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FROM PROGRAM HYPOTHESIS TO GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Up to this point we have encouraged a great deal of theoretical and hypothetical thinking about needs and social problems, resulting in a hypothesis about how the problem can be reduced if certain interventions or services are created and provided to the target population. At this point we move to program planning activities in a human service organization.

All of the components of the program hypothesis, including the problems and needs being experienced by the target population, the provision of services needed to address these problems, the monitoring of service provision, and the expected short- and long-range results of services provided, must now be incorporated into the agency's program plans. All of these components fit with the phases of the logic model as presented in Chapter 1. Table 7.1 illustrates the compatibility between the program hypothesis and the logic model.

THE FUNCTION OF A MISSION STATEMENT

It is fairly common among human service organizations to succumb to the temptation of attempting to go off into many directions at the same time. When funds become available to address a particular problem, some organizations will bid on the contracts even if this is not their main area of expertise. Too much diversity of program efforts is seldom healthy or productive. Every organization needs a sense of direction. Without a clear focus on its reason for existence, an organization can easily become unproductively involved in whatever happens to be the dominating problems or issues of the day. A mission statement formalizes a reason for existence by providing a long-term sense of direction and continuity (Andringa & Engstrom, 2002). A good mission statement is lofty, inspiring, concise, and understandable (Brody, 2005).

Table 7.1 The Fit Between the Logic Model and the Program Hypothesis

Logic Model Component	Definition	Example
Inputs	Resources (staff, funding, etc.) Raw materials (clients or consumers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women who are victims of domestic violence primarily due to dependence on their abusers • Resources, including trained staff, that will contribute to improving client self-esteem, reducing social anxiety, establishing ties to community resources, developing financial management skills, learning job skills, and placing them in a job with a career path
Process	Activities that use inputs to achieve objectives with raw materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual and group counseling to address personal, emotional, and psychological problems • Case management services to facilitate and support making appropriate community contacts designed to build a sustainable, steady lifestyle following treatment • Financial planning services designed to manage income and meet basic expenses • Employment training and placement
Outputs	Measurements of services provided and completion of all services prescribed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each service provided would be quantified so that it would be possible to measure both intermediate outputs (the number of units of service provided) and final outputs (the number of clients who complete all the services prescribed)
Outcomes	Demonstrated benefits to those receiving services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in self-esteem • Reduction in social anxiety • Knowledge and skill in using community resources for independent living • Demonstrated ability to manage finances • Demonstration of ability to perform critical job skills • Placement in a job for which the client was trained • Reduced incidence of returning to the same or another abuser
Impact	Measurable changes occurring in organizations, communities, or systems as a result of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a community-wide reduction in the number and percentage of incidences of domestic violence reported among women who are victims primarily due to dependence on their abusers

A mission statement is formally approved and sanctioned by designated officials in public agencies and by boards of directors in private agencies. Another way of describing the purpose of a mission statement is that it establishes broad and relatively permanent parameters within which goals are developed and specific programs designed. A mission

Table 7.2 Examples of Mission Statements

Type of Organization	Sample Mission Statement
Domestic violence shelter	To ensure a safe environment for women and children who have been victims of physical and emotional violence while strengthening their abilities to function independently in a positive lifestyle free of violence
Family service agency	To promote family strength and stability in a manner that allows each individual to achieve his or her potential while, at the same time, supporting strong and productive interrelationships among family members
Drug and alcohol counseling	To promote and support the achievement of a positive and productive lifestyle, including steady employment and stable family and human relationships, for those formerly addicted to chemical substances

statement includes, at minimum, a target population and a statement of the agency's vision for what ideally might be achieved in collaboration between the agency and the target population. A good, clear mission statement is usually limited to just a few sentences. Table 7.2 presents some examples.

