

PATIENT EDUCATION

Kelsey Grabeel and Alexandria Quesenberry, Column Editors

**An Academic Library Utilization of Research Guides to Disseminate
Consumer Health Resources**

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ABSTRACT.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries (UT Libraries) utilizes research guides as supplemental training resources, educational tools, and community enrichment aids to support health literacy. This article illustrates case studies of three UT Libraries research guides that provide consumer health information, breaking down each research guide's development, facilitation, and purpose. As a training resource, the Cultural Competency Guide works to support the course curriculum. The Introduction to Health Sciences Research Guide serves as an educational tool by establishing foundational information for consumer health assimilation. Lastly, the Seed Library & Gardening Guide serves as a community enrichment aid to encourage healthy lifestyles and share food insecurity information that impacts campus and local communities.

KEYWORDS. research guides; libguides; academic libraries; consumer health; community support; health literacy

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INTRODUCTION

Health literacy serves as a critical component of libraries in their efforts to promote health awareness and advocacy. “Libraries of all kinds have created educational programs, fostered partnerships with health and community organizations and used innovative outreach methods to reach their user populations” (Barr-Walker, 2016, 193). The involvement of libraries in community-wide health literacy programs can leverage their positions as “shared organizational and community resources, while simultaneously increasing their value to their organizations and communities” (Whitney, Keselman, and Humphreys, 2017, 98). While consumer health outreach is more commonly considered the job of public and medical libraries or even academic libraries affiliated with healthcare facilities, academic libraries that are not affiliated with medical centers also promote health literacy among their campuses and communities (Barr-Walker 2016; Duhon and Jameson 2013).

One vital aspect of consumer health outreach is sharing consumer health resources with users in easily accessible online formats. Consumer health information needs vary according to the diverse health concerns and interests of health information seekers. Consumer health-focused resource guides can be easily tailored to assist users with locating useful resources that help satisfy their varied interests. A review of the literature revealed several examples of how resource guides have been used to connect users with valuable consumer health resources within various academic library settings and programs. In a 2014 online survey, public health graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan critiqued an existing subject guide and expressed appreciation that the guide allowed them to access multiple public health resources in one

location. These student respondents also suggested ways for making the guide more useful, such as improving the guide's navigation, adding more databases to the front page, and reducing the number of clicks needed to access desired databases (Lê 2014). The Kornhauser Health Sciences Library at the University of Louisville School of Medicine created two audience-specific guides to share lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) health resources and tools. One guide focused on consumer health information for community members, and another guide for providers promoted competent healthcare for LGBT and differences in sex development (DSD) patients. Both guides were accessed more than 900 and 600 times, respectively, since they were launched in 2016 (Petrey 2019).

Librarians for the Preston Medical Library (PML) at the University of Tennessee Medical Center (UTMC) in Knoxville described how they developed online consumer health guides using Springshare LibGuides. These consumer health guides aligned with the six Centers of Excellence located within UTMC for various patient groups and community members as a part of their Consumer and Patient Health Information Services (CAPHIS) program. PML librarians cited several advantages to using LibGuides to share consumer health content, including the ease of using templates for consistency among guides and the ability to create multiple banners and branding for guides using the LibGuides Content Management System (CMS) upgrade (Oelschlegel, Luhrs, and Lindsay 2017). Librarians from Southern Louisiana University Sims Memorial Library created a Senior Citizen Consumer Health LibGuide to support Senior CHAT (Consumer Health Awareness Training) classes held at a senior center in Hammond, Louisiana. This guide provided links to quality consumer health content hosted by MedlinePlus and NIHSeniorHealth, along with necessary computer skills information for Senior CHAT participants to practice outside of class times (Strong, Guillot, and Badeau 2012). These

examples illustrate some of the various ways that academic and health sciences libraries have used online resource guides to promote health literacy among their constituencies by presenting curated consumer health information.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries (UT Libraries) follows this approach by supporting their various demographic entities through curated resources and research guides. Using Springshare's LibGuide content management tool, UT Libraries provides subject-specific content guides to meet their users' needs. These guides serve a diverse audience and their ever-growing need for information and resources. One facet of this subject-specific content is consumer health. The UT Libraries' current consumer health research guides play a vital part in connecting its users to health information as training resources, educational tools, and community enrichment aids.

