

Learning group_ Lessons from e...-informed evaluation projects

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

empathy-informed evaluation, conservation action, interpretive master plan, naming policy, animal names, empathy best practices, conservation messaging, behavior change, training tools, data analysis, visitor engagement, educational signage, social science, communication strategies

SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Speaker 4, Speaker 5, Speaker 3, Speaker 2, Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo)

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 06:41
Welcome. Gonna get my screens set up really quick.

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 06:54
Alrighty, do folks see a blue screen with some white text on it. Okay, awesome. Thank you so much. All right. Well, welcome everybody to our first learning group of the fall season. We are back and out of summer, so it is event season for our network, and this is our first one. So we are going to be talking about lessons from empathy informed evaluation projects, and we're going to be hearing about work happening across our network from Autumn Russell at Akron zoo, Bethany West at Idaho Falls and Courtney Cordova at Henry Vilas. My name is Emily burnhardt. I am the empathy network specialist at Woodland Park Zoo. I use she her pronouns, and you can contact me or the rest of the advancing empathy team at empathy@zoo.org I just have a couple of admin updates before we get started, and also just wanted to make sure that everybody in the room today has a shared understanding of the work that we're talking about. So who are we? If this is your first network event, welcome the advancing conservation through empathy for wildlife. Network is a professional learning network that facilitates the sharing of knowledge, experiences and data to drive conservation change through fostering empathy for animals and the environment that sustains them. Between our network, partner organizations and our affiliates, we have over 800 people doing this work across the globe, which is super exciting. So I'm really thankful that y'all are here today to learn about some of that. As a network, we operate off of this shared definition of empathy. This definition came out of the measuring empathy collaborative assessment project, which our presenters are going to reference later on, and I'll also drop a link to that in the chat. But we define empathy as a stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand and care about the experiences or perspectives of another person or animal. So when you hear us talk about or refer to empathy, this is what we mean.

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 09:06

And collectively, we know that when working in tandem with other factors, when people feel empathy for wildlife, they are more likely to take conservation action. Of course, there's a lot of other variables and gears functioning and working in the system, but we know that empathy is a key piece to it. So if you have not already explored our resource library that has a wealth of resources that examine this connection, highly encourage you to do so. But I'm really excited to pass it over to our first presenter, Autumn Russell, to talk about what this looks like at Akron zoo and how they evaluate their empathy, informed project. So I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing my screen. Pass it off to you, autumn.



09:50

Thank you, Emily, hopefully

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Speaker 1 09:54

you can see my presentation and I do have a poll in there, a slido, so hopefully you guys will be able to take that and that will work well. So one of the things that we wanted to dig into here at the Akron zoo was names, kind of looking into what's in a name? The reason we pick names, it may seem a little bit innocuous, but we found that there was a lot of emotion centered around the idea of naming our animals. In the past, we've had for a long time, we've had naming policies. The original policy was focused around an educational name, but it was usually approved by an individual, and so this often created a little bit of angst in some people, especially if there was a name they felt very attached to. And then we had an updated policy that actually allowed for different names so you you could have a name behind the scenes that didn't meet the policy that name was not supposed to be used in front of the scenes to the guests or PR. But that often didn't happen, and it confused especially our volunteers. Because we we share names with our guests, we've also found that there's a lot of conflicting priorities between we want an educational name versus like a cutesy pop culture name. We also saw that there was some mixed messaging. We would see very cutesy names being given to animals, but then the message that went out is that, no, we don't touch those animals. And so it felt very it felt like there was a lot of confusion when we looked at naming. We also, here at our zoo, if we had an animal come in with a name that didn't quite match our policy, we would want to change it. And there was often issues with you can't change an animal's name. How's it going to know its name? But with all of those emotions, we know that it is an empathy best practice. Part of framing is to tell people the pronouns and the names of the different animals. So we really wonder, do the animals do we name our animals for ourselves or for our visitors, and then do the names we give our animals influence our visitors perceptions of those animals. So there we go. So what do you think? Who do we name our animals for? So you should be able to use your phone to scan the QR code and



12:43

I should be live.

