

Aims, Goals, and Objectives

Clinical and Non-clinical Examples



Clinical Example - St Luke's 5 West care unit

Aims clarify why the initiative is important to your organization or area, by specifying what is the intended outcome, how it will be accomplished, by who, for whom, and by when.

Example: St Luke's 5 West care unit (by who) will reduce unplanned rehospitalizations by 10% (what) for patients with heart failure (for whom) by November 1, 2021 (by when) using the evidence-based practice of teach-back (how).

Goals specify steps for how your Aim will be achieved for your organization or area.

Example:

1. Partner with patients with heart failure (HF) and staff to improve patient understanding of self-care after discharge using teach-back.
2. Clarify critical information patients need to know and do to stay safe after leaving the hospital.
3. Redesign patient teaching in the hospital, for patients with heart failure, using teach-back, with 5 West as the pilot unit.

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Clinical Example - St Luke's 5 West care unit (continued)

Objectives of goals are **SMART**: specific, measurable, actionable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound milestones to get you exactly where you want to be.¹

Example: Phase 1

1. By 9/20/21, hold three focus groups with patients with HF and two focus groups with hospital, home care, and physicians' office staff to discover what is most difficult for patients to understand and do as they transition from hospital to home.
2. By 10/15/21, work with 10 or more patients with HF, in the monthly Heart Failure Clinic, to review current teaching materials and wording for the discharge process. Apply patient and staff input to draft the vital few discharge instructions to keep patients safe after discharge.
3. By 11/21/21, while the previous steps are in process, train five staff on using teach-back using the Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit. Observe their ability to effectively use the 10 Elements for Using Teach-back Effectively and coach them where improvement is needed. Limit the content of this early training to the few critical things a patient must know or do after leaving the hospital.
4. By 12/18/21, test the usefulness of the newly drafted discharge instructions with two patients and two staff for each of the five staff with teach-back skills. Use lessons learned to continue improvement.

¹ Doran, G.T. (1981) There's a SMART Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives. Journal of Management Review, 70, 35-36.

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Non-clinical Example - After-School Program

Aims clarify why the initiative is important to your organization or area, by specifying what is the intended outcome, how it will be accomplished, by who, for whom, and by when.

Example: By 6/30/23 (by when), in collaboration with our community partners (with whom), After-School Program (by who) will improve the lives of our students (for whom) and reduce school absence by 50% (what) using plain language and teach-back (how).

Goals specify steps for how your Aim will be achieved for your organization or area.

1. Use the Attributes of Health Literate Organizations and Enliven self-assessment to set up the infrastructure for our initiative.
2. Partner with our staff, schools, students, and parents to learn difficulties in understanding written and verbal information and instructions.
3. Provide Plain Language resources and supports needed within the Program and with our partners.

Objectives are **SMART**: specific, measurable, actionable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound milestones to get you exactly where you want to be.¹

Example: Phase 1 - Work with participants and schools to understand:

1. Three Ways to gain continual feedback from participants.
(By 10/30/22 - front desk staff, led by the program manager)
2. Two Reasons for school absence.
(By 11/15/22 - social worker, working with local schools)
3. Three verbal or written Resources and Supports for removing barriers.
(By 12/15/22 - day staff, working with students daily, parents weekly)

¹Doran, G.T. (1981) There's a SMART Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives. Journal of Management Review, 70, 35-36.