
How to Write Behavioral Objectives

Writing behavioral objectives for your activity need not be a difficult task if you take the time to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do you want the participant to learn as a result of your session?
2. How do you want to verify that the learning took place? Use action verbs that are verifiable such as: ***Apply, Construct, Define, Describe, Demonstrate, Distinguish, Identify, List, Use***. Using these **types** of verbs in your sentence will **enable you to verify** the outcome of your teaching. For example, one of the goals of your session might be to have participants learn the pain coping strategies for chronic pain patients. Therefore, you could write an objective such as:

A. Participants will understand pain coping strategies for chronic pain patients.

or

B. Participants will list four pain coping strategies for chronic pain patients.

Only objective **B** is verifiable because it defines a behavior. You would not be able to verify someone's understanding of your teaching and thus it can not be used as a behavioral objective.

3. Your objective will also need to indicate TO WHAT DEGREE the material will be learned. What **amount** of learning can be reasonably expected after your session? In other words, it might be reasonable to expect the participant to list four guidelines for prescribing appropriate amounts of exercise even though you may have discussed six guidelines in your presentation. You need to specify the amount.

The following are specific examples of acceptable and unacceptable objectives

ACCEPTABLE OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to *name* three life events that can be associated with the onset of environmental illness.
- Participants will *identify* six common physical manifestations of food sensitivities.
- Participants will *list* three practical steps to begin meditating, for themselves and/or their clients.
- Participants will *describe* a six-step model for counseling cancer survivors .
- Participants will be able to *list* three of the five types of memory and describe how they are affected by aging.

UNACCEPTABLE OBJECTIVES

- Participants will *understand* the life events that can be associated with the onset of environmental illness.
- Participants will *know* common physical manifestations of food sensitivities.
- Participants will *recognize* the practical steps to begin meditating, for themselves and/or their clients.
- Participants will be *presented with* a model for counseling cancer survivors.
- Participants will *explore* the relationship between memory loss and aging.