

Empathy Café

Empathy & Interpretive Planning | January 14, 2025



Hello! Welcome!



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Empathy & Interpretive Planning

AZA Interpretive Community Call + Empathy Café

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 | 12:30pm pacific/3:30pm eastern

**Welcome &
introductions**

Denver Zoo
**Interpretive
Plan
Overview**

Seattle Aquarium
**Empathy as a
Conservation
Tool**

Denver Zoo
**Interpretive
Plan
Examples**

**Questions &
Conversation**



Interpretive Vision

Incorporating Empathy Practices

January 2025



Who are we?

DZCA Guest Engagement Team:

Tess Busch

Interpretive Signage and Exhibits Coordinator

Matt Hill

Guest Engagement Program Coordinator

Brittany Frederick

Director of Guest Engagement



Interpretive Plan Process

Where are we at?

- Working document with purpose/goals, site map, outcomes, themes/messaging, etc.
- Simplified tools
- Implementation of the plan in new exhibit design and programming

What's next?

- Further evaluation at new exhibits
- Co-vision and strengthen buy-in and understanding across organization



Interpretive Plan Goals



Inclusive, united



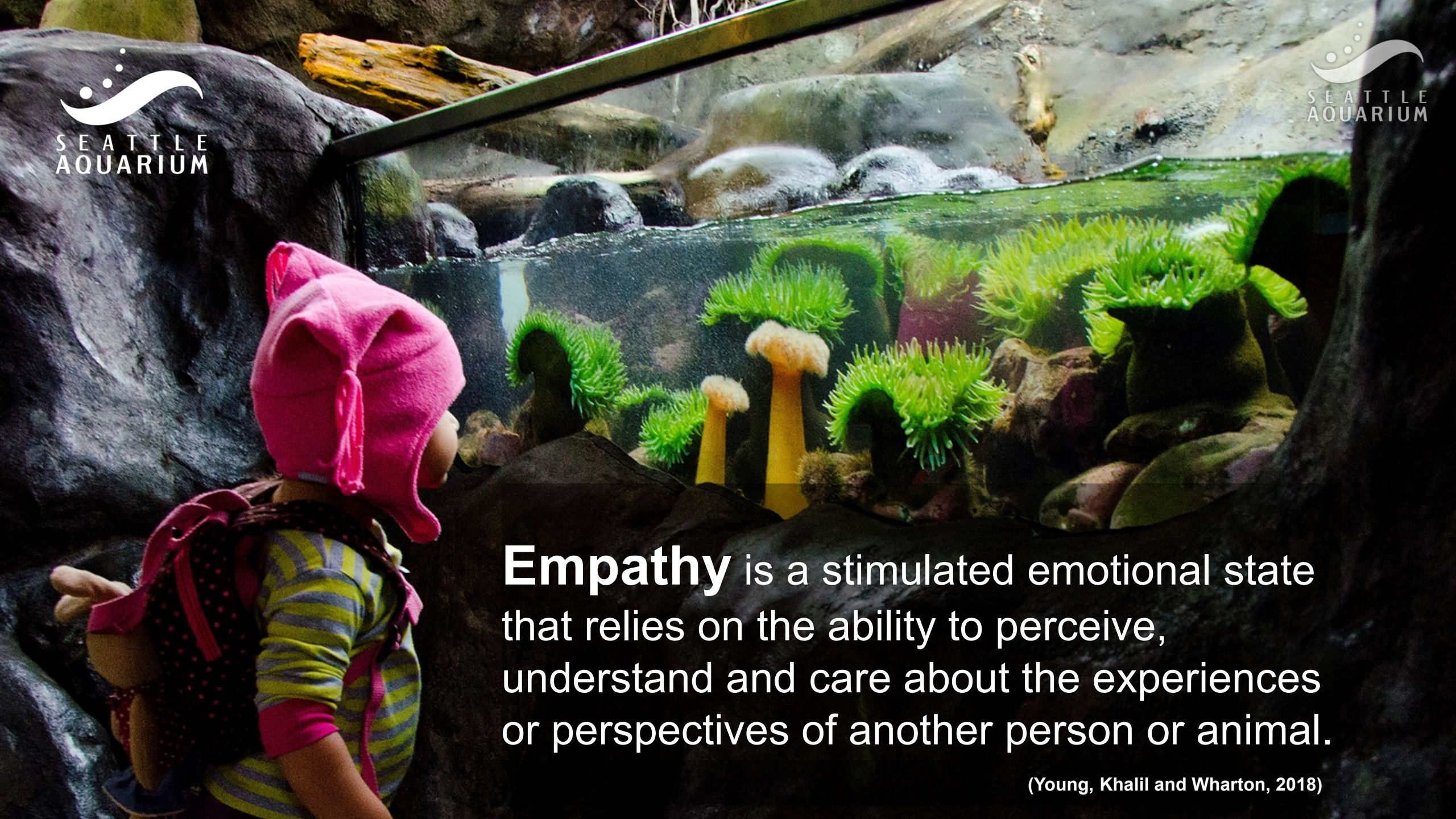
Consistency, repetition



Focus core messages

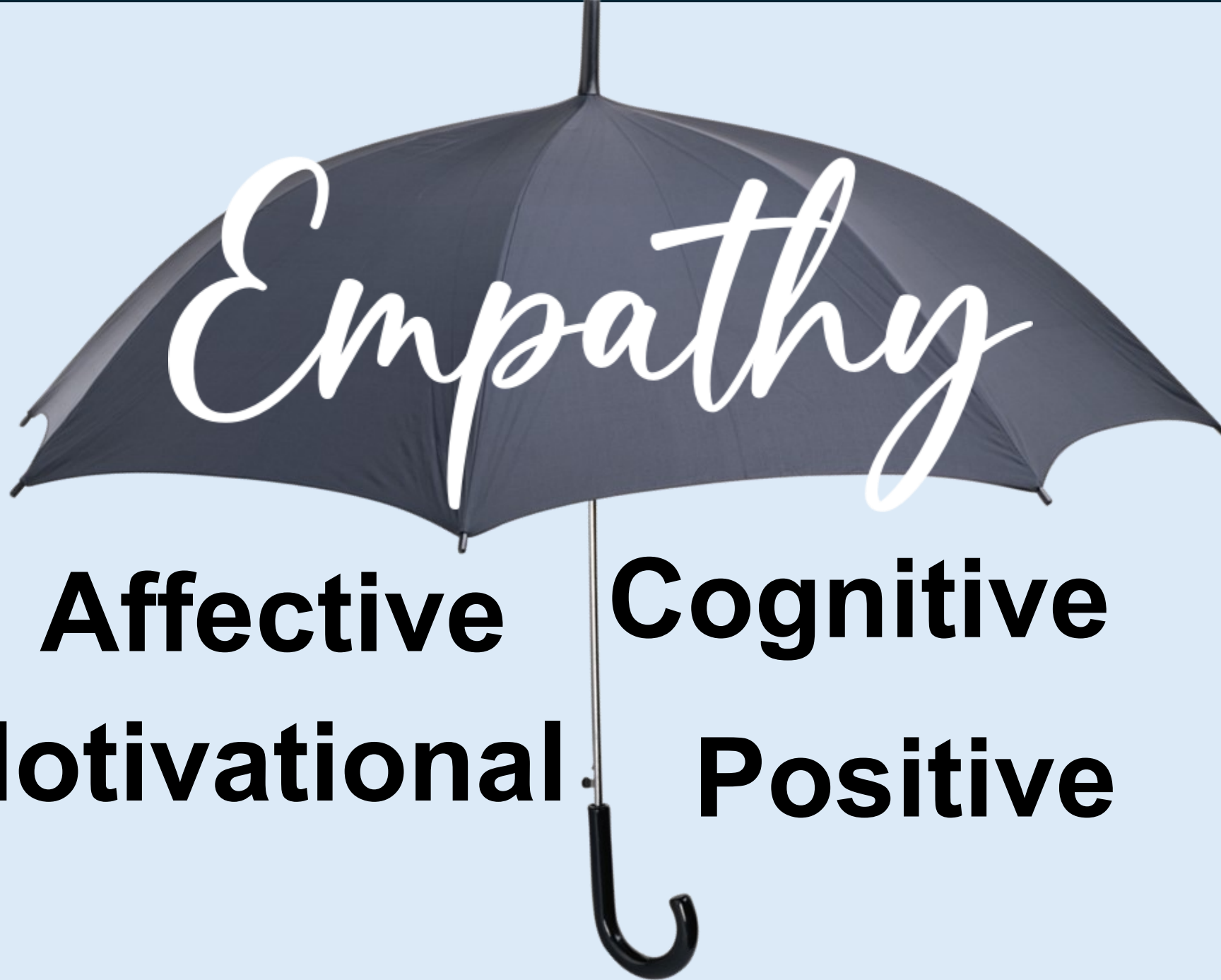


Inspire behavior change



