

SMART Goals & Objectives

A SMART goal is a framework used to set **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Relevant**, and **Time-bound** objectives. SMART objectives provide the details for how a person, group or organization will achieve a goal.



In order to understand how the parts of SMART objectives flow together, the order of the SMART components listed below will go out of order—SMTRA. This is because the Specific, Measurable and Time-Bound parts are clearly visible in the standard written format for objectives. The Achievable and Relevant pieces are more abstract and require reflection. Each of these parts will include an example objective that will be re-written to be SMART.

SMART objectives should:

- Include all components of SMART
- Relate to a single result
- Be clearly written (use plain language, avoid jargon)

Specific

Specific objectives:

- Are precise
- Are clear to team, partners, and other groups
- Use plain language and avoid jargon
- Use verbs that document action

Prompts to consider when writing specific objectives include:

- Who: Who will be impacted? Who is your focus population?
- What: What do you intend to impact?

*Note that not all of these questions will apply to every objective.

Example: I would like to improve my social functioning.

Measurable

How will we show impact over time? Use a unit of measure, to show progress toward a target:

- Measure: A measure is a number, percent, or standard unit used as a reference point from which change can be monitored.
- Target: A target is the direction we want to move the measure, or the level we want to reach.

Prompts to consider when writing measurable objectives include:

- How much and in what direction will change occur?
- What data will you use to measure?
- Where will this data come from?
- Is there a stand-in or proxy measure to use if you cannot directly measure this objective? If not, would another measure be more appropriate instead?

*Remember if you can't measure it, you can't maintain it!

Example: I would like to improve my social functioning by attending at least 1 social activity a week.

Time-bound

Time-bound objectives attach a reasonable date by which and objective will happen.

- Not too soon: Give enough time to demonstrate success and/or the connection between action and outcome
- Not too far away: Don't encourage procrastination, or remove the ability to connect the dots between action and outcome
- Consider when data will be available: May determine your time for you

Prompts to consider when writing time-bound objectives include:

- Is this time frame realistic?
- Should it be closer? Should it be further away?
- When will the data be available?

Example: I would like to improve my social functioning by attending at least 1 social activity a week for the next 6 months.

Achievable

Objectives should be within reach for your participant and consider available resources, knowledge, and time. Remember, considering what's achievable for your participant often requires thought and discussion.

Prompts to consider when writing achievable objectives include:

- How will the person accomplish this objective?
- Does the current time frame or environment help or hinder this objective? Should we scale the target or time frame up or down?
- What resources will help us achieve this objective? What limitations or constraints stand in our way?

A note of caution about setting objectives for long-term change:

- Complex, long-term issues require decades of work for change;
- Consider intermediate objectives when appropriate

Example: I would like to improve my social functioning by attending at least 1 social activity a week for the next 6 months by utilizing community transportation and assistance from my self-determination aide.

Relevant

Relevant objectives align with a corresponding goal. They're important to the participant and they help achieve meaningful change.

Prompts to consider when writing relevant objectives include:

- Will objective contribute to achieving goal?
- Is it worthwhile and meaningful to measure this objective?

Different ways to write SMART objectives

There are multiple approaches and ways to explain how to write SMART objectives. Here are some other sentence structures for objectives:

- [Who] will do [what] resulting in [measure] by [when].
- By [when], [who] will do [what] resulting in [measure].
- By [when], [measure - includes who and what].
- [Measure – includes who and what] by [when].

Training Videos:

You Tube: https://youtu.be/6UAabOYDY_c?si=VOc-AWtqAdA-NHX8

You Tube: <https://youtu.be/rz-OhYcpOIQ?si=qw4w8M9nkGOuFanv>

References:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/phqitoolbox/objectives.html>

<https://www.thoroughcare.net/blog/smart-goals-patient-centered-care-coordination>