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Speaker 1 13:00

Oh, cool. I'll be honest, this question is more for me, and this is interesting. All right, we're going to give it about another maybe 10 seconds for people to take the survey. Write it down,



13:27

changing

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Speaker 3 13:29

if you have it scanned, you could still take the survey. But this is, this is really interesting. It looks like we're almost not quite the getting close to 50, 50% so yeah, so this is really interesting. So our first step was, well, what does the research say? Is there any research out there that tells us about naming? And what we found, there's not a whole lot, but what we did find, find is names lay the foundations of representations and perceptions to come. So what we found is that when we name an animal, not only are we putting on that animal how we want to express ourselves, but how we are telling others they should think they should perceive us based on the name of that animal, which isn't necessarily something that is about the animal itself, but is more about us. There's also a lot of research that shows naming really demonstrates power and control. We can see that in anthropocentrism and Eurocentrism, especially, there's records that when Columbus landed on, I think it was seeing, Oh, I'm not gonna remember the name. He staked his claim on that location and gave it a name, even though later in his journals, he knew that it already had a name by the local people. So it really demonstrates that sort of power and control. We also can use names to objectify animals, especially when we're thinking of, is it a pet or is it a pest? The same type of animal can be both. So there's a lot of really background on names, but we also know there's research that shows that naming and individualizing an animal could lead to Pro Environmental behavior. It can improve memory retention. There was a study done with animal ambassadors, and they found that when names were used, people remembered information about that animal longer. It builds empathy. We name things dear to us, and we also saw that in terms of changing names, that most pets, when they're adopted, the owner will change its name to what they want it to be. So we wanted to find out what. We wanted to dig more into this, this name idea. So we sent out a survey. We tested names based on policies or practices we'd used and then things that have caused a little bit of issues with us. So we looked at educational Tali is part of a scientific name. Hawks is part of a birthplace. We made up a zoo, Hoxie Hill Zoo. We did tattoo, which is a language from the range of the animal we did. Dozer as a descriptive or cute kind of aspect, Logan as a human name, which is is currently popular, and also referred to a keeper reference with that. And then casadillo, which was testing out that punny or funny and cute name. So the results we got, we did get demographics. We surveyed our general audience, we posted it on Facebook, sent it to our members. We got about 790 responses. We also sent it out to Zoo staff and volunteers. We did it through our zoo staff and volunteers and then posted it on the social science research and evaluation and the Education Network page, we get about 378 responses with that. We were curious to see if generations or cultural background had an impact or an influence with our demographics. Unfortunately, it didn't really tell us a lot. We didn't have really diverse respondents for that same thing with the zoo staff and volunteers, there wasn't a real big difference in the demographics. What we did find is that pretty much people rated the names the same across the board. We found interesting is that

the gap between dozer and tattoo was greater in our general audience than in our zoo staff and volunteer. And then the gap between tattoo and quesadilla was greater in zoo staff than it was in our general audience. It was just interesting information. Now I'm not going to focus on the results of that study. I'd be happy to share them with you. I don't know that we've got enough time, but more talk about how we kind of dug into it. So we asked two open ended questions in here, and that was, how did you come to your final choice? And then, why didn't you choose the other names, open ended questions with over 1000 responses? I will caution you to think about that if you choose to do that, that was a lot of coding. So our team first set a standard set of categories when we started coding and definitions. So we all agreed on the categories and what fell in those categories. And then we really worked to try to have each name, have at least two people go through and code them. We use two different tools. We used Excel, you know, the old standby with coding it. And then I use a tool. It's called QDA minor light. It's by provalisresearch.com I love this thing, the light or free version you can't share with others, but it does allow you to upload all of the verbiage and then just go through and highlight and code it by clicks, and then it analyzes it kind of tabulates it for yourself. So if you do a lot of quality, qualitative data analysis, that is, I found a really good tool. One of the interesting things we did find in our coding with zoo staff and volunteers. We did find that we had to divide it into two areas. One is what we called presumptive. We found a lot of people responding to I think others would like, as opposed to their self I would like. So that was one of the things that we kind of pointed out, and what we develop based on the responses, is the criteria that we wanted to look at for future naming policy so descriptive, educational or having a deeper meaning, was definitely the most important for both general audiences and zoo staff. Cool, fun was an important piece that mainly came from quesadilla. Quesadilla, yeah, it had to somehow be relatable or connect. It needed to be kid friendly. It needed to be member memorable. There was something to the sound or how easy it was to pronounce the name they like the tattoo that it somehow showed respect to the culture that the animal came from, and it was also important that it showed respect for the animal. So those were the main categories that came out of the study. And so with that, we created a new process for naming our animals. We now are using a committee, and we literally just started this. So we're using a committee, and the committee votes on only if the name passes the criteria. And that's something that we are having to remind the committee that's not about your favorite name, it's just, does it meet the criteria. We have gotten rid of the two, like a behind the scenes name and a front of the house name. And one of the things with the promotes respect. We really wanted to be focused on this idea of degrees of separation. So whether you're Sydney Portier Will Smith or Kevin Bacon, we didn't want a long story of how the name connected to educational information. The name has to somehow be cute or have a catchy, catchy factor should be easy to pronounce and the translation should be appropriate. We actually have a parent named Chi Chi in our collection. We did a presentation for students from Mexico who snickered every time we use the name because it refers to a female body card in Spanish. So we wanted to be aware of that we have a rating form, and we've developed a policy from this, as well as a decision tree on choosing names. So and I think that this should be available on our resource page, on the ACE Network page. So one last survey, again, more for me, does your institution have a naming policy? So, yes, no, I don't know, and I know some people may have a naming policy sort of but there's not a lot of detail, or it's not followed greatly. Yeah.