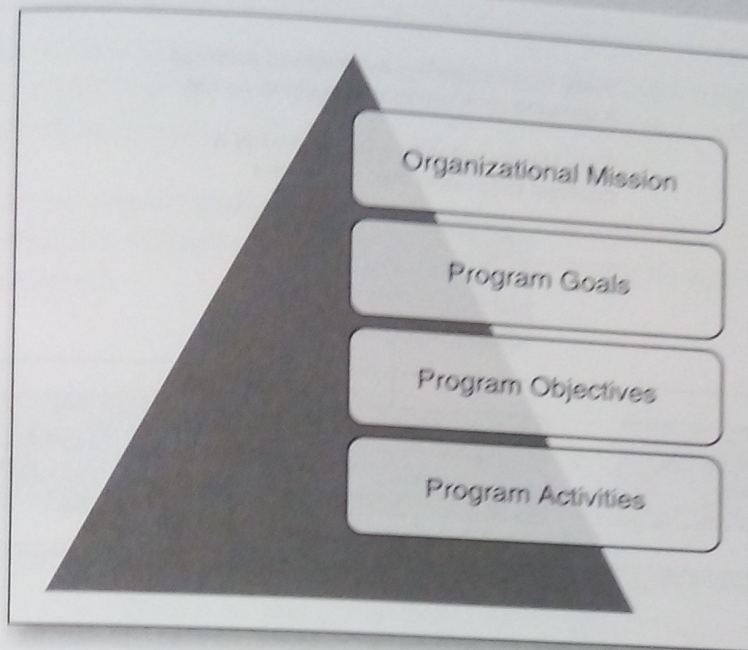
The key is that a mission statement should focus on what lies ahead for its clients or consumers if the agency is successful in addressing their problems and meeting their needs. Some mission statements make the mistake of *describing* their services (a key to this is when the mission statement uses the term *provide*). It is perfectly acceptable to have follow-up statements about services or agency values, but the mission statement itself should be brief, clear, and stated in outcome terms.

As Brody (2005) points out, the mission statement should be the most enduring part of the organization. When an agency continually changes or modifies its mission statement, that agency is usually having problems finding its niche and is likely to be experiencing internal problems. Implicit in the relative permanence of a mission statement is an understanding that the problems or conditions of concern to the agency are broad enough in scope and scale that they are unlikely to be achieved in the near future. Just as the mission statements "to strengthen independent functioning," "to promote family stability," and "to promote and protect a chemical dependency-free lifestyle" are legitimate statements in the year 2020, so they are likely to be relevant in 2030 and beyond. Even though the concepts of independent functioning or family stability might be operationalized differently in the future, the concept will continue to have validity.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Up to this point in the effectiveness-based program-planning process, activities have focused on gathering data and information about the problem and thinking analytically about cause-and-effect relationships. The next step in the process is setting goals and objectives.

Figure 7.1 Relationship of Mission, Goals, Objectives, and Activities



Goals and objectives provide a framework for action. Goals establish a general direction for a program. Objectives establish precise expectations of what the program is attempting to achieve, including a time frame. Activities specify detailed tasks to be carried out. Objectives and activities also provide a framework for monitoring, performance measurement, and evaluation. These relationships are depicted in Figure 7.1.

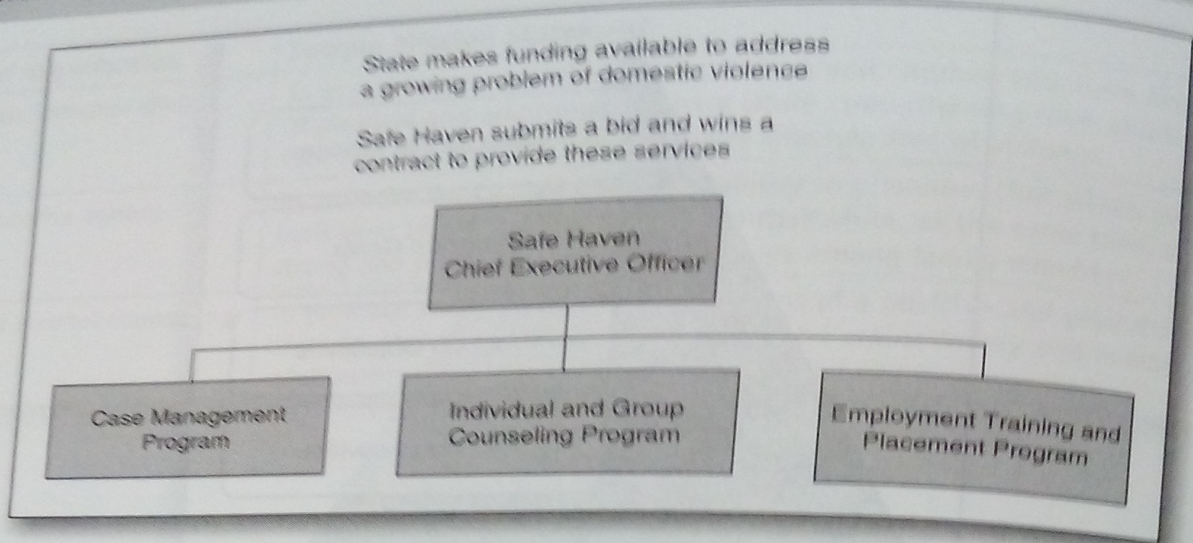
AGENCY EXAMPLE: SAFE HAVEN

For the remainder of this book we will use as an illustration a domestic violence shelter for women that we will call Safe Haven. While women are in the shelter they will participate in the services that we have described. We will incorporate all services under three programs: (1) Case Management, (2) Individual and Group Counseling, and (3) Employment Training and Placement. These programs are illustrated in Figure 7.2.