Background

UT Libraries has a dedicated mission to "providing expertise and leadership in accessing, creating, disseminating, and preserving knowledge." (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries, n.d.-a). While their service to the campus and local communities as Tennessee's land grant institution blooms, so does their online presence and outreach, allowing them to connect with their on-campus and distance education users. During the 2018-2019 academic year alone, there were over 17 million database searches (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries, n.d.-b). As these numbers continue to increase as we move into the 2020-2021 academic year, UT Libraries' online services and resources strive to meet the demands of their students, faculty, staff, and communities.

Training Resources

Academic libraries can partner with their discipline-focused departments to provide consumer health information needed to prepare students for their health sciences careers. Through this partnership, academic librarians help close the information gap that students may not otherwise receive directly in their disciplines' curriculum. One example of such a partnership is the development of the UT Libraries' Cultural Competence in Public Health guide in Figure 1.



[COVID-19 Updates](#)
[Online Support](#)

[My Account](#)
[Search](#)
[Menu](#)

[University Libraries](#) / [Research Guides](#) / [Cultural Competence in Public Health](#) / [Getting Started](#)

Cultural Competence in Public Health

Getting Started

[About Cultural Competence](#)
[Selected Websites for More Information](#)
[University Resources](#)
[Find Articles/Journals](#)
[Find Books/Reference Resources](#)
[Find Theses in Cultural Competence](#)
[Ageism and Aging Resources](#)
[More Public Health Resources](#)
[Library Research Support](#)
[Citing Sources](#)

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Health Sciences Librarians

About Cultural Competence

What is Cultural Competence?

- "A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enables effective work in cross-cultural situations." ([Health Resources and Services Administration & Office of Minority Health](#))
- "...the adaptation of care in a manner that is consistent with the culture of the client and is therefore a conscious process and nonlinear." ([Purnell, 2002](#))
- "...the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures, helps to ensure the needs of all community members are addressed." ([Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015](#))
- "...is a multidimensional learning process that integrates transcultural skills in all three dimensions (cognitive, practical, and affective), involves transcultural self-efficacy (confidence) as a major influencing factor, and aims to achieve culturally congruent care." ([Jeffreys, 2014, p. 51-52](#))

Related Definitions

Cultural Humility: "...a process of openness, self-awareness, being egoless, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals. The results of achieving cultural humility are mutual empowerment, respect, partnerships, optimal care, and lifelong learning." ([Foronda et al., 2016, p. 213](#))

Culturally Congruent Care: "...health care that is customized to fit with the client's cultural values, beliefs, traditions, practices and lifestyle. Clients may include individuals, families, groups, institutions, and organizations." ([Jeffreys, 2014, p. 51](#))

Health Disparity: "...a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion." ([Healthy People 2020](#))

Health Literacy: "The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions." ([Health Resources and Services Administration](#))

Selected Websites for More Information

Figure 1. *Cultural Competence in Public Health Research Guide*

Case Study: Cultural Competence in Public Health Guide. This research guide was created in response to a Public Health instructor who had contacted the Health Sciences Librarian in 2017. The instructor requested help compiling and presenting resources to graduate students in an experiential learning course working with diverse populations in the local community. The Health Sciences Librarian assembled a list of library-curated and freely available online resources surrounding cultural competency, cultural humility, health literacy, and other related topics into a searchable research guide (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries 2020a).

The Health Sciences Librarian also provided a presentation for the class that featured the new guide and an overview of the critical concepts surrounding cultural competence. Other courses in Public Health have also referenced this guide and other subject areas interested in cultural competence resources (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries 2020a).