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Speaker 1 23:09

So thank you. While you're finishing that up, I'm going to take that information and then there'll be questions later, so I'm going to go ahead and stop sharing. Feel like that was a lot of information quickly shared.

 Speaker 1 23:33
So back to Emily. Are we moving on to our next person?

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 23:38
Yeah, and so unfortunately, I don't see Bethany in the waiting room, but I did just drop the naming decision tree link in the chat, if folks would like to peruse that at any point, it'll also be posted with recording of this later on. But Courtney, we can go ahead and pass it to you, and then once Courtney has presented, we'll do a joint Q, amp a and some discussion. Okay? My

 Speaker 2 24:07
Wi Fi has not been amazing, so I'm sorry if I cut out at all involving it all works out okay,

 24:18
right. Can you guys see my screen. Okay, yes, okay, great,

 Speaker 2 24:26
awesome. Well, I wanted to share a little bit about how evaluation has informed different projects at the Henry Vilas Zoo. So I was going to talk today a little bit about some of the overview of our zoo and kind of our history with empathy. Talk about our interpretive master plan project that we had at the zoo that had a lot of evaluation components to

 Speaker 2 24:52
it, and how it's kind of changed the way that we do training and how we look at conservation action messaging for our zoo. So little bit to know about our organization. We are a small, free AZA accredited institution in Madison, Wisconsin. We're a pretty small but mighty team, as many small zoos are. We're about 28 acres, and we have about 41 full time staff. We have three full time education staff. So a lot of lot to do, and a lot of us wear a lot of different hats. So we don't necessarily have an evaluation team department. It's one of the hats. We

 Speaker 2 25:40
have around 700,000 guests a year, so it allows us to connect with a lot of different groups and allows us to get a lot of different data about how people are engaging with things. So we recently redid our interpretive master plan for the Henry Vilas Zoo. We did that through the Hey, Courtney,

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 26:06
I'm sorry. I don't mean to interrupt you, but I'm going to recommend turning your camera off. You are cutting out a little bit, and that might help.

 26:14
Okay, sound good. Sorry, no.

 26:21
Is that better?

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 26:24
I think so we'll find out. Okay,

S Speaker 2 26:27
we'll find out. So, yeah, with our interpretive Master Plan grant, we really looked at trying to increase empathy for animals through our

S Speaker 2 26:42
conservation action message retention. So with that, we actually didn't see a significant increase in area change in conservation action message retention, which fueled further projects. I feel like I might be cutting out again. Am I getting out?

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 27:01
You're not cutting out, but I can't tell if your screen should have switched or not. We can see your mouse circling, but we are still are on the overview

 27:09
slide switched over

E Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 27:13
if you want to. You can send me your slides if we want to do some Q and A for Autumn's presentation. And then I can control your slides and you can talk and just reduce your overall

like, bandwidth use. I think that's a great idea. Okay, let's do that. And while we figure that out, let's have a discussion about Autumn's content. So if anybody has any questions for autumn, either drop them in the chat and I can read them off or come off mute, and let's have a little bit of a discussion before we pivot back to a presentation.