We will assume for the sake of this example that the state is making funds available to test the program hypothesis that if women who are victims of domestic violence primarily due to dependence on their abusers receive and complete prescribed services they will become self-sufficient and be able to leave their abusers and live independently.

Safe Haven will employ a program supervisor in each of the three programs and the number of staff in each needed to provide the services as designed. The steps of developing goals and objectives, designing programs, designing a data collection system, measuring performance, and budgeting will be covered in this and the following chapters.

Figure 7.2 Organizational Chart Illustrating Safe Haven Programs



THE FORMULATION OF GOALS

The next step after deciding on the program structure is to create program goals. Program goals help to focus a program's efforts and are intended to be compatible with the agency's mission. Goals are statements of expected outcomes dealing with the problem that the program is attempting to prevent, eradicate, or ameliorate. They are responsive to problems and needs, and represent an ideal or hoped-for outcome (Coley & Scheinberg, 2000).

A goal statement should fit within a system and serve as a transition between mission and objectives. It should flow logically from the agency's mission statement while providing a framework and sense of direction for the objectives that are to follow. Goal statements provide a beacon that serves as a constant focal point and lends a sense of direction to the program. They are the reasons for which the program is funded and implemented. They are statements of preferences or values.

Goal statements should be worded so that they tend to build consensus. They need not be measurable or fixed in time. A program should have only one goal, and from this will flow a set of objectives and activities designed to move toward achievement of the goal. In some cases, goals may be specified by funding sources, and the agency or program will be expected to work within these limits. In these instances the mission statement should be reviewed to ensure a fit between organizational mission and program goals. If the overall state-level expected outcome is to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and promote self-sufficiency among the at-risk population, goals for the three Safe Haven programs might read as follows:

Case Management Program: To guide women who have been victims of domestic violence in learning basic home management skills and use of community resources necessary to achieve a positive and stable lifestyle

Individual and Group Counseling Program: To enable counseling participants to trace the early years that shaped their attitudes toward domestic relationships and to learn to redirect their efforts in a way that leads to positive and productive relationships

Employment Training and Placement Program: To assist participants in finding a career path, enrolling in and completing the necessary training programs, and securing beginning employment

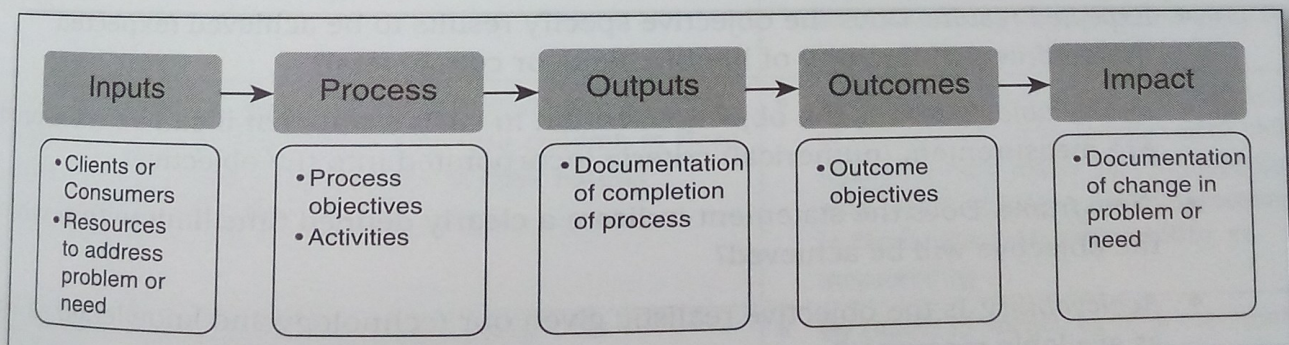
Each of these program goals helps to further the mission of the total organization, understanding that the mission is something that is always an aspiration but in most cases is never fully achieved.