Both the public health students and the course instructor had positive feedback about the guide's format and featured resources. Students commented that they found the self-assessments to be especially helpful as they gathered cultural knowledge prior to working with different community groups during their experiential learning assignments. The course instructor mentioned that she appreciated having a convenient method of sharing library-based cultural competence resources with her students to supplement their class discussions surrounding culturally congruent health care and other related topics. The instructor reported that this guide helped students in the 2017 course and those in subsequent semesters to have more meaningful interactions with various groups during their experiential learning assignments. This guide has been revised in subsequent semesters and continues to be used as a critical resource for multiple public health courses.

Educational Tools

Information is everywhere and can be overwhelming for the general consumer. As educational tools, research guides provide information on resources to support informational awareness and scholarship. For many, they can serve as starting points for user knowledge and help navigate the swamp of information readily available on the internet. Quick internet searches on health information and sources, in particular, can be misguided and erroneous. Thus, research guides focusing on health literacy and health information can be beneficial for a library user.

Case Study: Introduction to Health Sciences Research Guide. The introductory guide in Figure 2 formed out of the initial creation of the Health Sciences Workshop guide that was developed to support the Health Sciences Workshop given during the 2017 spring semester. The workshop presenters designed the Health Sciences Workshop guide; this included the Health Sciences Librarian, a Public Services Librarian, and an information sciences practicum student. The workshop and corresponding guide provided resources and tools for locating consumer health information for novice researchers.



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[Online Support](#)

[My Account](#)
[Search](#)
[Menu](#)

[University Libraries](#) / [Research Guides](#) / [Introduction to Health Sciences Research](#) / [Getting Started](#)

Introduction to Health Sciences Research

Getting Started

[Health Literacy](#)
[Consumer Health Resources](#)
[PubMed Tutorial Links](#)

[Tennessee Electronic Library \(TEL\)](#)
[Online Health Resources](#)

[Library Resources](#)

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Health Literacy: "The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions." ([Health Resources and Services Administration](#))

Health Literacy Resources

- [MedlinePlus - Health Literacy](#)
Provides resources to learn about and help improve health literacy. Provided by the National Library of Medicine.
- [Quick Guide to Health Literacy](#)
Provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.
- [What is Health Literacy?](#)
Health literacy overview provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Consumer Health Resources

- [ChooseMyPlate](#)
- [Consumer Information - Diet, Health, & Fitness - Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#)
- [Healthcare.gov](#)
- [Healthfinder.gov](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [Medicare.gov](#)
- [MedlinePlus](#)
- [Merck Manual](#)
- [National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#)
- [National Institute of Health \(NIH\) Health Information](#)
- [TN Department of Health](#)
- [Verywell](#)
- [Webidemic - Knox County \(TN\) Health Department](#)

For more information see the [Health and Nutrition](#) page of the [Consumer Information](#) Government subject guide hosted by the UTK Libraries.

PubMed Tutorial Links

- [PubMed](#)
Public access to PubMed
- [PubMed \(1948 to present\)](#)
Essential database for biomedicine. Includes citations from MEDLINE and for biomedical articles in life science journals. A product of the National Center for Biotechnology Information.
[PubMed Help](#) || [Tutorial](#) || [PubMed for Handhelds](#)
- [PubMed Tutorials \(UT Libraries\)](#)
PubMed Tutorial series for UT Libraries users.
- [PubMed Basics Handout](#)
- [YouTube: Advanced Search Builder](#)
- [YouTube: Use MeSH to Build a Better PubMed Query](#)
- [YouTube: My NCBI](#)

More information:

- [PubMed Help](#)

Figure 2. *Introduction to Health Sciences Research Guide*

The guide served a dual role during the workshop, allowing participants to follow along with the presentation within the context of the guide and utilize the guide later for access to the resources covered during the presentation. The guide showcased consumer help resources from health-centric organizations and government agencies from both a state and federal level. Additionally, it brought together health information from subject-specific research guides provided by UT Libraries and linked out those specialized resources (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries 2020b).

In 2020, the guide was retired with the creation of the Introduction to Health Sciences Research guide. This new iteration includes additional resources and enhanced usability to support the campus and community's evolving needs. Taking a useful resource and adapting it as a foundational educational tool broadens the reach for health information and health literacy awareness.