Empathy is a stimulated emotional state that relies on the ability to perceive, understand and care about the experiences or perspectives of another person or animal.

(Young, Khalil and Wharton, 2018)



Research foundations



Saving Mr. Nature: Anthropomorphism enhances connectedness to and protectiveness toward nature by Tam, Lee and Chao (2013)



The role of empathy in choosing welfare-friendly consumption options by Phillips and McCulloch (2005)



Perspective Taking, Environmental Concern and the Moderating Role of Empathy by Sevillano et al. (2007)



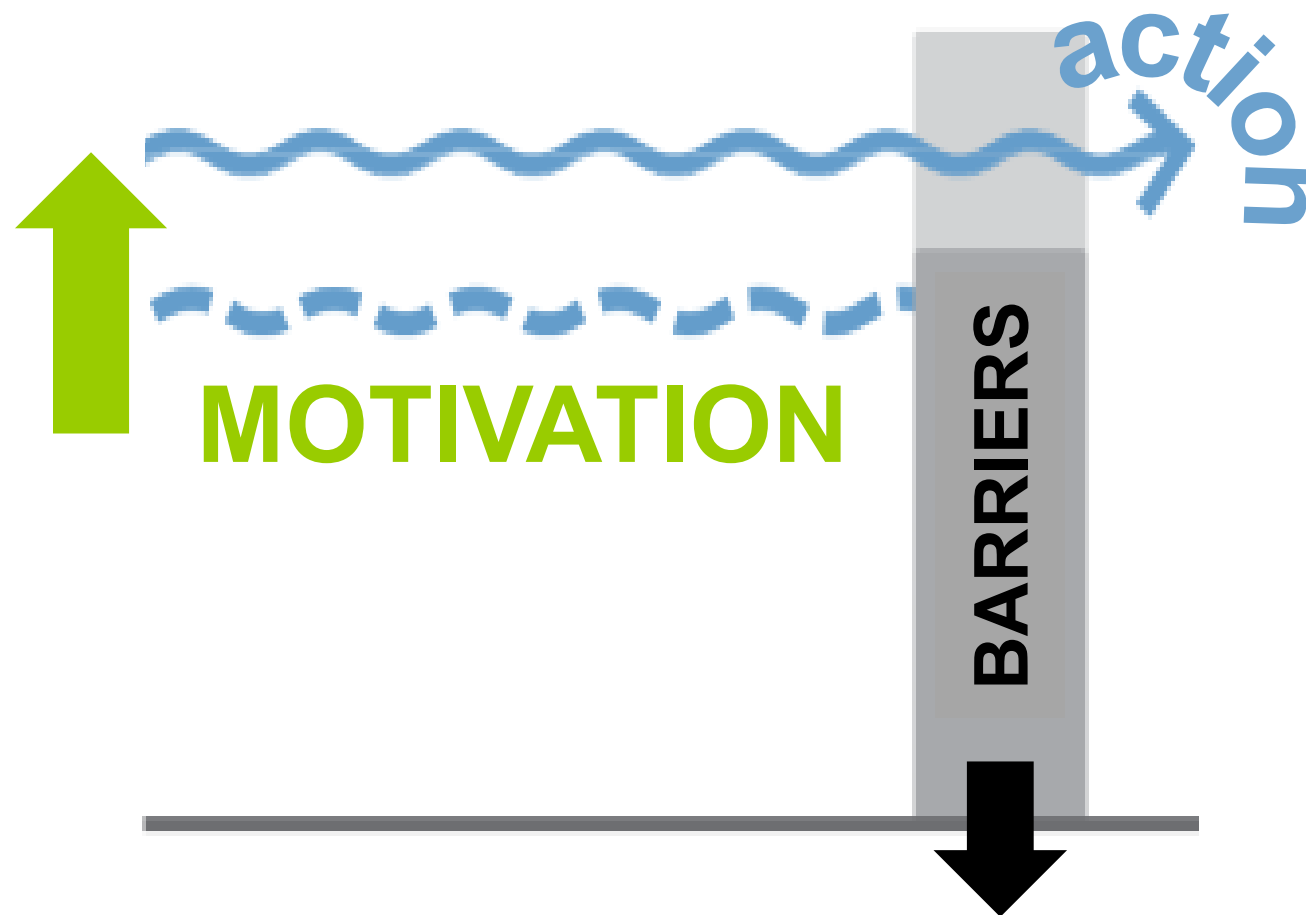
The Effect of Empathy in Pro-environmental Attitudes and Behaviors by Berenguer (2007)