S Speaker 3 27:48

I have a question Question autumn, because you address kind of like the pros and cons of naming a little bit. And my current institution has a bit of, I didn't know exactly how to answer your poll, because it sort of had a no naming policy, except for animals are penguins that they allowed high end donors to name. So it's kind of, you know, fueled by those kinds of things, and even that has been sort of problematic. Some of our penguins have names. Some of them don't, at least front of house. And so just sort of wondering, you know, like with the sentiment that you are seeing, like, did you encounter people that, or, you know, staff, or, you know, were there people that were highlighting the sort of negatives of the naming, or overall, like, you know, what kind of sentiments Did you battle there?

S Speaker 1 28:53

So for the most part, our zoo has been good with naming. When I got here, I've been here 17 years. They were already in on the naming bandwagon, not using, sort of like just the accession numbers. So we really have promoted that in creating individuals for the animals, I think the biggest situations that we would see was wanting to name animals that maybe didn't promote as much respect for the animals of what some of the individuals felt, I'm trying to think of we had years ago, we had a flamingo that ended up having to be hand raised, and everybody wanted to call her after the keeper who did that, and that caused a little bit of friction behind Well, why? What are we naming it after a keeper? Is that educational? What does that tell us about so those are some of the things that we've seen. The other things that we've seen is as our zoo has grown and changed, we have brought in more staff that maybe haven't worked at zoos for a long time, that come from different sectors, and so we see a real want to name animals, sort of like the pet type of names, even if we've ended up getting animals that were once pets donated in which we don't do a lot, there was the septum sentiment that, well, we need to honor their time as a pet. And so for us, we're like but our goal is to tell people why these don't make good pets and and so that's where a lot of that conflict came in. Are these sort of cutesy pop culture. There was some discussions of, let's name the animals after food. And so a lot of different points of view, like, well, food is cute, food is pop culture. But what is What message are we sending our visitors? That tends to be where a lot of the the angst came in at if that does that answer your question?

S Speaker 3 31:07

Yeah, I guess, because I am on on the pro naming side of things, and I would like to talk with our team members about what it would mean, because I think a lot of our animals have sort of cheeky names that people just come up with, you know, we have a giant sea bass that everyone kind of calls Big Bertha, you know, but, like, not officially. And we have a sea turtle that kind of came with a name, but we sort of don't adopt that name publicly, and things like that. And so, like, if I were to want to go to, you know, our higher ups and and sort of have a

persuasive argument for, like, what naming could do to build empathy, and how we could do it in a still scientific, you know, our our institution as part of Scripps, Institute of Oceanography. And so they want to keep it very scientific, and have the animals have the autonomy that you know wild animals do, but you know, at the same time, it makes it hard to, you know, especially if you're communicating with faceless animals like sea stars and sea anemones. I'm like, we could just still have a name name for them. So I just wonder if approaching it from this, like, data driven side of things to show, like, how you know, but I again, people who have worked with them for a long time, would, you know, maybe have their own Inkling towards how to how to name them, what to call them, and how that would be, you know, how would that be marketable, or how would that be equitable across the whole aquarium and things like that? So just some interesting things to think about.

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Speaker 1 32:42

Yeah, that definitely is where we came from, is that we wanted data to back up. The reason behind how we name our animals,

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Speaker 3 32:54

did people then, based on that data, did people then kind of agree to that poll, like, was it, did it come together, or was there still, like people disagreeing and still kind of just compromising despite that?

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Speaker 1 33:06

So it got approved about two months ago, and we, we, I mean, I would be happy to talk more. We're finding some little bumps in the road, but working through them as we're implementing the policy.

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 33:25

Alrighty Courtney, I have your PowerPoint up and ready so we can pay that back to your presentation, and then when you're done, do our joint Q and A. If that sounds good to everybody, thank you all for for being flexible and understanding of technology, doing technology doing technology things. Let's see. Is this the slide you want up Courtney,



33:50

not seeing anything yet?



33:58

Okay, let's see.



34:06

Okay. Can you see that? No, not yet. I'm just



Speaker 2 34:13

seeing that. It says advancing empathy has started sharing their screen.



34:18

Oh, okay, my cursed Canva.



