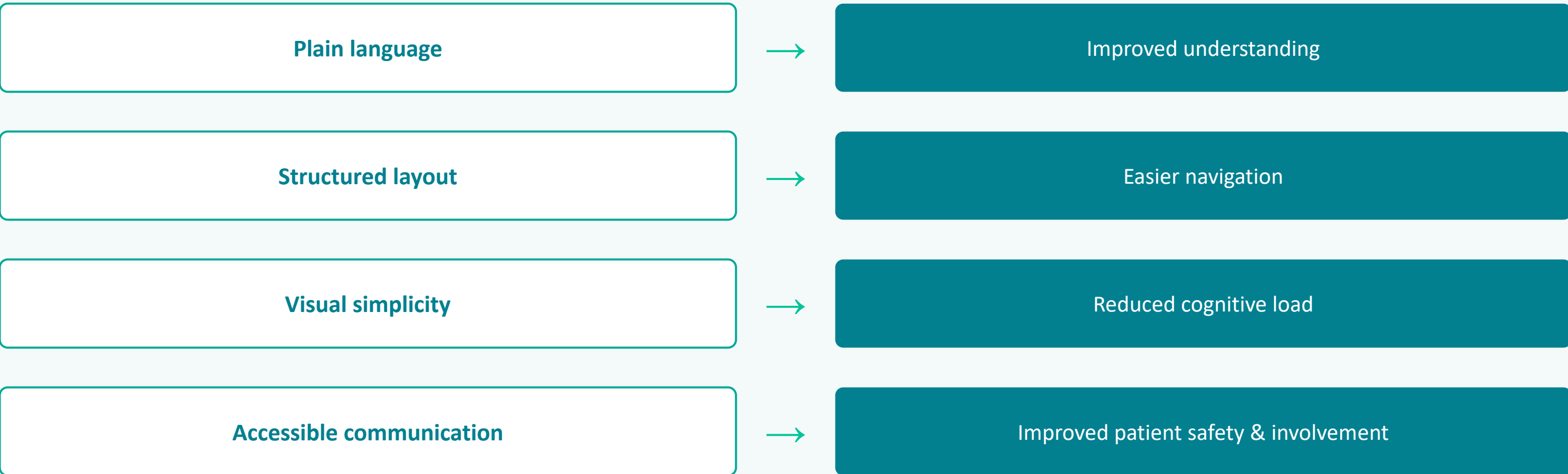
An easy read version of the clinic letter can potentially significantly improve patient understanding and engagement.



AIM STATEMENT

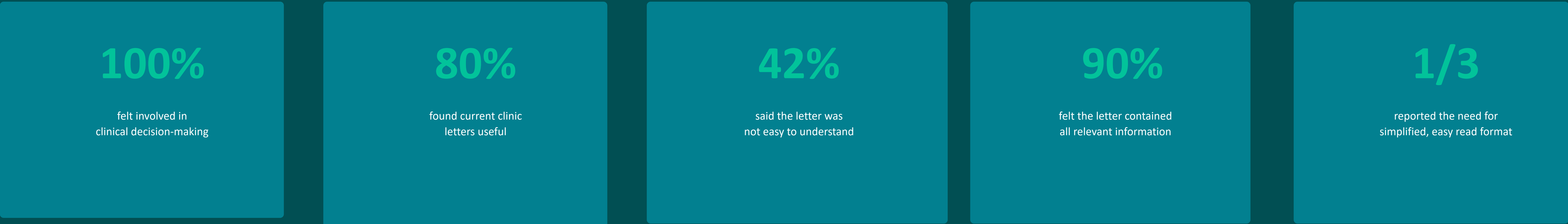
Create an easy read template for psychiatric clinic letters so that communication after appointments is more accessible and easier to understand for patients and carers.

THEORY OF CHANGE



KEY FINDINGS — BASELINE DATA

From a patient and carer survey exploring clarity, usefulness, accessibility & communication needs



PLAN · DO · STUDY · ACT

PLAN	DO	STUDY	ACT
Data Collection A patient and carer survey explored clarity, usefulness, accessibility & communication needs. Change Ideas - Format clinic letters using easy read principles - Use plain language, short sentences, and clear headings - Reduce unnecessary jargon - Provide a simplified summary alongside the standard letter Prediction & Measure Prediction: a proportion of patients will benefit from an easy read version Linked measure: administrative workload impact	What Happened An easy read format was created and sent alongside standard clinic letters for two months Feedback was collected from patients and carers A trust-vetted AI tool (Copilot) was used to reduce administrative workload and support easy read formatting	Outcome Patients and carers were surveyed; findings aligned with the prediction Some felt an easy read version is not required for every clinic encounter The easy read version improved accessibility without replacing the standard letter 100% of patients and carers found the easy read letter useful, easy to read, and containing everything they needed.	Reflections Administrative time: clinicians and admin teams already face high workload — easy read materials must be quick to produce Individualised communication: intellectual disability varies widely, so easy read versions must be adaptable Role of AI AI significantly reduced administrative burden by generating easy read versions quickly and safely, with strict adherence to GDPR

CONCLUSION

Patients and carers valued having both the standard and easy read versions.

Clear evidence that easy read communication improves accessibility and patient involvement.



NEXT STEPS

Existing clinic letters are not being replaced — not every consultation requires an easy read letter.

Further exploration should focus on producing easy read material for specific needs, for example:

- Co-produced easy read care plans completed during consultations, reducing admin time and improving tailored communication.
- Pre-produced easy read materials (e.g. medication info, diagnosis explanations) at different communication levels to support clinic letters and reduce workload.