THE FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES

In effectiveness-based program planning, one should be able to make explicit two things about a program: (1) the results that are to be achieved and (2) the manner in which these results will be achieved. The specification of results is a statement of the ends or expectations of the program. In the program-planning literature, these ends are referred to as *outcome objectives* (Brody, 2005; Coley & Scheinberg, 2000; Poertner, 2000). The specification of service provision is an articulation of the means that will be used to achieve the ends, and these are referred to as *process objectives*. Finally, under process objectives, we find listings of specific *activities* that represent a further breakdown or refinement of the details of program implementation.

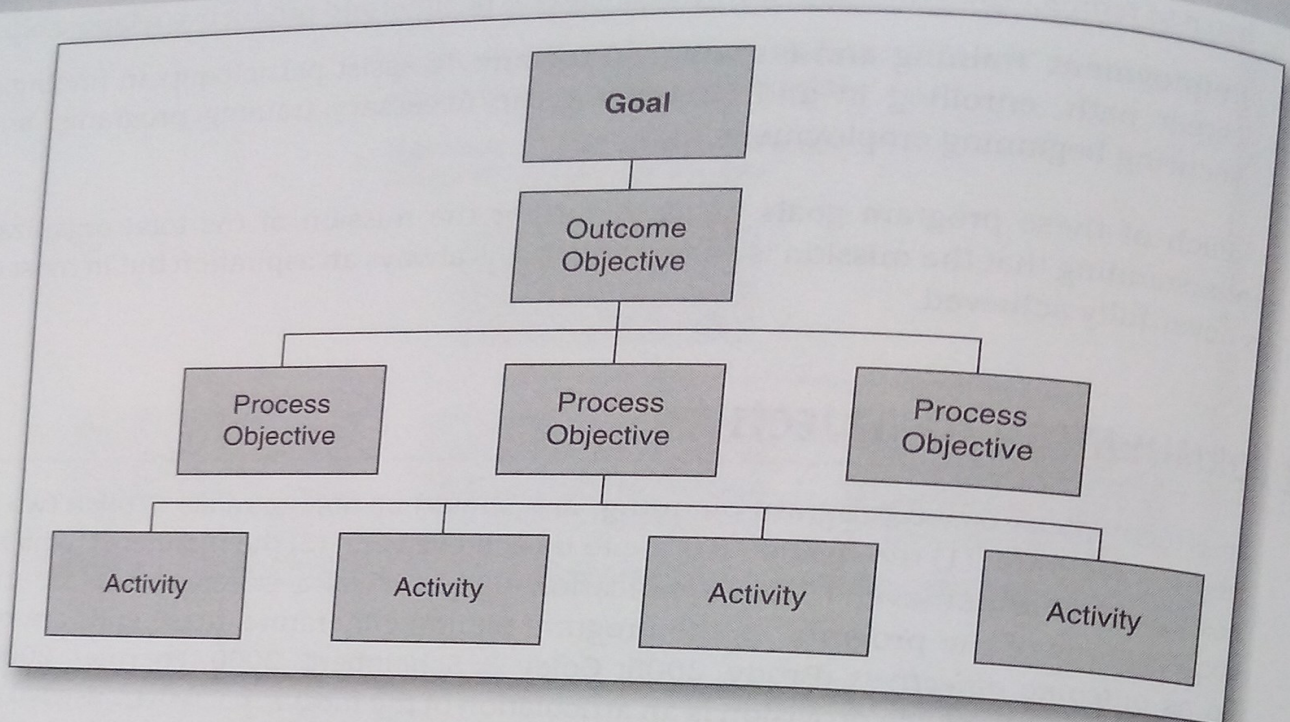
This approach further supports the logic model as presented in Chapter 1 and as illustrated in Figure 7.3. Outcome objectives identify and define expected program outcomes. Process objectives and activities work together to define the process of service provision to the client. Outputs become measures of processes and activities invested in the program.

Figure 7.3 Logic Model as Applied to Process and Outcome Objectives



Throughout the literature, a variety of terms are used by planners to distinguish these three different levels, including *strategies*, *milestones*, *operational objectives*, and *program objectives*. In the following discussion, we will use the program-planning terms *outcome objectives*, *process objectives*, and *activities*. The hierarchy is similar to that depicted in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 Hierarchy of Goals, Objectives, and Activities



REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL OBJECTIVES

All objectives have a number of elements in common. A good objective is *clear, specific, measurable, time-limited, and realistic* and represents a *commitment*. These elements can be addressed through the following questions:

- *Use of clear, unambiguous terms.* Is the objective clear? Does it mean the same thing to anyone who reads the statement?
- *Expected results.* Does the objective specify results to be achieved (expected improvements in quality of life of clients or consumers)?
- *Measurable results.* Is the objective written in such a way that it can be measured? Are measurement (numerical) criteria incorporated into the objective?
- *Time frame.* Does the statement indicate a clearly defined time limit within which the objective will be achieved?
- *Achievability.* Is the objective realistic given our technology and knowledge as well as available resources?
- *Accountability.* Does the objective identify who has responsibility for ensuring that the objective is achieved?

