Session Three - Understanding and Communicating Feelings

Cowboy Circle:

- Theme for the day – ***Understanding and Communicating Feelings***
- Introduce the "How Are You Feeling Today?" visual – see Appendix. Ask students to name the feelings according to the pictures.
    - Discuss the role of body language in determining how humans or animals feel. If you think you understand how someone is feeling, how important is it to respond? For example, if you see someone crying, what would you do?

Arena:

Give a brief explanation of the word "empathy." Empathy is the ability to see something from another person's point of view. It is usually expressed in terms of feelings (Magnelli & Magnelli, 2011).

Have the group observe the horses in the arena. Discuss the following questions:

a. How are the horses feeling?
b. How do you know?
c. How do you know what people are feeling?
d. How can you tell by their actions?

Ask the group to lead a horse to different spots in the arena while practicing respect, boundaries, and relationship skills with each other and the horse. Have the students "read" the horse's feelings at each spot by paying attention to the horse's actions (body language). Ask them to determine what the feeling is and what the action was that helped them come to this conclusion. Write their responses on separate index cards and place in buckets labeled "feelings" and "actions." Remind students that, to take a careful reading, they should look at the horse's whole body, including his ears, eyes, head, and tail.

After all the stations have been completed, review the cards in the buckets to reinforce the relationship between feelings and actions.

Cowboy Circle:

Debriefing:

1. Were the horse's feelings different at each spot?
2. How did **you** feel when the horse was feeling that feeling?