

GOAL WRITING WRITING A BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE

WHAT IS A BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE?

A behavioral objective is a performance goal that includes:

1. A statement that describes a proposed change in behavior
2. Criterion reference because performance is measured and compared to baseline information

WHY DO WE NEED GOALS?

1. The therapy program is based on goals to bring about changes in the client's performance.
2. For children, the goal usually is to help them acquire new information; for adults, the goal is often to facilitate compensatory strategies to regain lost function. Goals are essential to measure treatment progress. Goals allow weekly, monthly, and semester progress assessments. Goals enable us to devise a plan to meet the client's needs.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVE?

1. The person performing the desired behavior ("The client...")
2. The product/result of performance ("to increase vocabulary")
3. The actual behavior/visible action ("will name...")
4. Conditions and requirements to correct/achieve the desired performance ("objects when presented with pictured objects...")
5. Criteria/objective measurement ("with 80% accuracy on 10 trials")

Final Product: In order to increase vocabulary, Mr. Jones will name 10 objects when presented with their pictures with 80% accuracy on 10 trials.

HOW CAN I MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MY TREATMENT/INTERVENTION?

1. Pre and post tests
2. Description of accuracy may include:
 - a. Accuracy (a mean score or average)
 - b. Frequency of occurrence (behavior will occur less than 3 times in 10 minutes)
 - c. Latency of behavior (within 10 seconds of stimulus presentation)

WHEN ARE LONG-TERM GOALS FORMULATED?

Long-term goals are identified and specified after the assessment has been completed. A decision must be made regarding the proposed outcome of the treatment and the time available (time may be based on the funding source – self-pay, private insurance, Medicare/Medicaid). Long-term goals should not change over the course of therapy unless a serious illness or major change in the client's status occurs. In a medical setting, the long-term goal may be modified in writing to address the change in status.

WHEN ARE SHORT-TERM GOALS FORMULATED?

Short-term goals are identified after the long-term goals. They are specific, measurable goals and reflect small steps needed to achieve the long-term goals.

IN SUMMARY

1. Assess the client's strengths and weaknesses with standardized and/or criterion- references tests.
2. Determine stimulability, when applicable.
3. Formulate long-term goals.
4. Formulate short-term goals and collect baseline information
5. Begin therapy
6. Collect data to measure progress toward goals throughout therapy sessions
7. Justify progress: daily/weekly SOAP notes, semester progress reports, monthly summaries

Generally speaking, steps 1-7 must be completed in order to receive payment for your services.