# Tips for Writing Learning Objectives



### Writing a learning objective

Component	Definition	Example
WHO	Participants, learners, physicians, and healthcare providers	Participants should be able
HOW	An action verb that identifies the level of performance	to integrate
WHAT	A description of the relevant factors associated with the desired result that specifies what learning will be demonstrated	the key components of a successful smoking cessation program in a busy primary care practice

### **Examples of learning objectives that are written specifically to address:**

#### Improvement in Competency

Knowing how to do something: What a physician would do if given the opportunity but has not been put into practice yet

• Example: Evaluate the factors involved in developing cultural competence and how to address these clinically.

#### **Enhanced Performance**

The ability to apply knowledge, skills, and judgments in practice

• Example: Implement strategies that address cultural competence (specifically linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect mental health in the lower socio-economic community) in clinical practice.

#### Change in Patient Outcomes

The consequences of performance that have direct and positive results for patients

• Example: Reduce morbidity and mortality rates of the lower socio-economic population by addressing linguistic, cultural and social issues that affect the mental health in this community.

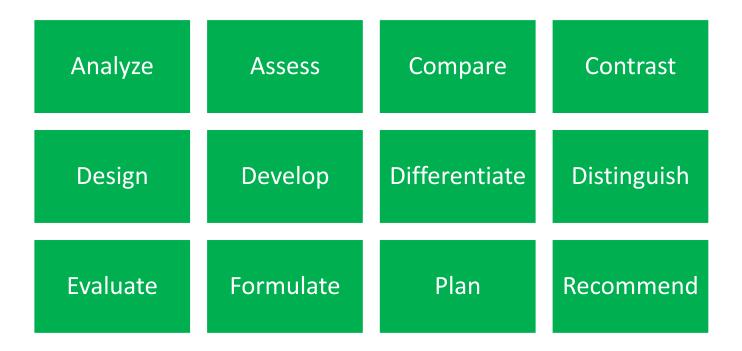


## **Objectives Should Address these Questions**

- •What should the result of the educational activity be for participants?
- •What should the participant be able to do after attending the activity?
  - Make sure that objectives are measurable
  - State what the learner might do differently (behavioral change) because of what has been learned
  - Use verbs which allow measurable outcome and that can be used in the evaluation process



### **Good Verbs to Measure Competence**





## Potential Learning Objectives: Competence

- Describe key elements of treatment protocols for patients with [insert disorder or disease state] and apply to applicable treatment plans in clinical practice.
- Distinguish information about emerging diagnostics, technologies, and therapeutics related to [insert disorder/disease] to treatment plans.
- Identify common high risk [insert subspecialty] problems so that they can be triaged and treated appropriately.
- Evaluate recent innovations in [insert subspecialty] clinical practice in order to assess their use for safe and effective patient care.

## Potential Learning Objectives: Competence (cont.)

- Summarize recent advances in [insert subspecialty] research in order to design best-practice approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of [insert disorder/disease].
- Design diagnostic and therapeutic plans for common presentations of [insert subspecialty] diseases.
- Evaluate contributing factors to near-miss cases, including breakdowns in communication and coordination of care.
- Apply current practice guidelines in the field of medicine or surgery to patient treatment plans.

#### **Good Verbs to Measure Performance**





### Potential Learning Objectives: Performance

- Integrate new information on up-to-date technologies, recent advances, updated guidelines, and/or best practices into daily clinical practice.
- Apply evidence-based methods for improving care to current clinical and surgical quality improvement efforts.
- Apply current practice guidelines in the field of medicine or surgery to treatment of patients.



### **Verbs to Avoid...**

- Appreciate
- Be aware of
- · Be familiar with
- Comprehend
- Define
- Discuss

- Know
- Learn
- List
- Think
- Understand

