

Handout #2: Developing Goals and Objectives

Goals

Goals state the “grand reason” for engaging in your public health effort. They are statements of intent.

To create goals, ask yourself:

- In the long run, what effect do I hope to have on this community?
- What is the overall improvement I want to achieve?

Goal statements should be simple and concise. They should include who will be affected and what will change as a result of the program (McKenzie & Smeltzer, 1997).

You should also set your goals with input from your audience. Develop a plan based on the community’s needs and concerns rather than on what you think should happen or an agency’s agenda. You will be far more likely to achieve change.

Objectives

Objectives are more specific than goals. They state how much of the goal will be accomplished within a certain timeframe. They are specific accomplishments or benchmarks that show step-by-step progress toward the goal.

Objectives are statements that focus on outcomes. They should follow these SMART rules:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-framed.

There are many types of objectives. They can include:

- Behavioral
- Learner
- Outcome or program
- Process or administrative.

Behavioral objectives describe the behaviors or actions that the population will engage in because of the program. They state who is to demonstrate how much, of what action, and by when (Green & Kreuter, 1999).

Example:

“Among women attending the program, yearly mammograms will increase by 50 percent over the following 2 years.”

Learner objectives are the educational or learning tasks that need to be achieved before the behavior change can take place (Deeds, 1992).

Example:

“The women will list three things they should not do before a pelvic exam.”

Program or outcome objectives are the change in health status that is the desired result of the educational intervention. They must be specific and measurable and must be achieved by a given time.

Example:

“Within 3 years, breast cancer deaths will decrease by 15 percent in Monroe County.”

Process or administrative objectives are the daily tasks and work plans that must be done to achieve any of the other objectives.

Example:

“Develop a system to contact at least 10 OB/GYN physicians per year to gather support for the program.”