Speaker 4 34:28

Are other people seeing it? Is it just because my computer slow the second the second message? It says double click to share full screen. Maybe you had to click,



Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 34:39

okay? Maybe it's just the presentation that's crashing everything. Let me try again. Present, present, full screen. All right, here we go. Any luck this time?



34:58

Yay, that's it. I seeing it.



35:01

Hooray.



35:02

Okay.



Speaker 2 35:05

Well, back on track, everyone. So evaluation, what we were talking about. Okay, so we learned a lot from our evaluation, from our interpretive master plan. I gotta shout out Catherine Owen, who was instrumental and was our consultant for this project. So a lot of the data and strategies that were used for that project were developed by her. We used the me Cap tool that

empathy talked about, or that Emily talked about as well. And then we kind of did a different a couple different strategies, a lot of observations, which is nice, because you don't have to necessarily interact with people. You can sit there and watch which I have. Silvery is one of our instructors modeling very perfectly in the bottom picture there, surveying. So a lot of getting people before, after, entering exhibits. And then we also did some Semantic Differentials. So thinking about, do you feel this is ugly or beautiful? Do you feel like it is similar to me, very different from me. So a couple different strategies with that. Okay, the next slide. So this chart kind of shows an overall pre and post difference in using the mecap tool and showing empathy towards animals with our new signage. So our new signage really focused on empathy, best practices, talked about animals as individuals. We do use names. We have names even on the signage. And so what we wanted to see, we're hoping to see, was a difference pre and post between indicators of empathy and anything that has a little star next to it shows statistical significance in that pre post data. So we saw pretty clearly that people after implementing the new interpretive signage, were understanding the needs of our animals more, or appreciating and respecting the animal more, showing and expressing desire to help the animals and recognizing the animals as an individual, so showing that even the ones that didn't have statistical significance also still showed an improvement. So through our interpretive master plan and through our new signage, we saw that we were pretty effective in getting people to feel empathy for animals and indicate that through those observational data collections, is that me Cap tool. Next slide, this was showing the semantic differential. So we focused on our herpeterium was one area where we wanted to see improvements in our signage. And so we asked people before and after they entered the exhibit, different people before and after, but kind of doing pre post tests and having them say if they think that this animal is beautiful or ugly, friendly or unfriendly, or unimportant, showing that that differential, so you can see this is before and after leaving the exhibit. And so again, we're seeing significant increase with the difference with people feeling that the animals are beautiful, which is a really key piece in our signage. The signage used to be very like dark, very scientific, and we opted for more colorful, more friendly photos, really highlighting the beauty, especially of reptiles. This is often one that people feel a little bit more nervous around, really telling the stories of the animals and framing them in friendly ways. We saw a significant increase in that, and then also personality and talk, even just explaining why animals are doing what they're doing, really went a long way. The number one thing I heard in my observations when working in the Herbert were, is it alive? Is it a statue? Does it actually like? Are you guys just fooling us? And yes, in fact, the alligators are alive. And so being able to tell stories of they're not just sitting there doing nothing, they're resting in the sunshine, because that's how they warm up their bodies and their ambush predators. So still using scientific stories and scientific language, but being able to explain their personality and explain those behaviors in a way that allows people to understand Next slide. So this is where we didn't necessarily hit our mark. So one of our goals was getting people to remember conservation messages, and that was also a specific goal, because getting people to follow through with conservation messages and understanding their intent to participate in conservation messages was a little bit bigger of an Ask than what we had capacity for in our initial project. So this was just, do you remember seeing a conservation action message? Do you remember hearing anything about conservation and unfortunately, we didn't see that people consistently saw conservation action messages. So it wasn't something that people are really remembering after we implemented our new signage. So only 15% recalled seeing something about how to help reptiles on amphibians, even though it was on pretty much every single one of our new signs. Same thing for the Primate House. People didn't remember or didn't see anything about helping primates in the wild. Again, it was definitely there, but it just wasn't what people were looking at. People couldn't think of anything to help primates in the wild. And then, did you see any information about how to help animals in the Primate House? Then again, most people said no. So we weren't quite meeting that mark there. And oh, you

can hit the next great, perfect. And so you can see one of our goals for this project was that 25% of guests were able to give an example of a conservation X and action message. And again, we didn't quite hit that mark. Another key thing that we saw in our surveying was We also gave the survey out to our volunteers in understanding what they knew about conservation messaging, and most of our volunteers reported that they couldn't really think of any specific conservation action messages. So they knew that it was a thing, but they couldn't really think of anything in specific so that gave us some pretty good data to go off of. Of what were our next steps in our interpretation at the zoo? And so that's where we came up with our next project, to really focus on conservation messaging, because we knew we hit the mark of people feeling empathy. But how do we get the mark of people remembering



41:15

messages? You can get the next slide.

