

# GUIDELINES FOR WRITING CONTINUING EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

January 20, 2020

## 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Follow the APA Guidelines for Writing Objectives

Learning objectives for all IPI courses must be written to meet the requirements set by the. The APA guidelines for writing objectives are attached for your information.

Please contact Anna ([annainnes@theipi.org](mailto:annainnes@theipi.org)) if you have any questions regarding these guidelines.

## 2. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THE NUMBER OF OBJECTIVES REQUIRED FOR EACH PRESENTATION

To meet the requirement, each course must have the following number of objectives:

**2-3 objectives for 1-3 hours**

**3-4 objectives for 4-6 hours**

**5-6 objectives for 7-8 hours**

**You should approach this by writing separate objectives for each presentation in a longer course or conference.**

### Make sure you have:

- At least 1-2 objectives for each 1 or 1.5 hour presentation.
- Not more than 2 objectives for a 1 hour presentation, or more than 3 objectives for a 1.5 hour presentation.
- GAM group meetings also need objectives; and each GAM group in a longer program (like a weekend conference) needs to have a different objective.
- One approach to this is to write the objective anticipating that the GAM group will discuss the subject matter covered in the presentation(s) preceding it in the schedule.
- For an example, see the revised objectives for the April 2019 Weekend Conference and the 2019 summer institutes, attached.

## 3. **Submit draft objectives to Anna for review with Caroline along with the course description and schedule prior to advertising.**



## Guidance for Writing Behavioral Learning Objectives

There are key components of well-written behavioral learning objectives that – when incorporated – allow for an optimal, articulated experience for learners. Consider using the below checklist when developing your objectives.

Are my learning objectives:

- **observable and measurable** (i.e., use action verbs that describe measurable behaviors)?
- statements that clearly describe what the learner will know or be able to do **as a result** of having attended an educational program or activity?
- focused on the learner?
- appropriate in breadth (not too few *or* too many – e.g., 3-4 objectives for a four-hour program)?
- sufficient in depth (at the **postdoctoral** level for psychologists and **clearly articulated** – e.g., does the *whole* of the objective make sense and is it appropriate for CE)?
- fully linked to: (a) the program narrative, (b) adequate references that support content, & (c) are listed on promotional materials?

Verbs to consider when writing learning objectives	Verbs to avoid when writing learning objectives
✓ list, describe, recite, write, identify	⊗ know, understand
✓ compute, discuss, explain, predict	⊗ learn, appreciate
✓ apply, demonstrate, prepare, use	⊗ become aware of, become familiar with
✓ analyze, design, select, utilize	
✓ compile, create, plan, revise	
✓ assess, compare, rate, critique	

Example of well-written learning objectives for a 4-hour CE session on hypnosis and pain:

**At the end of this workshop, the learner will be able to:**

1. Describe 3 key aspects of basic hypnosis theory and technique;
2. Explain differences between demonstrations of hypnotic technique and phenomena;
3. Identify 2 differences between acute and chronic pain; and
4. Demonstrate effective use of hypnosis in controlling acute pain.

**Notes:** For additional guidance on learning objectives, refer to the Standards and Criteria ([Standard C, Educational and Technical Assistance](#)). And, for further clarification on linking objectives, content, and promotional materials please refer to our [“What Should I Know about Standard D?”](#) resource.