

**Activity Title:** Charades

**Participant Characteristics:**

- a) Grades K-10
- b) Mixed group of gender & academic abilities.

**Potential Stage/Sessions:** School classroom or large impact counseling group. This activity can accommodate from 10 to 30 participants and can be completed in one session.

**Estimated Duration:** 15-30 minutes.

**Materials:** Group Facilitator: Container/Stack of Picture Charade Critter Cards, Word Action Cards and Facial Emotion Cards (see attached.)

Group Participants: Willingness to participate

**Goals:** 1. To increase the student's ability to correctly identify and appropriately express challenging emotions with words rather than actions.

**Diversity Relatedness:** Intercultural and educationally diversified learning group. & have fun!

**General Directions:** Group facilitator (GF) announces that today's activity will better help them understand what goes on in counseling when boys and girls go to see a counselor. Ask, "Raise your hand if you've ever been nervous about going to see a dentist, a doctor, or coming to school." State that today's classroom activity is intended to help you not be so nervous about ever going to see a counselor. State, "Today you get to see what happens in counseling so if one day when you want to see a counselor your fear or nervousness won't prevent you from doing so." Be sure to let the kids know that you know plenty of grown ups that really need to or should go see a dentist, doctor, or counselor but who are still too afraid/nervous and now too embarrassed to go. This activity will make people less afraid to see a counselor when needed!

**Introduction to Activity:** Inform students that today's activity requires some "acting out" skills. That is, the activity requires boys and girls who can really express critters, actions and feelings. Ask, "Who wants to help out?"

**Specific Directions for Activity:**

~ Often this activity involves many volunteers. It might be best to simply start on one side of the classroom and recruit kids to come up one at a time to demonstrate their Charade card. Remind volunteers they do not get to make noises or use props as they "act out" their card. If time starts to become an issue, it's alright to have several kids come up at the same time and act out the Emotional Charade card. It's often helpful for boys and girls to witness different aspects or looks of the same emotion.

~Using the attached animal cards (laminated cards if possible with clear tape or lamination material,) begin having kids come up one at a time. Show one of the animal cards to your first volunteer. The picture cards are really invaluable especially for younger kids who struggle with reading. If the student is still in doubt, ask if it's ok to whisper the name of the critter in his or her ear. You may have to really encourage kids to "act out" their critter. Some students may need additional support in terms of receiving whispered clues on how their critters act, sounds made, etc. Take guesses from several students even if the card is named correctly with the first guess. Use several cards and volunteers to get the activity started.

~ Move to the Action Charade Cards (see attached & laminate as needed.) Continue recruiting volunteers one at a time moving up and down the rows picking up from where you left off with the critter cards. Instead of the animal picture cards, inform kids that they will be given verb or action cards to "act out" and or guess at. As with the Critter cards, once a viewing student believes he or she can correctly identify the action being acted out, he or she should raise his or her hand. Move through all the Action cards emphasizing the correct responses between cards. That is, between volunteers, say for example while pointing at various students, "Ok, so you were the Hitting action, you were the Kicking action, you were the Slamming action, you were the Stomping action, and so on. This helps identify the behaviors that will be in question later.

~Lastly, move onto the Emotion Charade Cards (see attached and laminate as needed.) Inform the class that now volunteers will be given emotion cards to guess at (pick up from where Action Charade cards ended.) Just like for the other two sets of cards, once a viewing student thinks he or she has an answer for the emotion clues given, the student should raise his or her hand. Between cards, point to various students and reiterate who had the Mad, Sad, Scared, Frustrated, Worried, Frightened, etc. cards. If willing, get the classroom teacher to participate by demonstrating one of the emotion cards. Suggest the universal teacher card... "Frustrated." Most boys and girls will recognize their teachers look! If you are running out of cards and still have more students, try having several students come up at once to demonstrate/act out a single emotion card. It's a worthwhile lesson in and of itself for kids to see how the face of certain emotions, such as "disappointment" looks on different people.