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Speaker 2 41:20

So we really wanted to increase that message retention. We wanted to engage visitors meaningfully, meaningfully and inspire guests to connect with wildlife and take conservation actions. We also know that there's kind of the historical context of like, well, if we just talk about that, they're facing issues, people will then connect with that and want to do something. But that's not really based on what social science tells us. So we're really trying to take a social science approach of how can we encourage people to modify behaviors? And the other big thing that we I think we realized in this is that our initial project was really focused on static signage and focused on physical media, and that is not the most effective way to communicate conservation action messages, because conservation action messages are very personal. It really depends on the person and what their barriers are and what they're interested in, and that is, that's not something I can put on a sign. So really taking our focus to two way communication and focusing on oral interpretation for our conservation messages, and knowing that that's going to be a more effective strategy, and we also know that our guests and our interpreters, particularly our volunteers, didn't want people to feel overwhelmed and focus on this doom and gloom, so I often got something that was skipped. So how can we focus this to be something that's a little bit more hopeful and a little bit more engaging in that way?

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Speaker 2 42:38

So what we did is we made a couple different things with our project, but one key piece that we implemented was a webinar. So this is a training that we use for our staff, volunteers, Education members, to help bridge this gap of knowledge, of being able to teach people how to talk about conservation action, how to talk about it in a hopeful way, and how to find easy ways to bridge talking about an animal to talking about a conservation action that people can do to help that animal. We also got fact sheets. HDZ has made some pretty impressive fact sheets in the past. Not to brag, but people tend to really love our fact sheets, so we just kept on the fact sheet train and made some specific fact sheets focused on conservation actions and just strategies to talk about conservation and hopefully to provide more resources for volunteers to have something physically with them and on them, so they just felt more empowered to be able to talk about those things.



43:37

Next slide.

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Speaker 2 43:40

So I'm going to talk just a breeze through a few key components of our training. One thing that we really focused on in our training, and again, thinking more about the social science of it all, is the trans theoretical model of behavior change, which sounds really complicated and fancy, but it's really just thinking about behavior as a process, rather than kind of a light switch. And so we really focused in our training on how to help interpreters match messages to visitors readiness to change and move guests from awareness to action by promoting achievable action steps. So again, that trans theoretical model of behavior change was really helpful and training staff and volunteers

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Speaker 2 44:28

are walking in with all of these different ideas and awarenesses, which, again, is why talking about conservation didn't necessarily translate well to physical interpretive media. And so we wanted to think of change as a process, and how can we support our interpreters in being able to define that and identify that and speak to that. So really, what we did another key component of our training was thinking about, how can we get from I'm talking about an animal at an exhibit to I want someone to participate in a conservation action and so breaking it down into simple steps, and having people practice these steps in our training. So the steps that we broke it down into was describing the animal's needs, talking about how the zoo meets those needs, comparing that with their wild counterparts, and then inviting the guests to participate in a conservation action effort that meets those so as a result, I wish I could give you more graphs and fun things, but evaluation capacity is challenging, and so we've had a very busy summer. I've been a bit short staffed, so I did not get as much data as I wanted. Really any data much on how effective this has been yet, but we do have all of the tools to be able to do that. So it is something I'm hoping to do. But we did get a lot of the training done. So we trained 65 different volunteers. We managed to train all of our education staff, as well as all of our animal care staff who run our keeper chats and have a lot of engagement with our guests. So we know that we were able to provide this training, provide resources so that we can encourage those who are communicating with our guests to be more effective at communicating conservation action. And I'm hoping next time we do some more surveying and have a bit more capacity for it, we'll be able to see some of those changes.

