

Tips for Developing Learning Objectives

What do we want participants to be better able to do as a result of participating in this activity?

Activity objectives should grow out of a thorough gap analysis/needs assessment. After you've determined the professional practice gap you want to address, barriers to closing this gap, and the learners' educational needs, you should develop learning objectives that are congruent with these needs.

Two to three learning objectives are usually appropriate for a one-hour activity. For multi-hour or multi-day programs, one to two objectives for each session in the program will be critical in linking individual sessions together and ensuring the linkage of individual sessions to the overall course goal(s).

Effective objectives are characterized by the following

- Participant directed (As a result of participating in this activity, learners should be better able to...)
- Described with action words rather than conceptual words
- Behavior/competence based, and measurable

Immediate Behavior Change or Implementation

When the activity is intended to have the participant do something differently immediately after the activity, use objectives that define that behavior or next step.

Examples

As a result of participating in this activity, learners will be better able to:

- Successfully conduct a knee exam with an elderly patient to rule out any unusual pathology
- Complete a plan for implementing the new Clinical Practice Guidelines for Neck and Back Pain in their local department
- Evaluate and manage patients with headache and make appropriate referrals to neurology
- Apply recommended best practices for diagnosing depression in adolescent patients
- Identify the clinical implication of emerging trial data on the optimal management of individuals with fibromyalgia.

Please Keep in Mind

- Accredited Continuing Education should be developed to improve the competence/skills and/or performance of the healthcare team or its members, and/or patient outcomes. While it is acceptable to have knowledge-focused objectives, one or more of the activity objectives should be focused on the competence/skills, performance, and or patient outcomes.
- If the activity is intended for the multidisciplinary or interprofessional team, at least one of the learning objectives should be team focused.