TIP SHEET:
Developing Goals and Objectives

PURPOSE

The purpose of this resource is to provide learners with step-by-step guidelines and information to to support the development of goals and objectives.

Trainers may choose to provide this resource as additional supplementary information to support learners understanding and completion of relevant assessments.

UNITS OF COMPETENCY

This resource supports learning and completion of assessments for the following units of competency:

- HLTPOP501C Apply a population health framework
- HLTPOP503C Plan a population health project
- HLTPOP504C Evaluate a population health project

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This resource has been adapted from a range of existing resources of which have been referenced at the end of this guide.

DEVELOPING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Developing goals and objectives is the first step to developing any project plan. This process often causes angst among people who do health promotion work as it can seem confusing and difficult to develop succinct and straightforward goals and objectives. However without succinct goals and objectives, we are unable to define what we are planning to do.

WHAT IS A GOAL?

A Goal is the broad or long term change the project is working towards. It is a statement of what you ultimately want to achieve or your destination. When considering health and wellbeing, goals might relate to improving health and wellbeing status through changes in mortality and morbidity, disability, quality of life and equity. Achievement of goal(s) can only be expected once a number of objectives have been met.

Sample goal:
"Employees will have access to healthier food options within the workplace"

WHAT ARE OBJECTIVES?

Objectives on the other hand are statements about more specific and immediate changes you want in order to progress toward your overall goal. As objectives are a statement about change, it often includes words such as: to increase, to improve, to reduce. The changes might be in skill levels, attitudes, knowledge, processes, awareness or behaviour.

Sample objective:
"All vending machines within the workplace will be modified to include at least 50% healthy food options by 1 September 2013. Healthy food options include wholegrain breads and cereals, fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy, lean meats, water and low kilojoule drinks."

The **SMART** acronym can help us to write realistic objectives:
- Specific - indicates a clear action on a determinant, population group and setting.
  - Example: "to stop teens from smoking" is too general. Instead try, "At least 90 per cent of schools in the community will institute campus wide no-smoking policies by 2015".
- Measurable - includes feature that will help you tell whether it has succeeded.
  - Example: "To ensure hospital staff eat more fruit" cannot be clearly measured. Instead try, "To increase fruit and vegetable consumption among workers in the Hospital (the target audience) by 50 per cent by June 2013".
- Achievable - can be realistically achieved on time and within available resources.
  - Example: "To stop youth from drinking alcohol" is not realistically achievable. Instead try, "To reduce alcohol consumption by youth ages 14-16 in Queensland by 5 per cent by 31 December 2013".
- Relevant - to the health issue, the population group and your organisation.
  - Example: "To improve physical activity levels among people with low literacy by teaching adults to read better" does not directly address the health issue. Instead try, "Developing pictorial instructions that can be understood at low reading levels to improve physical activity among people with low literacy by 10 per cent in the next six months".
- Time framed – it has a timeframe for action.
  - Example, "To reduce the proportion of adults in Australia who smoke to 12 per cent" does not have a timeframe. Instead try, "To reduce the proportion of adults in Australia who smoke to 12 per cent by 2015.

WHAT ARE STRATEGIES/ACTIONS?

Strategies are the steps you will need to take to implement the objective. Some plans will require you to break down these strategies further into 'actions' or the tasks that you will need to undertake against each of the strategies. Below is a very simple project example summarising a goal, objectives and strategies:

Project Goal: To Plant a Vegetable Garden

Objective 1: To research the conditions needed to grow carrots, broccoli and cabbage, in two weeks time

Strategies:

- Test soil
- Research weather conditions
- Research need for these vegies
- Research their water usage/sustainability
- Investigate whether thieves, possums, birds etc will be a problem

Objective 2: Plant vegetables in four weeks time

Strategies:

- Make sure of equipment
- Make sure of family dedication to helping
- Buy seeds/plants
- Prepare the soil
- Set aside time to work in the garden
- Plant

Objective 3: Harvest and sell vegetables in three months time

Strategies:

- Water vegies
- Weed garden
- Protect from possums, birds and thieves
- Pick vegies
- Take vegies to the market

Source: Developing Goals and Objectives Fact Sheet, A Guide to Health Promotion Action, Women's Health West, Victoria

ADDITIONAL READING AND LINKS

Department of Health, Tip Sheet: Writing Measurable Objectives, Victoria, May 2010.
http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/southern/downloads/Tip-sheet-writing-measurable-objectives.pdf

Developing Goals and Objectives Fact Sheet, A Guide to Health Promotion Action, Women's Health West, Victoria, 2010.

Flinders University, Discipline of Public Health, Planning and Evaluation Wizard: step-by-step project planning and report writing for primary health care,
2008. http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/SACHRU/PEW/pep_plan_goals.htm

Health Education Partners, S.M.A.R.T. Behavior Change Outcome Objectives Instructions,
2008. http://www.healthedpartners.org/ceu/sm/smart_behavior_change_outcome_objectives.pdf