

Boilerplate formula for writing a SMART outcome objective:

At the completion of [time point X], [criteria defining person(s) being assessed] will / will have / will be able to [verb from the “measurable behavioral verbs” list] [item to be measured].

Example:

Upon completion of the CFAR Adelante intervention all participants who attended at least three Adelante-sponsored workshop sessions will be able to construct at least one culturally appropriate HIV prevention message targeting Hispanic/Latino transgender men.

This example is:

S: Specific. The objective is Specific because it specifies exactly **who** will be evaluated (all participants who attended at least three CFAR Adelante-sponsored workshop sessions) and **what** will be measured (their ability to accurately construct an HIV prevention message that targets Hispanic/Latino transgender men).

M: Measurable. The objective is Measurable because it describes a task that can be objectively* tested for success. In this case, anyone who is knowledgeable about what would and would not constitute a culturally appropriate HIV prevention message targeting Hispanic/Latino transgender men can determine whether a provided example meets the criteria.

*It is not required that all outcome objectives be *objectively* measurable. Subjective measures such as self-report, observation, etc. are permissible in certain circumstances.

A: Achievable. The objective is Achievable (i.e. the bar for success is not set too high) because writing HIV prevention messages that are culturally appropriate is a skill that can be taught and anyone who participates in a series of workshops that explicitly teaches and provides opportunities to practice the skill should be able to master it

A: Ambitious. The objective is Ambitious (i.e. the bar for success is not set too low) because, in this case, if even only one participant in the intervention fails to meet the criteria for cultural appropriateness, this program objective will be considered unmet. For this reason it is frequently better to set the bar lower than 100%. Note: in this case the level of ambition has been adequately tempered by specifying that to succeed students need produce only *one* correctly written example out of several submitted.

R: Relevant. The objective is Relevant because being able to construct culturally appropriate HIV prevention messages is highly pertinent to the overall goals of an HIV prevention intervention.

T: Time limited. The objective is Time limited because it specifies exactly when it is reasonable to begin testing to determine if the objective has been met (in this case, at the conclusion of the CFAR Adelante intervention).

NOTE: In some cases it is wise to insert a caveat stating how much of the total intervention a person must have participated in before being tested (e.g. 80% of all group meetings) or if participants must have attended some particular *part* of the intervention before being tested (e.g. the classes covering the topics/skills being assessed).

Dr. Kimbi Hagen
Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University

Measurable Behavioral Verbs

all examples adapted for use in public health initiatives from <<http://www.adprima.com/examples.htm>>

Use the verbs below when constructing a measurable outcome objective:

By [insert date or time frame here] participants will be able to ...

- **Apply a Principle:** E.g., ... participants will be able to *apply the principle* of the Theory of Reasoned Action to explain why people “fall off the wagon.”
- **Calculate:** E.g., ...participants will be able to use a sample data set and *calculate* the p-value of a statistical significance test.
- **Classify:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *classify* at least three examples of prevention methods within specified ranges of cost and availability.
- **Construct:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *construct* a SMART outcome objective.
- **Define:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *define* at least 85% of the health education terms on the following list:
- **Demonstrate:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *demonstrate* the proper method of using male and female condoms.
- **Describe:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *describe* potential obstacles to complying with each of the four Evaluation Standards (Utility, Feasibility, Propriety, and Accuracy) when designing and implementing a public health program evaluation.
- **Distinguish:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *distinguish* between dependent and independent variables.
- **Estimate:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *estimate* the amount of weight a person could lose over the course of one month if they reduced their food intake by 200 calories a day and increased their steps walked by 1000 a day.
- **Evaluate:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *evaluate* the relative cost-effectiveness of items on a list of hypothetical prevention program funding uses.
- **Identify:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *identify* which birth control devices, among a selection provided, would be suitable for STD prevention.
- **Interpret:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *interpret* a data table taken from a published research report.
- **List:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *list* all the stages in the “Stages of Behavior Change” model.
- **Locate:** E.g. ...participants will be able to *locate* the closest methadone clinic on a map of the city. NOTE: To locate is to physically find, not merely describe.
- **Measure:** E.g. ... participants will be able to use a stopwatch to *measure* the amount of time it takes Baby Safe course attendees to correctly install several different brands of infant car seats.
- **Name:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *name* the parts of a logic model.
- **Order:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *order* the steps in planning a health education seminar.
- **Predict:** E.g. ... participants will be able to use a description of a given social network to *predict* the transmission of a communicable disease that enters the network.
- **Solve:** E.g. ... participants will be able to *solve* the following query: “How many children in a city of two million need to be immunized against chicken pox before herd immunity will provide 85% protection for unvaccinated children?”