Research foundations



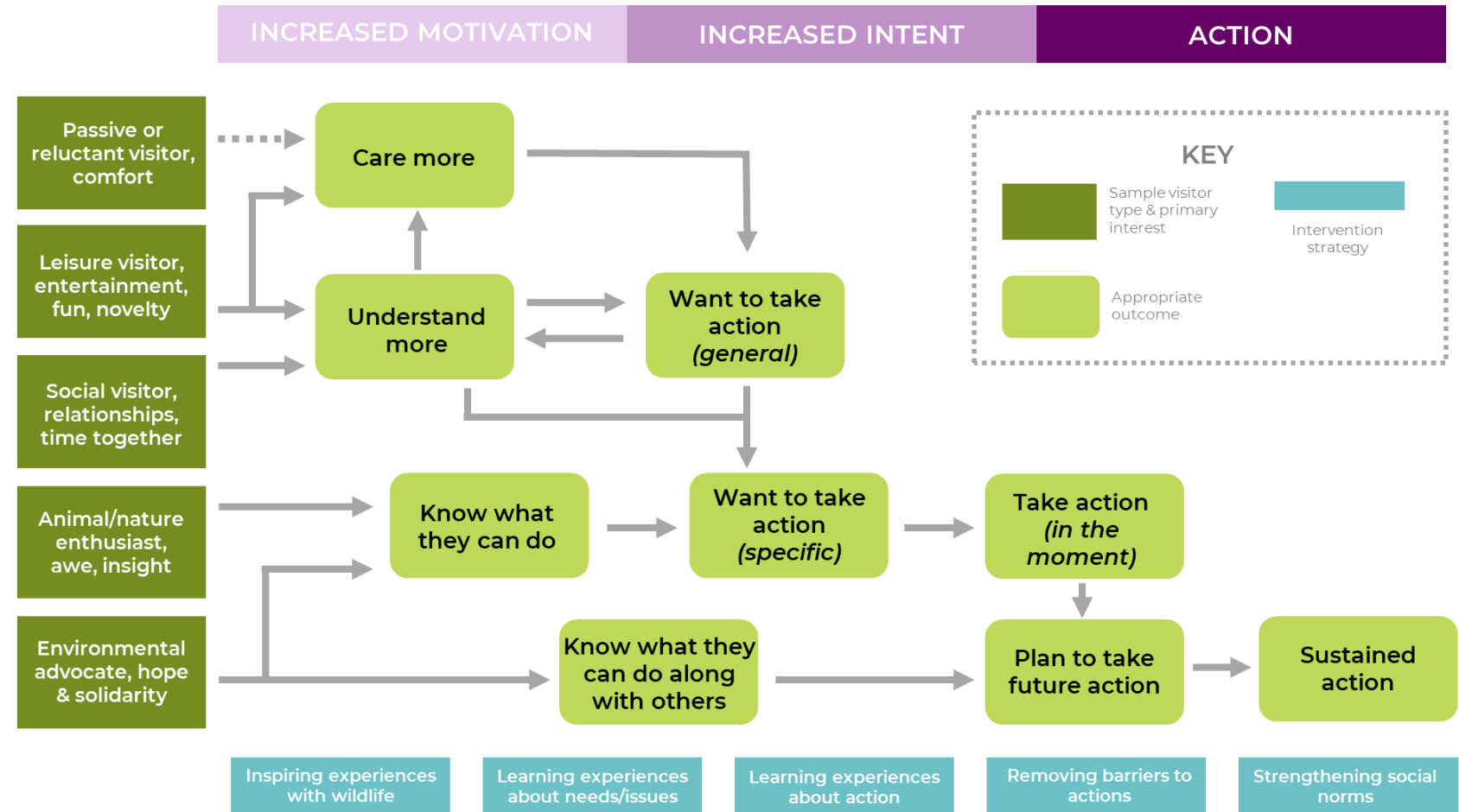
What we know about empathy and conservation:

