Writing Behavioral Learning Objectives and Assessments

As a general guideline, there should be three to four objectives for a four-hour program; five to six objectives for a seven to eight-hour program, etc.

- Learning objectives, or learning outcomes, are 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.
- Learning objectives must be observable and measurable.
- Learning objectives should (1) focus on the learner, and (2) contain action verbs that describe measurable behaviors.
- Verbs to consider when writing learning objectives include:
  - List, describe, recite, write
  - Compute, discuss, explain, predict
  - Apply, demonstrate, prepare, use
  - Analyze, design, select, utilize
  - Compile, create, plan, revise
  - Assess, compare, rate, critique
- Verbs to avoid when writing learning objectives
  - Know, understand
  - Learn, appreciate
  - Become aware of, become familiar with

- Example of well-written learning objectives:
  
  **This workshop is designed to help you:**
  1. Summarize basic hypnosis theory and technique;
  2. Observe demonstrations of hypnotic technique and phenomena;
  3. Recognize differences between acute and chronic pain;
  4. Utilize hypnosis in controlling acute pain;
  5. Apply post-hypnotic suggestions to chronic pain; and
  6. Practice hypnotic technique in dyads.

- Objective learning assessments should be written in a manner that determines whether participants learned what you planned to teach them. The evaluation (or learning assessment) should be based on the stated learning objectives of the program.

- Example of well-written learning assessment:
  
  **Based on the content of the workshop, I am able to:**
  1. Describe at least two theoretical approaches to hypnosis;
  2. Employ at least two hypnotic induction techniques;
  3. Explain how psychological approaches differ when applied to acute vs. chronic pain;
  4. Demonstrate a technique for applying hypnosis to acute pain;
  5. Provide a post-hypnotic suggestion for controlling chronic pain; and
  6. State that I had the opportunity to practice the technique during the workshop.