How to Write an Educational Goal and Measurable Learning Objectives
Educational Goal

- A Goal is a statement of the intended general outcome of a program. A goal statement describes a more global learning outcome.

- Educational Goals are general statements of what the program intends to accomplish and broadly describe the kinds of learning the provider hopes participants will achieve—they describe learning outcomes and concepts in general terms.

- More general educational goals usually reference overall professional growth, improved sophistication, or greater clinical skills, which would occur later (after the workshop) in a therapists' future clinical work.

- Another way to define an Educational Goal is to formulate it as a statement and include an action verb and the competency required by the graduates of a program or a course.

- “By the end of this program, participants will be able to <<action verb>> <<something>>.”
Measurable Learning Objectives

What is a Learning Objective?

A statement of what course participants will be able to do when they have completed instruction. A learning objective has three major components:

- A description of what the participant will be able to do right then and there at the end of the course.
- The conditions under which the participant will perform the task.
- The criteria for evaluating participants’ performance.
Measurable Learning Objectives

To write a Learning Objective:

- Focus on participant performance not teacher performance.
- Focus on product - not process.
- Focus on terminal behavior - not subject matter.
- Include only one general learning outcome in each objective.
Measurable Learning Objectives

Three Characteristics of Learning Objectives

A learning objective is a statement describing a competency or performance capability to be acquired by the learner. There are three characteristics essential to insuring clear statements of objectives:

- **Behavior** - First, an objective must describe the competency to be learned in performance terms. The choice of a verb is all-important here. Such frequently used terms as know, understand, grasp, and appreciate do not meet this requirement. If the verb used in stating an objective identifies an observable participant behavior, then the basis for a clear statement is established. In addition, the type or level of learning must be identified.

- **Criterion** - Second, an objective should make clear how well a learner must perform to be judged adequate. This can be done with a statement indicating a degree of accuracy, a quantity or proportion of correct responses or the like.

- **Conditions** - Third, an objective should describe the conditions under which the learner will be expected to perform in the evaluation situation. What tools, references, or other aids will be provided or denied should be made clear.
Measurable Learning Objectives

Example of Inappropriate Learning Objective: "Participants will grow as clinicians through learning emotional catharsis therapy."

- Condition- There is no specific situation presented
- Behavior- The mechanism for the learning is not identified
- Criterion- No specific components, issues, tools, etc. are named (this is very general and more suited for an overall educational goal rather than as a learning objective)
Example of a Rewritten Learning Objective: "Participants will identify two perspectives and three interventions from emotional catharsis therapy through didactic and experiential learning in the training for dealing with highly stressed clients."

- Condition- for dealing with highly stressed clients
- Behavior- therapy through didactic and experiential learning in the training
- Criterion- participants will identify two perspectives and three interventions from emotional catharsis therapy
Checklist for Writing a Specific Instructional Objective:

- Begin each statement of a specific learning outcome with a verb that specifies definite, observable behavior.

- Make sure that each statement meets all three of the criteria for a good learning objective: observable behavior, the conditions under which the student will be expected to perform, and the criteria to be used for evaluation of the participant's performance.

- Be sure to include complex objectives (appreciation, problem-solving, etc.) when they are appropriate.
Measurable Learning Objectives

Learning Objective Areas and Words to Use:

Example- "When dealing with a depressed client, the participant will be able to ________"

- **KNOWLEDGE**: recall, identify, recognize, acquire, distinguish
- **COMPREHENSION**: translate, extrapolate, convert, interpret, abstract, transform
- **APPLICATION**: apply, sequence, carry out, solve, prepare, operate, generalize, plan, repair, explain
- **ANALYSIS**: analyze, estimate, compare, observe, detect, classify, discover, discriminate, identify, explore, distinguish, catalog, investigate, breakdown, order, recognize, determine, outside
- **SYNTHESIS**: write, plan, integrate, formulate, propose, specify, produce, organize, theorize, design, build, systematize
- **EVALUATION**: evaluate, verify, assess, test, judge, rank, measure, appraise, select, check
Measurable Learning Objective Tip

- When you ask participants if the learning objective was met at the end of the course, they should be able to say, “Yes.”

- A good trick is to make sure your objective has a number in it. This forces it to be measurable.

- Below are some examples that could be used:
  - Participants will be able to identify four key principles of…..
  - Participants will be able to compare three techniques to…..
  - Participants will be able to state five reasons that…
  - Participants will be able to analyze four different theories of.....
Goal vs. Learning Objective

What is the difference between a GOAL and a Learning Objective?

A Goal is a statement of the intended general outcome of an instructional unit or program. A goal statement describes a more global learning outcome.

A Learning Objective is a statement of one of several specific performances, the achievement of which contributes to the attainment of the goal.

Remember: a single GOAL may have many specific subordinate Learning Objectives.