

Mystery hospital visits by communication vulnerable persons as education on healthcare communication

An assignment in the minor programme ‘Communication? Like I care!’

Neijenhuis, K.¹, Twilt, S.¹, Ooms, I.¹

¹⁾ Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, Research Centre Innovations in Care / Institute of Health Care

BACKGROUND

Health service users who are communication vulnerable could face several barriers during a hospital visit. Due to a diminished capacity to speak, hear, understand, remember, read or write, they are at high risk for communication breakdowns due to factors inherent to themselves, or due to factors related to their environment (Blackstone, 2015). This includes people with communication disabilities (for instance aphasia, stuttering, hearing impairment), but also people with low literacy, second language learners and people experiencing temporary barriers in communication (for instance during intubation or in a very stressful situation). In Rotterdam, 1 in 5 citizens is low literate, compared to 1 in 8 nationwide (Huijts et al., 2020). Also, the city is superdiverse; Dutch native citizens form a minority group and more than 200 different nationalities live together. There is a growing number of migrants who are second language learners of Dutch (Crul et al., 2019). In this educational project, collaboration took place between Maasstad Hospital (a large trainee hospital in Rotterdam) the Reading and Writing Foundation, the Mano Foundation and students from the minor programme ‘Communication? Like I care!’.



AIM

- 1) For the hospital: Optimize communication accessibility
- 2) For the students: Raise awareness of communication vulnerability and its consequences for access to health care

METHOD

Participants

11 students were matched to 11 experts-by-experience (low literacy: n=5, Dutch as second language: 6)

Assignment

Pay a hospital visit like a real patient, compare your data with fellow students, formulate recommendations for the hospital

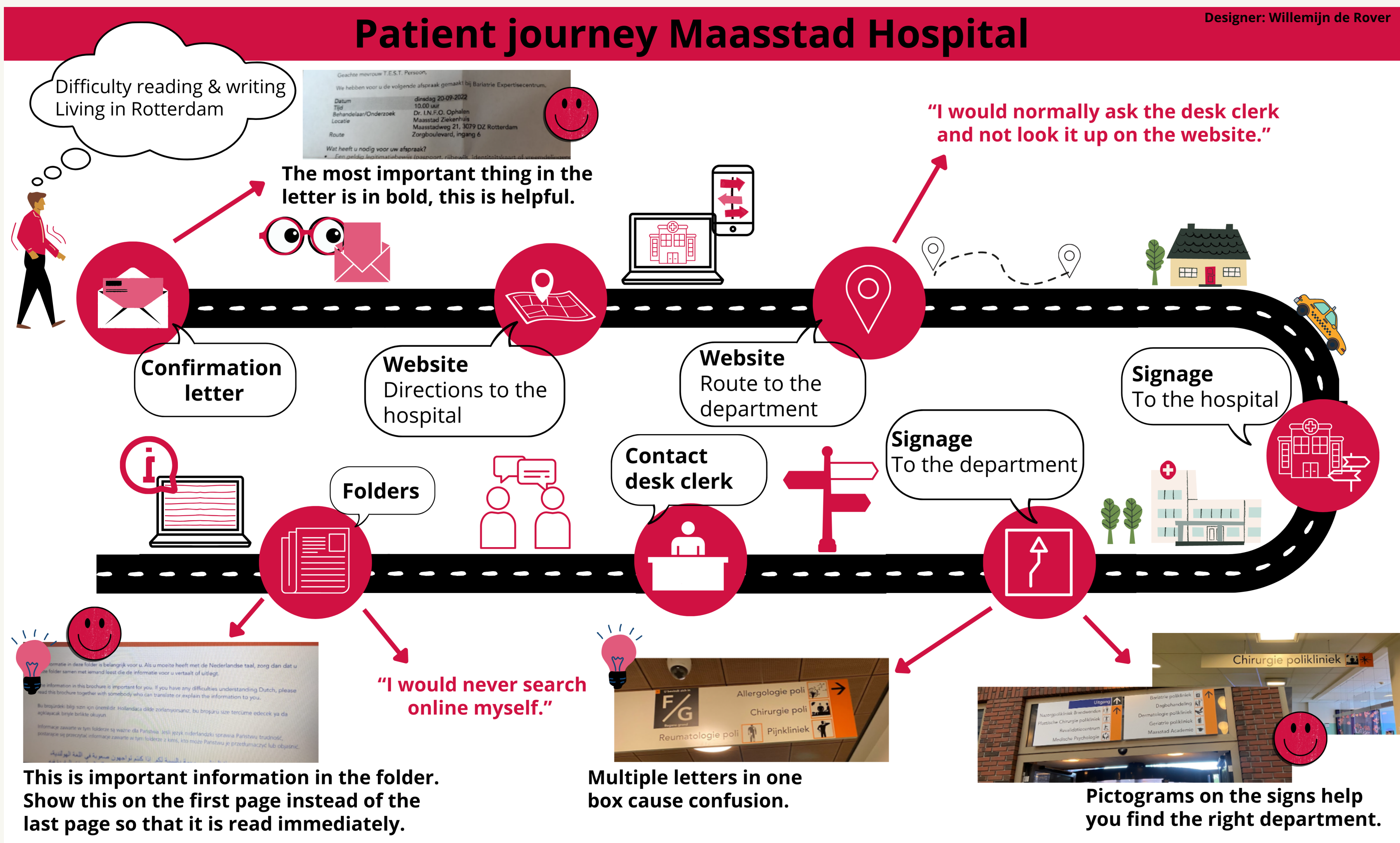
- assess appointment letter
- visit the hospital website
- use signage to find your way
- ask desk personnel for a folder
- do you understand the folder?

Data

Photo safari



Customer Journey Map



CONCLUSIONS

The hospital gained a new perspective on communication access. They learned that including the perspective of experience experts shows a more complete picture of barriers and facilitators.

Experts-by-experience gained more self-confidence in finding their way through the ‘information jungle’ of the hospital.

Students gained more awareness of communication vulnerability and learned about communication access in health care in an experiential way.

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

- Collaboration between hospital, experts-by-experience and health care students serves multiple aims in optimizing communication access in healthcare
- Take care to inform hospital staff of mystery visits beforehand

SPECIAL THANKS

A special thanks to Willemijn de Rover for designing the patient journey map and her fellow students Kajol Asray and Elisa van Tol for giving consent to display it on this poster.

CONTACT

Website:
www.rotterdamuas.com/CareforCommunication
Karin Neijenhuis: neica@hr.nl