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Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 46:27

Was that the last slide,

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Speaker 2 46:28

that was the last slide. That's all I

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 46:30

got, incredible. Okay, awesome. Well, thank you everybody for being understanding of all of the technology funsies that we had, but we had, but we have about 20 minutes left. So if folks have questions, comments, things you want to chat about with empathy evaluation without their autumn or Courtney or the other folks who are in the room today who didn't present, I know we've got a lot of empathy evaluation expertise in our audience, so I am going to be monitoring the chat. If anybody wants to pop things in there, but otherwise, please feel free to come off mute, ask your questions, and I will just Yeah, make sure that anybody in The Chat does not get

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 47:21

missed. Oh Courtney, there is a question from Randolph in the chat. So you talked about four key steps. Talk of needs and three others. Can you remind folks what the other steps were?

S

Speaker 2 47:34

Yeah, so the steps are, talk about the animal's needs. Talk about how the zoo meets those needs. Talk about the wild counterparts needs, and then talk about how the conservation action can meet those needs. So for example, I'm talking about seals. I can talk about our seal. This is Sammy. You can see she's enjoying swimming today. She loves swimming in this particular part of her pool. We make sure she has lots of room to swim by giving her this amazing exhibit here, it has 27,000 gallons of water that we take really, really good care of. And in the wild, seals need clean water too, but unfortunately, pollution and plastic and things like that can impact water quality. So something you can do, or something you might already be doing, is have a reusable water bottle rather than a plastic water bottle. So again, I don't think it's like anything groundbreaking, but it was nice for me to break it down into, like, here's four steps, because I found that to be really helpful, especially with their volunteers, because they want to talk about the animals so much that, like, it's always at the end where they were like, oh shoot, I forgot a conservation message. And so it's a nice way of like making it like a little check box. I also encourage people to think through it backwards. One thing exercise I did with particularly my zookeepers, was, how do you get from a random guest question to a conservation action, and can you do that in six sentences or less? So I gave them some prompts of questions, or let them pick whatever question they want and get to whatever conservation action they wanted. But how do you get from, I like these monkeys, to orangutans in palm oil crisis, and what kind of sentences could you use to get there? And it was a really nice thought exercise, especially to do with zookeepers. And I actually got a lot of them to participate, which if you work with zookeepers regularly, zookeepers regularly, that's a pretty impressive thing.

S

Speaker 3 49:27

I was gonna ask, what kind of training tools were you using? Like, that sounds kind of like a fun like, almost a game that you're kind of playing with them. For the training tools, did you have PowerPoints? Like, was everybody meeting in one place? Was it in person? Was it over virtual systems? Or can you talk? Talk a little bit more about

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Speaker 2 49:48

that? Yeah, I used Canva presentations, which typically work more smoothly than they did today. And the training that I have the webinar is available in the conservation action toolkit. That's part of the ACE resources. So you're welcome to that entire training. The particular activity that I did is called Six Degrees of Separation. I believe it originally came from gnocchi and thinking about climate change communication. So that's just a worksheet that I had. It was



50:19

write down your

S

Speaker 2 50:21

question. And then I had six lines and then write down your conservation action so easy enough to make it was also something especially for maybe my zookeeper friends who were really not interested in writing things down, being able to just even talk through it together.

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Speaker 3 50:40

Perfect. Thank you. And then the thing the tools that you use to collect the survey data is that available, by any

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Speaker 2 50:47

chance, me cap tools available. The rest of the tools were developed by Catherine Owen as part of our choose our evaluation consultant. So not all of those are available, but I do believe we have a presentation about the interpretive master plan that goes into a bit more detail, that's also available in the ACE resources, and I

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 51:11

can try to find that link and pop that in the chat as well, while all the folks ask the questions go

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 51:35

I have a presentation for both or presentation question for both of you. I, whenever I do a big project, there's always a pro or a part afterwards where I'm like, What would I have done differently? Like, in retrospect now, having done all of this and like seeing what happened and getting in the weeds of it, you know, six months ago, I'd known what I know. Now, you know, what would I have done differently to maybe help mitigate X or make this go smoother. So for each of your projects that you talked about, was that something or like was there? Is there

something that you would have done differently, or a question you would have asked that maybe you didn't, or anything like that that folks who might want to embark on similar things should think about as they begin their process.

