

Guidance for Writing Behavioral Learning Objectives

There are key components of well-written behavioral learning objectives that – when incorporated – allow for an optimal, articulated experience for learners. Consider using the below checklist when developing your objectives.

Are my learning objectives:

- **observable and measurable** (i.e., use action verbs that describe measurable behaviors)?
- statements that clearly describe what the learner will know or be able to do **as a result** of having attended an educational program or activity?
- focused on the learner?
- appropriate in breadth (not too few *or* too many – e.g., 3-4 objectives for a four-hour program)?
- sufficient in depth (at the **postdoctoral** level for psychologists and **clearly articulated** – e.g., does the *whole* of the objective make sense and is it appropriate for CE)?
- fully linked to: (a) the program narrative, (b) adequate references that support content, & (c) are listed on promotional materials?

Verbs to consider when writing learning objectives	Verbs to avoid when writing learning objectives
✓ list, describe, recite, write, identify	⊗ know, understand
✓ compute, discuss, explain, predict	⊗ learn, appreciate
✓ apply, demonstrate, prepare, use	⊗ become aware of, become familiar with
✓ analyze, design, select, utilize	
✓ compile, create, plan, revise	
✓ assess, compare, rate, critique	

Example of well-written learning objectives for a 4-hour CE session on hypnosis and pain:

At the end of this workshop, the learner will be able to:

1. Describe 3 key aspects of basic hypnosis theory and technique;
2. Explain differences between demonstrations of hypnotic technique and phenomena;
3. Identify 2 differences between acute and chronic pain; and
4. Demonstrate effective use of hypnosis in controlling acute pain.

Notes: For additional guidance on learning objectives, refer to the Standards and Criteria ([Standard C, Educational and Technical Assistance](#)). And, for further clarification on linking objectives, content, and promotional materials please refer to our [“What Should I Know about Standard D?”](#) resource.