More specifically, in writing objectives, the following five components should be included:

1. Time frame
2. Target of the change
3. Products (process) or results (outcomes) to be achieved
4. Criteria by which the products or results will be documented, monitored, or measured
5. Responsibility for implementing and measuring achievement of the objective

Several examples are presented in Table 7.3.

The issue of clarity as well as these five components will be discussed in the following paragraphs. In order to emphasize the chronology of the objective-setting process, we will first discuss *outcome* objectives, and following that we will discuss the construction of *process* objectives and *activities*. Outcome objectives should always be developed first (even though they appear last as depicted in the logic model) because it is from the specification of desired outcomes that the remainder of the program-planning process flows.

Table 7.3 Examples of the Relationships Between Goals and Objectives

Type of Organization	Sample Goals	Sample Outcome Objectives
Domestic violence shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Mead County • To develop outreach services to Native American women in Mead County who have experienced domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By (date) to reduce by 20% the number of women in Mead County who return to domestic violence shelters, as measured by . . . • By (date) to increase by 25% the number of Native American women who are able to secure living arrangements away from their abusers, as measured by . . .
Family service agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase family strength and stability among African American children in Mead County who return to their natural families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By (date) to increase by 25% the number of African American families with children returning from foster care in Mead County who report at least a 50% improvement in family strength and stability, as measured by . . .
Drug and alcohol counseling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the incidence of methamphetamine use in Mead County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By (date) to reduce by 50% the number of arrests for methamphetamine use among youth ages 15 to 18 in Mead County, as measured by . . .

Clarity

The critical test of an objective is that anyone who reads it will understand it. There should be a minimum of ambiguity. Adjectives, because they are usually open to a wide range of interpretations (e.g., *healthy, productive*) should be minimized or eliminated in favor of straightforward phrases made up primarily of verbs and nouns. Brody (2005) advises those who write objectives to use action verbs that describe an observable change in a condition, such as *reduce, improve, strengthen, or enhance*. Everyone who works with the objective should interpret it in essentially the same way. For example, a statement such as "to improve the quality of interaction between spouses" could have many interpretations. It is vague and uncertain without further modifiers and descriptors. A better, more measurable statement would be "to reduce the number of unresolved disagreements each week by at least 40% in at least 60% of participating couples." Even here, the term "unresolved disagreements" would probably need further definition and clarification.

Precision becomes extremely important as the program goes through its implementation stage. By the time of implementation, the initial authors of the objectives may not be available for interpretation, nor should they have to be if the objectives have been crafted correctly.

One way to ensure clarity (and, later, measurability) is to develop objectives that have behavioral aspects. Examples of these would include statements that begin with verbs such as *write, list, increase, reduce, terminate, or demonstrate*. Examples that use vague and nonbehavioral (i.e., not observable) referents might include statements that begin with verbs such as *understand, know, realize, feel, believe, or enable*.

Time Frames

The time frame specified is the date when it is expected that the objective will have been achieved. The United Way of America (1996) describes three levels of outcomes: *initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and longer term outcomes*. Initial outcomes focus on the first benefits or changes in knowledge, attitudes, and skills that participants experience. They are not the end in themselves, but they are necessary steps toward the desired end and therefore are important indicators of participants' progress toward that end. Intermediate outcomes focus on the changes in behavior that result from new knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Longer term outcomes focus on the ultimate outcomes that a program desires to achieve for its participants. It is important to remember at this point that these measures are used to track the progress of individual clients or consumers as well as to aggregate the data at selected intervals (e.g., quarterly) for program monitoring and evaluation purposes. Procedures for these activities will be discussed in Chapters 10 and 11.