S

Speaker 2 52:29

Um, a couple learnings that I had, especially when I was thinking about, like, the interpretive master plan and writing. I know when I get into like, kind of the interpretive writing style of things, I think a lot about intentional word choices, and that's a good thing that sometimes I can get two in my head about it and actually end up wasting time and, like, discuss as a group where, like, me and my supervisor were just talking the other day, and we're talking about a sign about composting, and I was like, animal waste and other byproducts. And she's like, well, it should say bedding. And I'm like, I don't know bedding might be confusing. And then we're having this back and forth about that. I was like, let's just go ask the guests. And we took 10 minutes to go do AB testing with our guests, and had them read two sentences and tell us which ones they like better. And it like, very clearly, gave us a date of like, oh, they like waste products better, because it made more sense. So I think that getting too caught up in certain things like that when it comes to especially interpretive writing, and then also budgeting for evaluation capacity, because it is challenging. It takes a lot of time, and so being able to either train up LTE or staff or budget time yourself, to be able to actually go out and do the surveying, because it's definitely a time consuming process that unfortunately, we weren't able to adapt a lot of the things we were hoping to this summer just because of our staff capacity.

S

Speaker 1 53:48

I think for then the naming part, I'm trying to think what we would have gone back and changed. We we talked a lot. We had on our little research group. We had purposely people with more conservative viewpoints and then less conservative viewpoints. And I think that was good to kind of keep us down the middle. I think what it what the research did, was really bring up things that we still would like to know about. One of the things that was very curious to us is this idea of we got a lot of it fits. Oh, it fits the animals personality. And we're like, how did you get a personality from like, five sentences? And so, what? What is, what does that mean? It fits. So, yeah, there's it fits. We've found a study that sound actually, there's, there's a study that shows sounds or names with a very hard sounding beginning, like Kirk, that people perceive that individual as not as nice as somebody with a like a Mary. That was really interesting.

S

Speaker 1 55:12

See the chat that the Kiki and Booba study. I'll have to look that up. I don't know that



55:20

that's not the one that you thought it was.

S

Sneaker 1 55:23

 Speaker 1 55:12
No, it's nothing. Was baluma and tech. Were the names that they kind of put in.

 Speaker 5 55:30
Okay, this one was super cool. Um, he had two cut out shapes of plastic, and one was a very angular star, and one was sort of a smooth splotch, and he it's VS Ramachandran. He's at San Diego, and he went out on the beach and asked people which was Kiki and which was Booba and overwhelming something like over 90% of people said that the the the one with the sharp points was Kiki, and it's one of the things that I'm going to try to work off of, also with sound and language and naming.

 56:13

 56:16
also we call all of our cockroaches fluffy. I just needed to add that

 56:20

 Speaker 1 56:25
just like our millipedes are all Millie

 56:28
Millie. I like it.

 Speaker 2 56:33
Our cockroaches are Mozart and Beethoven and Bach because they're D composers. Yep. Um,

 56:45
oh, my God, that's ridiculous. Thank you.

 Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 56:56
Any other questions or comments that folks have for our presenters, or general empathy

evaluation stuff that people want to talk about.

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 57:14

I see some things popping up in the chat. Nicole says, all of our madhouse, all of our Madagascar hissing cockroaches are Bob. And then Brian says, excellent summary. Courtney, it's helpful to hear about when things mysteriously don't work, like how many people seemed oblivious to conservation messaging. And then I found the Wikipedia page for the Buba and Kiki effect, so I'm going to drop that in the chat case anybody is interested in looking at that a little bit more, Anything else that folks would like to talk about? I

E

Emily Bernhardt (Woodland Park Zoo) 58:00

Yeah. Okay. Well, if that is the case, oh, Nicole, just pop something in the chat. This is super informative. Thank you so much for imparting your wisdom on this awesome Well, I'm glad that you enjoyed this, Nicole. Thank you all for being patient with the technology things that happened today, but we made it work. Everything was fine. So we're going to go ahead and post this recording on the discussion board or on the excuse me resource library, probably sometime within the next week. We'll also link Autumn's naming tree document that she shared today with that as well, so you can access that there. And if you have any other questions, comments or concerns, please reach out to us at empathy@zoo.org, when you close out this meeting, there's going to be a little box that pops up on your screen for a quick post event survey. It should take you less than three minutes, but we use those surveys to help shape and determine the topics for the events that we host. So any and all input is greatly appreciated for that. Thank you all for attending today, and I will give you all seven minutes of your day back, and I hope to see you at one of our upcoming events this fall. Alrighty, I will talk to you all later. You.