



Universal Patient Language®

Best Practice — Be Culturally Responsible

Culture-First Checklist

Use this checklist when creating a communication for anyone, regardless of cultural background or language spoken.

Culture-First Checklist

1 Plan for cultural adaptation from the start

- ☐ Did you identify and engage with the top 3 communities you need to reach?
- ☐ Did you research the cultural norms, values, and common language spoken so you can adapt more easily?

2 Choose the right language, dialect, and tone

- ☐ Did you consider the dialect, tone, and formality level for how this audience typically communicates?
- ☐ Did you look at gender pronouns and conventions with sensitivity to changes based on the community?

3 Adapt the communication visually

- ☐ Did you choose images and photography that authentically reflect the intended audience?
- ☐ Did you anticipate layout adjustments for character length, reading order, and the use of visuals and colors?

4 Respect cultural beliefs and decision-making

- ☐ Did you consider the community's commonly held health beliefs, traditional medicine and spiritual practices, and decision-making preferences?
- ☐ Did you consider how trusted community members could help communicate this information?

5 Review words or phrases that may not translate directly

- ☐ Did you identify words or phrases that may not translate directly, including dialect variation within the same language?
- ☐ If a direct translation changes the meaning, did you choose language that communicates the same idea?

6 Ensure the format works across languages

- ☐ Did you consider a bilingual format to support conversations?
- ☐ Did you confirm the best format (print, digital, verbal, video, infographic, etc.) for the audience based on how this community receives information?



7 Collaborate with the intended audience

- ☐ Did you test the communication with members of the intended audience early and throughout the process — confirmed with someone who speaks the language or is familiar with the culture?
- ☐ Did they understand the communication as intended?



Put UPL Into Practice

Explore practical tools, examples,
and resources at UPL.org.

Learn it. Apply it. Share it.



Consider culture from the start.

Culture can shape how patients and caregivers understand health information and how they make decisions.



At Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS), we believe language should never be a barrier to care. Universal Patient Language (UPL) transforms how BMS communicates with the world — turning complex content into understandable messages that improve access, trust, and outcomes.

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