

Directions for Writing Objectives for CME Activities

These directions will assist you in writing meaningful objectives for the CME activity that you are planning.

Where You Are Now:

If you are ready to write objectives for your educational activity, you already have decided all of the following:

- What your CME topic will be
- Why you believe this CME topic is necessary and relevant
- What the title for your CME activity will be (and a descriptive, catchy title)
- Which medical professionals you want to attend this CME activity (and the more specific you have made your target audience, the better!)

What You Need to Do Now:

You need to decide now what it is you want your audience **to be able to DO** after your CME activity. This is more than just a list of what you want your audience to learn; you will want the members of your audience to be able to USE the information they have learned. In other words, to show that learning has occurred, your audience members should **be able to demonstrate** that they have learned the subject material at hand.

A word of caution: Because many CME planners have also taught in CME activities, they think in terms of what the teacher of the activity will need to do during the CME activity. That is NOT what is needed here. For example, the faculty member may have the teaching objective “to review the symptoms of Type I diabetes in a school-age child.” In order to show that learning has occurred, the student of this teacher should be able to list or to describe the symptoms of Type I diabetes in a school-age child. Note that the focus here is on what the learner can DO to demonstrate that learning has occurred. You should be able to see the learner doing something that relates to the learning that has occurred.

The best way to write **learner-centered, behavioral objectives** is to picture what one of your audience members will be able to do after attending your CME activity. You can literally write out:

At the conclusion of this CME activity, the learner will be able to:

1. Do this.
2. Do that.
3. Do a third thing.

Now, in place of the word “do” in the objectives, put in an action verb with its object. We have given you a list of action verbs with this direction sheet. For the activity described above, you might have objectives like the following:

1. List four physician symptoms of a school-age child with undiagnosed Type I diabetes.
2. Describe the physical attributes of a school-age child with undiagnosed diabetes.
3. Cite or state ways in which a parent might explain the behavior patterns of a school-age child with undiagnosed diabetes.

The chart of verbs to be used in writing learner-centered, behavioral objectives lists activities from simple (to list, to describe, to cite) to complex (to appraise, to compare, to evaluate). The verbs you select will depend on the kind of CME activity you are planning. Please note that *understand*, *learn*, *appreciate*, *believe*, and *know* should not be used. (One cannot measure a learner “understanding” something the way one can observe a learner listing or describing something.)

Additional verbs to use include: *demonstrate*, *distinguish*, *use*, *utilize*, *perform*, *select*, *define*, *discuss*, *identify*, *assess*, *evaluate*.

Again, for assistance, feel free to contact the Office of CME.