

## You Talkin' To Me: Empathy Ethogram Protocol

<b>Name of instrument</b>	You Talking to Me? (Animal behavior & emotion observation)
<b>Program Target</b>	Summer Camps: Ages 8 and up
<b>Theme</b>	Animals feel emotions too, and by watching them closely we can sometimes tell how they might be feeling.
<b>Scheduled implementation</b>	One time activity to be administered towards the end of the program.
<b>Evaluation questions addressed with assessment</b>	Does program participation improve the child's ability to make informed predictions or inferences of an animal's emotional state?
<b>Outcomes being measured</b>	<p>2. Child can take perspective of animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2A) Can predict or infer the state of an animal and identify what informed this prediction</li> <li>• 2B) Can predict or infer the state of an animal based on understanding of the animal's needs</li> </ul>
<b>Materials needed:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethogram worksheet</li> <li>• Pencil/crayon</li> <li>• Timer</li> <li>• Animal to observe</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 staff member required to distribute the worksheet and facilitate activity and discussion, and ideally, a second to note children's responses during the discussion.</li> </ul>

### Activity description

1. Go to a location where you can easily spend 10-20 minutes observing an animal. Exhibits with easy viewing and multiple, active animals work best (e.g. meerkats, otters, birds, aquariums, primates). Give the kids a minute or two to simply observe the animal and talk about what they see.
2. Briefly explain what an ethogram is; for example: *One way researchers and zoo keepers learn about animals is by observing their behavior. To record this information, researchers use an ethogram which lists the kinds of behaviors you might see an animal doing. They then observe the animal and mark off what they see the animal doing at specific intervals of time. When you make a lot of observations you can start to draw conclusions about the animal.*
3. Now have the students conduct their own observations of the animal's behavior. Distribute the worksheet and go over the six behaviors listed. Then have the kids choose one individual animal to watch. Start the timer and at 30 second intervals tell them to mark what behavior their animals is doing at that moment. (They can mark more than one box at one time).

4. After the first round of behavioral observations are recorded have a brief discussion of what the kids noticed.
  - a. Suggested probing questions: *What behavior did you see happening most often? Is this what you were expecting?*
5. Next, talk about how researchers also conduct observations of animal behavior to learn about what an animal is feeling. Ask the kids if they know when their pet dog or cat is happy. What things do they notice that lets them know the animal is happy. (Optional: show photo of “Happy Cat” and “Angry cat” and have the kids talk about what they notice that lets them know how the animal is feeling).
6. Now, look at the back side of the ethogram worksheet and go over the 6 emotions listed. Then have them conduct their ethogram activity again, but this time checking off the emotion they think the animal is feeling.
7. After this round of data collection conduct a discussion about what the kids noticed this time and record responses in data sheet. Suggested Questions:
  - a. How many of you think you could tell what the animal was feeling when you were doing your observations? (If Yes) What things did you notice about the animal that helped you predict their emotion? (If No) What was hard about identifying the animal’s emotion?
  - b. What emotion did you select most often?
  - c. Did you notice anything that you didn’t in the first round of observations?

#### **Recording responses when working with large groups**

If you’re working with a large group of kids, it may not be possible to indicate every child’s response. Here are a few guidelines







With **indicators that you can assess visually** (for instance, whether kids are demonstrating ‘embodied empathy’ by mimicking the behaviors of animals, or the extent to which kids are participating in the activity), try to get a rough estimate of the extent of engagement. For instance: *“Roughly 50% of kids are making animal sounds;” “Roughly three-quarters look like they’re paying attention.”* Estimates in quarters are fine. (E.g., one-quarter, one-half, three-quarters.)

With **indicators that involve verbal responses**, ask the questions as indicated on the instrument, and select a few kids at random to respond. It’s best not to call only on kids who have their hands up and are eager to talk, since they likely aren’t representative of the whole group. On the other hand, you don’t want to make kids uncomfortable by calling on them when they don’t have an answer. Just do your best to try & select a couple of different kids for each response. Put a check mark in the appropriate response box for each child that responds.

**Instructor's Instrument:**

**Q: When you observed the animal how many of you think you could tell what the animal was feeling?**

# Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ # No: \_\_\_\_\_ # Maybe: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes: Emotion	Record what behaviors they observed that informed their prediction.
 Happy	E.g. Otter was playing with a stick.
 Sad	
 Scared	
 Angry	
 Bored	
 Relaxed	
Other Behaviors	

No: Emotion	Record what they identify as challenges or reason they could not predict the animal's emotion.
No, can't identify emotion	

**Other notes:**