### **Processing Section:**

Once everyone has had the opportunity to participate in the activity, begin to explain why this was a counseling activity. Initiate and encourage a discussion for any of the following:

\*This activity had a lot to do with behavior.

\*How many of you could guess the critter cards based on a person's acting out behavior?

\*Actions are often considered to be behaviors.

\*How many of you could guess what action a person was doing based on their behavior?

\*Emotions are often turned into behaviors.

\*Have you ever seen a parent, neighbor, friend, brother or sister hit something, throw something, slam a door, break a dish, kick the wall, punch a door, push someone, or shove somebody because of a feeling he or she was having?

\*Did their acting out behaviors ever get them in trouble or cause them to lose friendships, privileges, jobs, trust, or respect from self or others?

\*Name some ways people can express their feelings that won't get them in trouble, won't cause them to get sent to the principal's office, won't get them fired, or lose trust and respect.

\*Do you "handle" your emotions or do you act them out?

\*Sometimes, counseling is about learning how to handle our emotions instead of reacting to them by acting out.

\*Lots of times handling feelings means talking about them using appropriate words that describe how we're feeling.

\*Without words, it's hard to really tell how someone is feeling. Sometimes, mad and angry acting out behaviors are done by people who are really feeling sad and lonely!

\*If you're at home and any of the grown-ups are acting out their feelings in scary or dangerous ways, do you have a safe place you can get to quickly and quietly? Remember its ok to call for help (911) when grown-ups are acting out of control!

\*This week, figure out ways you can handle your emotions, instead of reacting to them. That is, try to practice how you'll handle for example, being frustrated when your brother or sister has the remote control and won't let you watch your favorite show. How do you plan on handling that? Who could you talk to about your feelings? What words would you use instead of acting out?

**Cautions:**

GF should be mindful that some students will already be identified as having "acting out" issues both in and out of the classroom. Be cautious in assigning behaviorally challenged students certain types of cards that may bring unnecessary ridicule or negative attention. Instead, call on those kids to demonstrate more appropriate behaviors when it comes to acting out sometimes unfavorable emotions such as anger, guilt, shame, embarrassment, etc.

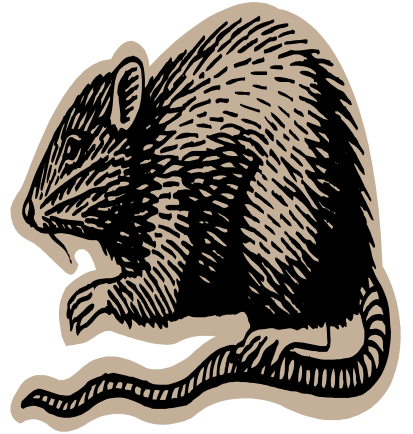
**References:**

The original idea for this activity grew out of a student reflection in a counseling activity book called: Fifty Steps Closer; Group Counseling Guide in Reflections of School-Aged Boys & Girls written by Nicholas G. Minardi, Ph.D.

**About the Author:**

Dr. Nicholas G. Minardi is a licensed clinical psychologist and credentialed school counselor of twenty years. The bulk of his experience involves group work with school-aged children. He has recently written a book called: Fifty Steps Closer; Group Counseling Guide in Reflections of School-Aged Boys & Girls. For more information go to [www.fiftystepscloser.com](http://www.fiftystepscloser.com)

(See below for Critter, Action, and Emotion Cards)



**Kicking**

**Punching**

**Pushing**

**Hitting**

**Slamming**

**Spitting**

**Stomping**

**Throwing**

**Yelling**

**Breaking**

**Swearing**

**Tearing**



SAD



EMBARRASSED



FRIGHTENED



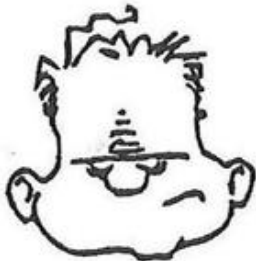
ANGRY



SHY



LONELY



FRUSTRATED



STRESSED



ASHAMED



GUILTY



DEPRESSED



ANXIOUS