

Expressions of Empathy and Related Emotions towards Animals: Observational Framework and Codesheet

Name of instrument	Empathy Towards Animals: Observational Assessment Framework
Program Target	All programs, all audiences
Scheduled implementation	Flexible; can be pre-post with extended programs (e.g., camp, classes) or used as stand-alone with comparison to other participant groups
Evaluation questions addressed with assessment	Does program participation elicit audience expression of empathic behaviors? Does it encourage expression of related positive emotions (e.g., respect, appreciation, curiosity, etc.)?
Outcomes being measured	
Materials needed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observational checklist ● Writing implement/ clipboard or surface to write on
Staffing requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1 person required to record observations

How to use the Observational Framework with your program:

This observational framework can be used in diverse settings and group types such as with public program audiences, camps, or individuals at animal exhibits. The framework includes expressions of empathy and related emotions, such as curiosity or appreciation.

Questions that can be explored with this framework:

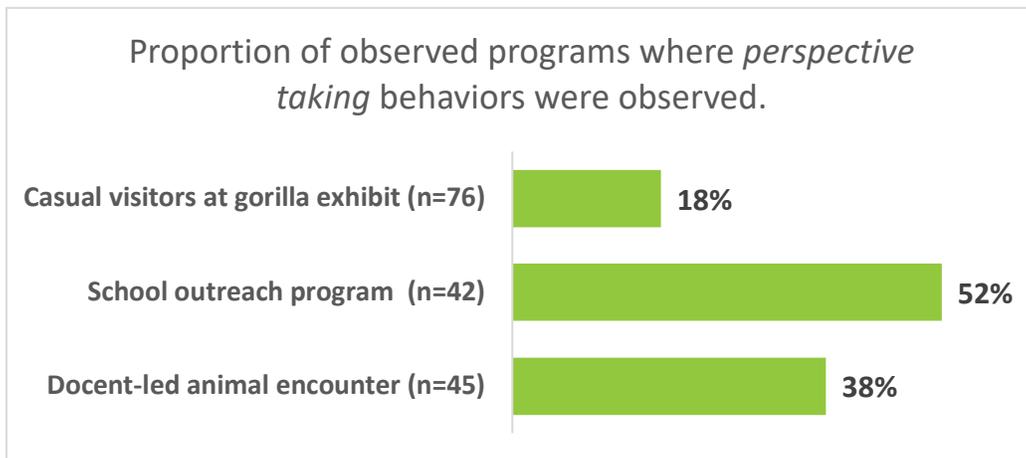
- What types of expressions of empathy do the target program or exhibit elicit overall? From an individual audience member or guest?
 - Observe program/guest experience in its entirety and record the presence or absence of indicators of empathy occurring during the program. Mark observed indicators with an “x” on the codesheet.
- How do programs or experiences compare in stimulating empathy towards animals from guests or audience members?
 - Observe each program or experience in its entirety and record the presence of indicators of empathy, marking the codesheet with an “x” when an indicator is observed. Compare the frequency of empathy indicators observed across programs.

Assessment implementation:

The person(s) conducting the observations should begin by familiarizing themselves with the list of outcomes, indicators & examples of each, below. When making observations the observer should position themselves where they minimize intrusion on the audience’s experience, but are close enough to observe the audience or individual’s behavior or comments. When completing the actual checklist note relevant programmatic details such as the age of the audience, type of programs, or the animals that are involved, if any.

How to conduct basic analysis:

Calculate the proportion of program observation where specific indicators were observed by dividing the number of observations the observable indicator was present by the total number of observations. (a sample graph comparing three different visitor experiences is included below).



Empathy towards Animals: Observational Assessment Framework

Empathetic Expression	Indicators	Example of observed indicator
1. Understanding animals' needs	a. Talks about animal's basic needs (food, water, oxygen, shelter, space)	a. <i>"The bear needs access to water"</i>
	b. Talks about secondary animal needs (e.g. safety, health, comfort)	b. <i>"My dog needs to get exercise and go for a walk every day."</i>
	c. Compares self to animal	c. <i>"I like playing with my brother too, just like the baby gorilla." "The tortoise and I both like apples."</i>
	d. Contrasts self to animal	d. <i>"The lizard likes bugs for breakfast, but I like waffles."</i>
	e. Connects animal to own lived experience.	e.
2. Perspective taking	a. Predicts or speaks to animal's state, emotion or wants	a. <i>"I think the otter is angry."</i>
	b. Provides reasons for prediction of animal's state, emotion or desires	b. <i>"It's so hot outside. I think that tiger is happy to be swimming right now." "The porcupine seems curious because it's looking around and sniffing a lot".</i>
	c. Verbally mimics animal, speaks in voice of animal	c. <i>"Ssssss"</i> (hisses like a snake) Observes sloth bear sunbathing and says <i>"ah, this feels so nice. I'm a happy bear."</i>
	d. Physically mimics animal behavior (biomimicry)	d. Sticks tongue out like a snake.
3. Demonstrates appreciation or respect for animal	a. Verbalizes appreciation, gratitude, or love for the animal	<i>"I love wolf eels". "The possum was so cool. I wanted to tell her she's awesome."</i>
	b. Verbalizes positive feelings abouts animals' physical characteristics	<i>"I can't believe how smart octopuses are." "Wow the snake's skin is so cool looking."</i>
	c. Shows physical affection	Smile at animal, hugging, petting
	d. Verbalizes negative feelings about the animal.	<i>"I hate spiders." "That opossum is so ugly."</i>

