



A Quick Guide to Outcome Language

INPUTS	<p>These are materials and resources that the program uses in its activities, or processes, to serve clients, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• equipment, staff• volunteers• facilities• money <p>These are often easy to identify and many of the inputs are common to many organizations and programs.</p>
ACTIVITIES	<p>These are the activities, or processes that the program undertakes with/to the client in order to meet the clients' needs for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teaching• counselling• sheltering• feeding• clothing <p>Note that when identifying the activities in a program the focus is still pretty much on the organization or program itself, and still is not so much on actual changes in the client.</p>



OUTPUTS	<p>These are the units of service your program provides.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The number of people taught, counselled, sheltered, fed, clothed, etc.• The number of clients served, books published, etc. Outputs often do not indicate anything about the actual impacts/benefits/changes in your clients who went through the program.
OUTCOMES	<p>These are actual impacts/benefits/changes for participants as a result of participating or completing your program.</p> <p>For example: for a smoking cessation program, an outcome might be "participants quit smoking" (notice that this outcome is quite different than outputs, such as the "number of clients who went through the cessation program").</p> <p>These changes, or outcomes, are usually expressed in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• knowledge and skills (these are often considered to be rather short-term outcomes)• behaviours (these are often considered to be rather intermediate-term outcomes)• values, conditions and status (these are considered long-term outcomes)



OUTCOME TARGETS	<p>These are the number and percent of participants that you want to achieve the outcome, for example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an outcome goal of 300 teens (70% who increase their knowledge of suicide prevention resources)
OUTCOME INDICATORS	<p>These are observable and measurable “milestones” toward an outcome target. These are what you would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• see• hear• read <p>It would indicate to you whether you're making any progress toward your outcome target or no, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the number and percent of teen participants who are able to identify at least 5 new programs and services that work with youth on suicide prevention issues--- this indicator give you a strong impression that the teens have absorbed the information and now have additional resources available to them that they did not have previously .

Take a few minutes and really notice the differences between:

- **Outputs** (rarely indicate any changes in client’s behaviours, status or health)
- **Outcomes** (indicate positive changes in your client’s behaviours, status or health)
- **Outcome targets** (specify how much of your outcome you hope to achieve)
- **Outcome indicators** (what you can see, hear, read, etc. and suggest that you're making progress toward your outcome targets or not)