Using the United Way framework, initial and possibly intermediate outcomes may be the focus of the first year, depending on the problem or need and the services provided. Longer term outcomes would involve multiyear efforts. Wherever possible, time frames should be stated as specific dates, including month, day, and year. These, then, become the dates on which readings are taken to monitor progress and review performance

measures that indicate whether the program is meeting its objectives. One-year time frames are usually stated as follows:

- By June 30, 20XX (with a specific year, 1 year from the start date, inserted)
- By the end of the first year (when the start date is not known)

Multiple-year planning may be necessary, given the complexity of most human service program outcome expectations. When multiple-year outcome objectives are developed, they may be stated as follows:

- By September 30, 20XX (when the start and completion dates are known)
- By the end of the third year (when the start and completion dates are not known)

Specific dates are always preferable because they are so much more useful for monitoring purposes, but when a program is faced with an uncertain start date, objectives may have to use flexible time frames that can later be translated into specific dates.

Target of Change

Objectives also specify the population or the elements that are expected to be changed if the objective is achieved. Outcome objectives focus on populations. The following are client populations that might be specified in an outcome objective:

- 30 women who have been victims of physical and/or emotional violence
- 75 low-income families
- 20 parents who have had children removed from their homes for child neglect

Results

Client outcomes identify what positive changes should have been achieved by clients by the time they have completed the program. For example:

- 20 women who have been victims of physical and/or emotional violence will report at least a 75% decrease in incidences of violence.
- 50 low-income families will report an income that allows them to meet their basic needs as established in a budget.
- 20 parents who have had children removed from their homes for child neglect will be determined (by professionally established standards) to be competent to have their children returned to their homes.

Deciding how much to promise in terms of client outcomes takes careful thought in program planning. Occasionally, program planners think that the more they promise, the more likely it

is that they will obtain funding for their programs. In most instances, this strategy backfires. Funding source personnel can usually recognize when the projected results are unrealistic and the program is overpromising. And in those instances where the program has overpromised but gets funded anyway, program planners often find that they have put themselves and the implementers of the program in the untenable position of attempting to achieve unachievable outcomes and, eventually, of attempting to explain why they did not. This type of behavior begins to affect an agency's credibility. A program's goals and objectives should be seen as a contract. If requested resources are made available, then stated outcomes will be achieved.

Criteria for Measurement

If the objective cannot be measured, the program cannot be evaluated—or at least we will never be able to know whether the objective has been achieved. Remember that failure to measure is like having an athletic event without keeping score. The corollary of this is that we need to state in the planning phase not only what we hope to achieve (such as a reduction in child abuse or an increase in job placements) but also the criteria of acceptable performance. For example:

- To reduce incidents of child abuse in District 1 by 15% as measured by referrals recorded in the Child Abuse Central Registry
- To increase awareness of the warning signs of a potential abuser as measured by the Straus Conflict Tactic (CT) Scales (Straus, 1990)
- To increase self-esteem as measured by the Hudson Self-Esteem Scale (Hudson, 1982)

To ensure that measurement criteria have been included, one should always look for the phrase *as measured by* (or something similar) in a complete outcome objective. This part of the objective allows the writer of the objective to state an outcome that may not be completely and precisely understood in the same way by all, with the understanding that its meaning will be further clarified and defined when stating the measurement criteria. For example, “improving healthy communication” may not be understood in the same way by all, but when the criterion for measurement—“as measured by the Flynn Compatibility Scale”—is added, ambiguity is removed.

Responsibility

The final issue is that of accountability for implementation of the objective. Up to this point our concern has been that objectives be clear, specific, measurable, time based, and realistic. The last necessary component is the ability to fix responsibility for seeing to it that activities are carried out and reporting on the objective's attainment. The statement should include an identification of a title (e.g., supervisor, program administrator) or a person, by name, and a simple additional phrase or sentence such as “The person responsible shall be the child care program manager.”

Not all writers of objectives include the name or title of the person responsible in the objective itself. Nevertheless, the principle of identifying the person(s) responsible is an

important one. In the same manner that we identify a specific date of completion for the objective so that we will know *when* the objective is to be completed, we identify a person or title so that we will know *who* is to be held responsible for monitoring. When the plan is fully fleshed out, it will include a list of objectives to be achieved and activities to be accomplished. If no one is assigned to track progress and monitor due dates, much of the carefully crafted plan could be ignored and the plan could fail. The person identified is usually considered to be responsible for managing implementation, not necessarily for carrying out the details of the activities.