Empathetic Expression	Indicators	Example of observed indicator
4. Demonstrates curiosity or interest in the animal	a. Asks questions about the animal or seeks out information	a. <i>“Are these two bears brothers?”</i> <i>“Where do ostrich live?”</i> Looks for or engages with written or interpretive materials
	b. Observes animal closely	b. Watches animal with expressed interest or focused attention.
	c. Expresses observations of animal.	c. <i>“Her feathers look like wood”</i> <i>“It (a raccoon) uses its paws like little hands”</i>
	d. Prolongs observation or repeated observation of animal	d. Returns to see animal or wants to view longer
	e. Retreats or withdraws from animal, avoidance of contact	e. Physically moves away from animal
5. Expresses desire to help animals (individually or as a group)	a. Expresses concern for an <u>individual</u> animal’s well-being	a. <i>“Is that lion o.k.? It looks like he’s limping.”</i> <i>“Are we scaring him?”</i>
	b. Wants to take action/ behave in a way that helps an individual animal	b. <i>“That turtle has flipped onto his back. I want to turn him back over.”</i>
	c. Expresses concern for animals overall/as a group	c. <i>“The number of birds that are endangered is alarming”</i>
	d. Wants to take action/ behave in a way act to help animals overall.	d. <i>“Next time I’m at the beach I have to be more careful where I’m stepping so I don’t kill the anemones.”</i> Pledges to take an action.
	e. Shares beneficial actions with others.	e. <i>“Don’t bang on the glass.”</i> <i>“You can buy recycled paper to help animals.”</i>
6. Demonstrates caring behavior or beneficial action towards animal(s)	a. Promotes safe and comfortable environment for animal.	a. Approaches the animal slowly, speaks softly, maintains distance.
	b. Physical interaction/touch is gentle or appropriate.	b. Touches animal gently, uses two fingers or recommended technique.
	c. Self-regulates behavior in response to the animal’s cues.	c. Refrains from moving closer if the animal indicates discomfort or stress.
	d. Provides for the need of the animal.	d. Refills water dish.
	e. Protects or reduces danger to an individual or group.	e. Moves worm off the path and into the grass. Votes for pro-wildlife initiatives.
	f. Demonstrates harmful behavior towards animal, puts animal in danger.	f. Touches roughly, touches areas of discomfort (e.g. eyes). Pulls seastar from rock.

Empathetic Expression	Indicators	Example of observed indicator
7. Recognition of animal as an individual	a. Speaks to animal's independent movements/making choices.	a. "Woah, look at the sea urchin moving". "(The orangutan) opted to move inside"
	b. Refers to animal by name or pronouns.	b. Uses he/she or individual's name (e.g. "Barney" the harbor seal)
	c. Greets or says goodbye to animal.	c. Waves to animal, " <i>Hi Barney</i> ".
	d. Speaks directly to animal.	d. " <i>Barney, you sure do love to eat fish don't you?</i> "
	e. Comments/inquires on animal's relationship with other animals or people.	e. " <i>She (porcupine) seems to know you really well.</i> " " <i>Are they the calf's parents?</i> "

Observation Codesheet

Date : _____

Program/experience: _____ Group type: _____ Ages: _____

Notes:

Expressions of Empathy and Related Emotions: Observation Codesheet			
1) Understands needs of an animal			
	OBSERVATIONS	X	Notes/supporting evidence
a.	Talks about/expresses animal's basic needs (food, water, oxygen, shelter, space)		
b.	Talks about/expresses secondary animal needs (e.g. safety, health, comfort, emotional wellbeing)		
c.	Compares self to animal		
d.	Contrasts self to animal		
e.	Connects animal to own lived experience.		
2) Able to consider perspective of animals			
a.	Predicts or speaks to animal's state, emotion or wants		
b.	Provides reasons for prediction of animal's state, emotion or desires		
c.	Verbally mimics animal, speaks in voice of animal		
d.	Physically mimics animal behavior (biomimicry)		
3) Demonstrates appreciation or respect for animal			
a.	Verbalizes appreciation, gratitude, or love for the animal		
b.	Verbalizes positive feelings about animals' physical characteristics		
c.	Demonstrates physical affection/appreciations		
d.	Verbalizes negative feelings about the animal.		
4) Demonstrates curiosity or interest in the animal			
a.	Asks questions about the animal or seeks out information		
b.	Observes animal closely		
c.	Expresses observations of animal.		
d.	Prolongs observation or repeated observation of animal		
e.	Retreats or withdraws from animal, avoidance of contact		

5) Expresses desire to help animals (individually or as a group)			
a.	Expresses concern for an <u>individual</u> animal's well-being		
b.	Wants to take action/behave in a way that helps an individual animal		
c.	Expresses concern for animals overall/as a group		
d.	Wants to take action/behave in a way act to help animals overall.		
e.	Shares beneficial actions with others.		
6) Expresses desire to help animals (individually or as a group)			
a.	Promotes safe and comfortable environment for animal.		
b.	Physical interaction/touch is gentle or appropriate.		
c.	Self-regulates behavior in response to the animal's cues.		
d.	Provides for the need of the animal.		
e.	Protects or reduces danger to an individual or group.		
f.	Demonstrates harmful behavior towards animal, puts animal in danger.		
7) Recognition of animal as an individual			
a.	Speaks to animal's independent movements/making choices.		
b.	Refers to animal by name or pronouns.		
c.	Greets or says goodbye to animal.		
d.	Speaks directly to animal.		
e.	Comments/inquires on animal's relationship with other animals or people.		