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

| ✓ 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.