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

Outcome objectives are the centerpieces of program plans in that they explain the reason for the existence of the program as well as project measurable results. Outcome objectives flow directly from the problem analysis phase in a number of ways. First and foremost, an outcome objective is a statement that is intended to reflect a reduction in the incidence or prevalence of the problem or need. Outcome objectives should state clearly what effect the intervention is expected to have on the target population. For example:

- To increase the graduation rate among high-risk adolescents
- To prevent the reoccurrence of child abuse or neglect in 25 families
- To return 100 children in foster care to their natural parents

The problem analysis section will provide the numbers necessary to meet the criteria of measurability and specificity discussed above. By identifying the numbers of individuals or families with a particular problem, we have established the outside limits for the program. Given agency, personnel, and resource constraints, we identify the number of clients or consumers that we realistically expect to be able to serve during a given period of time. Now the task is to *predict* our success rate. The example in Table 7.4 of an outcome objective illustrates the five parts (NB: the wording may seem awkward, but the phrase “it is the objective of this program” is not included in each statement for the purpose of brevity).

Table 7.4 Example of an Outcome Objective

Time	By June 30, 20XX
Target	At least 50 of 100 participating high-risk students in the Roosevelt School District
Result	Will graduate
Criterion	As documented in school records
Responsibility	The dropout prevention supervisor is responsible for monitoring and reporting

To restate, outcome objectives flow from the problem analysis phase and focus on a reduction of the problem or an improvement in the quality of life of the program's target population. They are statements that translate a program goal into precise and measurable language. Once the outcome objectives are clearly conceptualized and stated, their companion process objectives should begin to become clear. These are addressed in the next section.

Given the complexity of the problems that we are attempting to resolve, it is often necessary to think of outcome objectives in hierarchical terms, as with the United Way of America's (1996) use of initial, intermediate, and long-term outcomes. In most program plans there will be more than one level of outcomes, and all will deal with a positive change in the quality of life of the clients. In incorporating outcome objectives into the model for effectiveness-based program planning, we deal with only two levels—intermediate and final—which correspond roughly to the United Way's initial and intermediate. The third level, long-term outcomes, are the same as *impact*, as defined in the logic model. These long-term outcomes reflect the reason for the existence of the program and project expected outcomes in the total community, not just one agency's clients, as in the following examples:

- To reduce the incidence of physical violence against women
- To increase the number of homeless persons who become self-sufficient and secure a permanent residence
- To reduce the number of adolescents who participate in street gangs

Most programs designed to achieve these outcomes would require a mix of interventions. The hierarchy of outcomes for family violence programs would be as follows:

Final or ultimate objective:

- Reduce the reoccurrence of domestic violence in at least 75% of participating families

Intermediate objectives:

- Resolution of emotional and psychological issues that act as barriers to self-esteem and self-confidence
- Achievement of a certificate for successful completion of employment training
- Placement in a job for which the client was trained
- Mastery of independent living skills, including financial management skills and making use of available community resources

With the homeless, interventions might include a combination of learning basic job-finding skills (such as resume preparation and interviewing), learning a skill (such as short-order cooking or construction skills), and finding affordable housing. With potential high

school dropouts, interventions might include a combination of developing a relationship with a mentor, participating in after-school activities, and improving academic performance. In each instance, it is expected that if clients improve in the areas specified, they will achieve the stated overall expected outcome or result. We know (or believe) this because our research done during the problem analysis phase supports this hypothesis.

What must be recognized, however, is that each of the interventions designed to achieve the final or long-term outcome objective also must have expected outcomes. If one phase of the family violence intervention is designed to ensure the development of independent living skills, then there must be a measurable outcome for that phase. In this instance it would mean that clients were able to secure permanent housing, make acceptable child care arrangements, and build a social support network. The expected outcome might read as follows:

- To achieve all objectives in the Individual Rehab Plan (IRP) related to self-sufficiency and independent community living (NB: this would assume that housing, child care, and social supports were included in IRP objectives)

Likewise, there must be measurable outcomes for increasing self-esteem, lowering social anxiety, managing finances, and for employment training and placement. It is these outcomes in combination that we believe will enable a woman at risk to achieve a violence-free life, self-sufficiency, and independence. So to understand all the necessary components of the program, we must understand whether each individual client achieved expected outcomes and then aggregate all client data to understand the effectiveness of the program.

Once we know that these lower level outcomes have been achieved, and whether there have been subsequent incidents of violence, we can begin to support or reject the intervention hypothesis that states that achievement of these lower level outcomes will lead to a reduction in family violence.

