

APPENDIX C

Guidelines for Writing Learning Objectives

Every program offered for CE credit must have predetermined learning objectives. Rather than a description of topics to be covered, learning objectives should clearly define what the participant will know or be able to do as a result of having attended the program, and these objectives must be stated in measurable terms.

NUMBER OF OBJECTIVES - There should be three to four objectives for a one - to - three hour program; five to six objectives for a four- to-seven hour program.

Please follow these guidelines for developing your objectives for your NCPA or Co-sponsored presentation:

- 1) Objectives must be both observable and measurable (by both quantitative and qualitative criteria).
- 2) Use of words such as *understand*, and *learn* in writing objectives are to be avoided as they are difficult to measure. See page two for examples of acceptable and unacceptable terminology.
- 3) Objectives should be unambiguous.
- 4) Objectives should be results-oriented, clearly written, and specific.
- 5) Objectives should communicate successful learning in behavioral terms.

Examples

1. Unacceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to recognize at least 6 common types of automatic thoughts illustrated by brief transcripts of client-psychologist therapeutic interactions.

Acceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to identify and categorize accurately at least 6 common types of automatic thoughts illustrated by brief transcripts of client-psychologist therapeutic interactions.

2. Unacceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will know the advantages of using SNRI antidepressants in the treatment of depressed adults.

Acceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will state at least 3 criteria for selecting an SNRI antidepressant vs. an SSRI antidepressant in the treatment of Major Depressive Disorder in adults with a history of recurrent depressive episodes.

3. Unacceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will understand how to write case support goals that are acceptable for use in a person-centered case support plan.

Acceptable Learning Objective:

Based upon a vignette provided by the instructor, participants will write 3 case support goals that are consistent with the principles that guide the development of a person-centered case support plan.

4. Unacceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to distinguish a hypo manic episode from a manic episode.

Acceptable Learning Objective:

Participants will name 4 reliable criteria for distinguishing hypomania from mania.

Learning objectives should focus on the learner's experience and include measurable behaviors. For example, whether a learner can demonstrate a technique or list major components of a concept can, theoretically, be measured at the end of the seminar. In contrast, whether the participant knows or has learned the technique or theory is not easily measured. Consistent with APA standards, we encourage speakers to use active, measurable verbs to support learning objectives.

• **Examples of strong, active learning objectives:**

- Describe at least two theoretical approaches . . .
- Explain the nexus between
- Recognize differences between

• **Additional verbs which support strong, active learning objectives:**

List	Demonstrate
Describe	Prepare
Recite	Use
Write	Assess
Discuss	Compare
Explain	Rate
Predict	Summarize
Apply	Employ

• **Verbs to avoid:**

Know
Understand
Learn
Appreciate
Become aware of
Become familiar with