- Research across more than 30 studies shows a link between empathy and conservation behavior.
- People with higher empathy for wildlife may be more likely to donate to conservation efforts, make wildlife-friendly consumer choices, and support conservation policies.
- Both emotional connection (feeling) and understanding (thinking) components of empathy contribute to conservation action.
- The empathy-action connection holds true across different cultures and contexts.





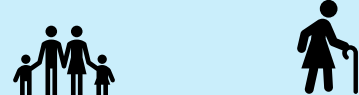




Adapted from Schultz, P.W. 2013 *European Psychologist*

One size *definitely* does not fit all!



Intended Program Outcomes

	Type of Empathy Built	CONNECT	CARE	CONSERVE
FEEL	Affective Empathy (emotional connection)	Feel connected to wildlife/habitats, people/communities, and DZCA 	Feel a desire to care for wildlife, habitats and communities at the zoo and around the world. 	Feel the desire to save animals and habitats
LEARN	Cognitive Empathy (understand the perspectives of others)	Learn perspectives of wildlife, people/communities and DZCA, and how people are connected to wildlife/habitats in a larger ecosystem 	Learn how people and DZCA care for wildlife/habitats and communities/people to help them thrive at the zoo and around the world. 	Learn that people and DZCA can positively impact and conserve wildlife and habitats. 
ACT	Compassionate Empathy (behavior change)	Take caring actions which build to conservation actions for individuals 	Take caring actions by demonstrating beneficial actions towards animals 	Take conservation actions 



CONSERVATION ENGAGEMENT INTERPRETIVE MASTER PLAN

CONNECT CARE CONSERVE



Down Under



DENVER ZOO
CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Intended Outcomes: Down Under

Connect

- **Feel** appreciation of and connection to wildlife/habitats
- **Learn** perspectives of wildlife and people/communities and how people are connected to wildlife in a larger ecosystem



CONNECT CARE CONSERVE

Care

- **Learn** how people and DZCA care for wildlife/habitats
- **Act** by demonstrating caring actions towards wallabies



ROADMAP Program Design Template

Backwards Design Program Tools

LEARN			
<i>Changes in knowledge, comprehension, skills, application</i>			
STEP 1 ↓	STEP 2 ↓	STEP 2 ↓	STEP 3 ↓
Intended Outcomes - Knows <i>As a result of the program our audience will know/comprehend...</i>	What This Looks Like <i>We intentionally develop and utilize this content/theme to achieve the intended outcomes -</i>	Experiences & Activities <i>We intentionally develop and utilize these experiences and activities to achieve the intended outcomes -</i>	Facilitation Techniques <i>We will intentionally use these facilitation techniques in our experiences and activities that we believe will achieve our intended outcomes -</i>
1. People (communities), wildlife, and habitats rely on each other (One Health model). a. People, wildlife, and habitats are interconnected i. People are part of a larger ecosystem. CONNECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australian wildlife is unique (specific to DZ species) - Connection between people, wildlife and landscapes - Indigenous management/land practices/being stewards - Connection between Australia & CO (especially indigenous practices) - Water/climate issues and fire (via First Nations' fire management/caring for Country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text - Text