The two levels of outcomes used in effectiveness-based program planning are referred to as final (e.g., reduction in reoccurrence of domestic violence) and intermediate (e.g., improved self-esteem, lowering of social anxiety, improvement in independent living skills, finding reliable social supports, improving financial management skills, learning employable skills). Table 7.5 depicts the relationships between final and intermediate outcomes.

Table 7.5 Relationship Between Intermediate and Final Outcomes

Final or ultimate outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the incidence of reoccurrence of domestic violence in at least 75% of participating families
Intermediate outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in self-esteem • Lowered social anxiety • Mastery of independent living skills • Mastery of financial management skills • Mastery of job skills • Placement in a job for which the client was trained

PROCESS OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Once the ends (outcome objectives) have been developed, we are in a position to specify the means (process objectives) by which we hope to achieve the stated results. Again, we return to the program hypothesis, which explains the assumed relationships between means and ends (if the following actions are taken, then the following results can be expected). The "if" statements in the hypothesis become the basis for the process objectives, just as the "then" statements dealing with the ends form the basis for the outcome objectives.

In developing process objectives we begin with intermediate outcome objectives. Process objectives are the tools we use to describe how these outcomes will be achieved. Process objectives are always related to the lowest level of outcome objectives, which, in most cases, will be the intermediate outcome objectives. We are assuming and testing the hypothesis that the highest level outcome objectives (final outcomes) will be achieved through the long-term persistence of the lower level outcomes (e.g., the reoccurrence of family violence will be reduced through victims learning independent living skills and securing a steady job).

Process objectives, then, are intended to spell out the milestones necessary to achieve the intermediate outcome objectives. Like all objectives, well-written process objectives require five basic parts: (1) time frame, (2) target (population or product), (3) result (the tangible expectation of this process), (4) criterion (how the result will be measured or documented), and (5) responsibility (who is responsible for ensuring the completion of this process objective). Just as with outcome objectives, we find that process objectives have their own set of verbs and descriptors. For example:

- To increase the number of cases . . .
- To provide individual counseling . . .
- To serve hot meals . . .
- To recruit program participants . . .
- To train volunteers . . .

Time Frames

Time frames are expressed in process objectives in the same manner as outcome objectives. A date is specified when it is expected that the objective will have been achieved. Time frames should be stated as specific dates, including month, day, and year. One-year time frames are usually stated as follows:

- By September 30, 20XX (with a specific year, 1 year from the start date, inserted)

When multiple-year outcome objectives are developed, the year will reflect the longer time required.

Target and Result

Targets of change in *outcome objectives* focus on the population in need of change. *Process objectives* focus on the completion of products or milestones or other elements needed in order to implement the program. The purpose of a program-planning effort is the accomplishment of changes that are achievable within stated time frames. To get to the point of successfully achieving client changes, certain processes must first be implemented and followed through to completion. In order to prevent processes from being allowed to continue on indefinitely without concrete, measurable achievement, milestones should be identified that can be used to mark the completion of the process.

The question to be answered in identifying the target and result of a process objective is "What processes must be completed and/or products produced for the program to be implemented and monitored?" The answer to this question can vary from preparation of a training program to hiring of personnel to producing reports.

The following are examples of milestones to be achieved or products to be produced that might be specified in a process objective. Note that target and result are both contained in these milestones.

- A screening system will be designed.
- A training program will be developed
- A training calendar will be disseminated

Criteria for Measurement or Documentation

Implementation of activities will, once again, require agreement on some type of quantitative measurement that defines completion. The issue here is to ensure that everyone who expects to be guided by a process objective must agree on how all will know when it has been achieved. Sometimes completion of a process objective is obvious, as in the hiring of a client at the conclusion of training. Either the person is put on the payroll or she isn't. But just to be sure there is no uncertainty, the process objective would state "as documented by an offer, acceptance, and starting date" or something to that effect.

Sometimes completion of a milestone is not as obvious. If a process objective target was "development of a training program," for example, the terms "development" and "training program" could mean many different things. To one person, training program may mean a one-page, skeleton outline of topics to be covered. To another it may mean complete lesson plans, workbooks, audiovisual aids, evaluation forms, and more. Likewise, development could mean that the person preparing the program says it is complete, or it could mean that all components defined in a contract must meet the approval of the training director. In order to prevent conflicting opinions to the greatest extent possible, it is useful to specify a criterion for documentation in the process objective.

To ensure that measurement or documentation criteria have been included, one should always look for the phrase *as measured (or documented) by* in a complete process objective. This allows the writer of the objective to clarify and define precisely how one will know when the target and result have been achieved.