Objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-Bound

An objective is a concrete statement describing what the project is trying to achieve. The objective should be written so that it can be easily evaluated at the conclusion of a project to see whether it was achieved or not. Writing a S.M.A.R.T. can help meet these needs.

Components of a S.M.A.R.T Objective

**Specific**
- Objectives should provide the “who” and “what” of program activities.
- Use only one action verb since objectives with more than one verb imply that more than one activity or behavior is being measured.

**Measurable**
- The focus is on “how much” change is expected. Objectives should quantify the amount of change expected. It is impossible to determine whether objectives have been met unless they can be measured.
- The objective provides a reference point from which a change in the target population can clearly be measured.

**Achievable**
- Objectives should be attainable within a given time frame and with available program resources.

**Realistic**
- Objectives are most useful when they accurately address the scope of the problem and programmatic steps that can be implemented within a specific time frame.
- Objectives that do not directly relate to the program goal will not help toward achieving the goal.

**Time-bound**
- Objectives should provide a time frame indicating when the objective will be measured or a time by which the objective will be met.
- Including a time frame in the objectives helps in planning and evaluating the program.
Objective Writing Practice

A well-written objective will answer the following questions:

- **WHO** will be impacted by the outcome or can help execute the outcome?
- **WHAT** is the desired outcome?
- **WHEN** will the outcome occur?
- **HOW MUCH** do you want your outcome to change by?

Sample Objective Structure

[Who] will conduct intervention resulting in [what] and [how much] by [when]?

By [when], [who] will conduct intervention resulting in [what] by [how much].

By [when], [what] will be achieved by [how much] benefiting [who].

S.M.A.R.T Objective Examples

**Example 1**

*Non-SMART objective 1:*
"Teachers will be trained on the scientifically based health education curriculum."

*This objective is not SMART because it is not specific, measurable, or time-phased. It can be made SMART by specifically indicating who is responsible for training the teachers, how many will be trained, who they are, and by when the trainings will be conducted.*

*SMART objective 1:*
"By year two of the project, LEA staff will have trained 75% of health education teachers in the school district on the selected scientifically based health education curriculum."

**Example 2**

*Non-SMART objective 2:*
"90% of youth participants will understand substance abuse prevention concepts."

*This objective is not SMART because it is not specific or time-phased. It can be made SMART by specifically indicating who will do the activity, by when, and who will participate in lessons on substance abuse prevention.*

*SMART objective 2:*
"By the end of the school year, 90% of youth participants in middle school will define addiction as a disease."

Adapted from:

University of Maryland School of Pharmacy