SPECIFIC AIMS WORKSHEET

The topics below parallel the content and structure of the Specific Aims page for NIH grant applications. It is important to answer the questions below **in writing**. Only by first writing your ideas down can you begin to refine them.

* **Overarching problem and overall goal**
  + What *general* public health problem will your work address? Include details about the problem to illustrate its importance.
  + What is the long-term goal? In other words, over the next 20 years, how might the work contribute to improving the public health problem?
* **Context and setting for your specific project**
  + What *specific* part of the general public health problem will you address? What is your *specific* goal for the project? Will achieving the goal create new knowledge (i.e., address Innovation)?
  + What is currently known about this specific problem? In other words, what is the current state of knowledge about it?
  + What specific gap in knowledge, question, or challenge remains that your project will address?
  + Why is it important to address this specific gap in knowledge? Identify specific areas/issues related to the specific gap in knowledge that will benefit human health and move the field of research forward.
* **Expertise, training, and resources**
  + How are you (or your team members) qualified to carry out the proposed work?
  + Are the necessary resources available to complete the proposed work within the funding period? Describe any unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements from which the project will benefit.
* **Central hypothesis, specific aims, and experimental overview**
  + What is your overall hypothesis?
  + State your specific aims (2–3). Begin each aim with a verb (e.g., determine, examine, identify, elucidate).
  + How will you accomplish each aim? Briefly describe the general approach or methodology. Mention any innovative aspects.
* **Expected outcomes and impact**
  + What results do you expect from your project, if things go as planned?
  + How will the results of your project move the field forward and/or improve public health? In other words, what will be possible after your success in achieving your goal that was not possible before?