Wallaby Walk Through – Facilitated Experience

Empathy Practices

- Facilitators share individual animal names, personalities, stories
- Encourage and demonstrate caring actions, giving wallabies space and respect



Wallaby Walk Through – Unfacilitated

Empathy Practices

- Wallaby perspective taking
- Learning basic needs
- Interact with environment
- Make comparisons



Empathy on Signage

- Individual names
- Personalities
- Caring for cassowary



Empathy on Signage

- Understanding Indigenous perspectives
- Interconnectedness
- Parallels personal programming





Tropical Discovery



DENVER ZOO
CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Intended Outcomes: Tropical Discovery

Connect

- **Feel** appreciation of and connection to wildlife/**habitats**
- **Learn** perspectives of wildlife and people/communities and how people are connected to wildlife in a larger ecosystem



CONNECT CARE CONSERVE

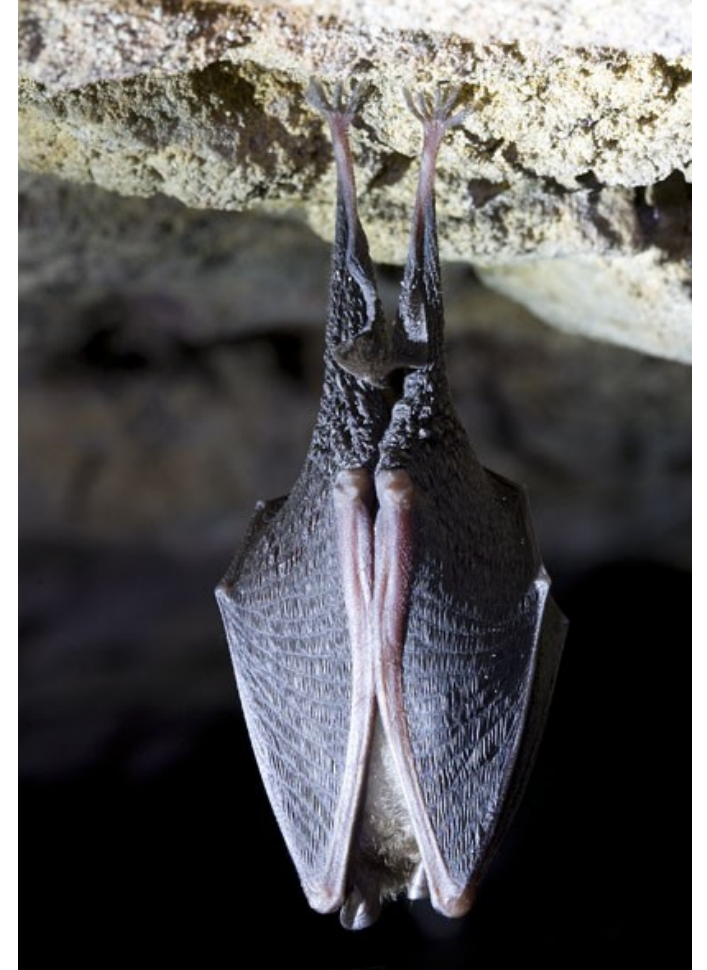
Conserve

- **Learn** that people and DZCA can positively impact and conserve wildlife and habitats
- **Act** by demonstrating conservation actions – keeping habitats clean and healthy



Caves

- Exploration with empathy in caves
- Building a connection through interconnectedness in personal and non-personal programming



Conservation Spotlight: TWF

- Highlight DZCA's conservation efforts around the world
- Activities to connect the public to conservation



Conservation Spotlight: Action

- Plan to incorporate action stations
- Keeping habitats clean
- Oceans interactive: focus on keeping plastics/pollution out of waterways



A close-up photograph of a bat-eared fox (Otocyonotis) looking slightly to the right. The fox has large, upright ears and a coat of brown, tan, and black fur. The background is a soft-focus green and brown.

Thank You! Questions?



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Email us:

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save
THE DATE



**AZA Interpretive
Community Call +
Empathy Café**

Part 2

Tuesday, April 8, 2025