Community Enrichment Aids

The intent of developing a resource guide geared at a campus community has the serendipitous result of impacting the surrounding communities. Interests and challenges can lay outside an organization's inner workings as communities are impacted and interconnected. A common need, in turn, translates to a broader reverberation of a resource.

Case Study: Seed Library & Gardening Guide. This service-specific resource guide in Figure 3 was created in 2018 by a Public Services Librarian who serves as the Seed Librarian to support the UT Libraries' Seed Library. The Seed Library provides students, faculty, and staff access to open-pollinated seeds free of charge that they can plant at home (Dean 2018). "Seed libraries

started as community outreach programs at public libraries, but they are gaining momentum in higher education as innovative initiatives that support food access, sustainability, and experiential learning while strengthening community engagement” (Dean and Johnson, 2019, 22).



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[Search](#)
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[COVID-19 Updates](#)
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[University Libraries](#) / [Research Guides](#) / [Seed Library & Gardening](#) / [Getting Started](#)

Seed Library & Gardening

This guide will help you find databases, web resources, planting guides, and items in our collection related to gardening.

Getting Started

How It Works

Planting Guide

Online Planting Guides

Our Seed Collection

Saving Seeds

Seed Saving Videos

Glossary of Common Terms

Books & eBooks

Articles & Databases

Web Resources

Videos

Checking Out Seeds - Fall 2020

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, seeds will now need to be requested for check out. **Please, place your request using the seed request form below.**

Seed orders will be filled once a week, and you will be emailed when your seeds are ready for pickup. Your order will be held in your name and can be picked up at the Public Services Desk in Hodges Library. Seeds do NOT need to be returned.

Please, be sure your email address is correct so that you can be notified when your order is ready.

Each seed order will receive a Seed Library STICKER!

Seed availability is subject to change. We will do our best to fill orders as requested.

- [Seed Request Form](#)

WELCOME TO THE SEED LIBRARY



Online Resources!

Many of the resources on this guide are available **online**. Have fun gardening and refer back to this for any planting help.

Mission

In conjunction with the University of Tennessee Knoxville's (UTK) mission, the UTK Seed Library seeks to "move forward the frontiers of human knowledge and enrich and elevate the citizens of the state of Tennessee, the nation, and the world," through engagement in experiential learning and empowering students to lead healthy, sustainable lifestyles, while facilitating food access, community connections, and enhancement of the student experience.

Core Values

| Experiential Learning | Empowerment | Community | Food Access | Healthy Lifestyles | Inspiration | Sustainability|

Last Updated: Aug 18, 2020 11:44 AM | **URL:** <https://libguides.utk.edu/seedlibrary> | [Print Page](#)

Subjects: [Agriculture](#) **Tags:** [gardening](#), [seed library](#), [seeds](#)

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Figure 3. *Seed Library & Gardening Resource Guide*

The Seed Library & Gardening resource guide goes beyond general instruction and the Seed Library's facilitation to educate users about planting and selecting seeds through curated resources. The guide includes resources on saving seeds to help promote sustainability and information from other campus institutions such as UT Extension (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries 2020c). Research is a vital component for both novice and experienced gardeners. Their resources ensure everyone has access to materials to support the community and their agricultural interest (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Libraries 2020c; Dean and Mezick 2020). Additionally, the guide's impact within the campus community transforms student and faculty awareness and bridges the connection to the local community and related services such as co-ops, local farms, and farmers' markets. This collaboration expands beyond advocating to "effectively [promote] the seed libraries and other community resources while facilitating the success of all initiatives involved" (Dean and Mezick, 2020, 16).

CONCLUSION

Academic libraries can support consumer health information literacy through their resource and research guides. These guides serve as vessels of health information and as supplemental sources for course instruction by providing foundational health literacy materials. Additionally, these guides enrich and empower user engagement and awareness of healthy lifestyle initiatives and related resources. While consumer health information is more apparent during a time of crisis, UT Libraries has collaborated internally and externally with other campus groups to provide consumer health information to their students, faculty, staff, and community.

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