

EMOTION UNDERSTANDING

Reference

Hembree, S. E. (1998). *Emotion understanding task*. Unpublished measure, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Secondary References

Gnepp, J. (1983). Children's social sensitivity: Inferring emotions from conflicting cues. *Developmental Psychology, 19*(6), 805-814.

Russell, J. A. (1990). The preschooler's understanding of the causes and consequences of emotion. *Child Development, 61*, 1872-1881.

Terwogt, M. M., & Harris, P. L. (1993). Understanding of emotion. In M. Bennett (Ed.), *The development of social cognition: The child as psychologist* (pp. 62-86). New York: Guilford.

Companion Document

Emotion Understanding Manual

Description

The Emotion Understanding task was developed by Sheri Hembree to measure young children's understanding of basic (happy, sad, angry, afraid) and more complex social (jealous, guilty, embarrassed, proud) emotions. The measure focuses on children's understanding of the kinds of situations that elicit or cause these emotions as well as their interpretation of situational cues for the emotions.

The measure is divided into two sections, one for basic emotions and one for social emotions (emotions that require an understanding of social standards or rules, an ability to recognize violations of those standards, and an ability to anticipate other people's reactions to such violations; Terwogt & Harris, 1993). At the start of each section, the child is asked about the causes of emotions: *Pretend that you are feeling X. What might make you feel X?* This question is asked about each of the eight emotions assessed by the measure and the child's response is recorded verbatim on the score sheet.

In the second part of each section, the child is presented with eight vignettes and companion line drawings that contain situational cues (but not facial expressions) to the emotions that an androgynous protagonist may be feeling in response to emotion-provoking situations. Each assessed emotion is represented by two line drawings. The child's responses are scored on a 4-point scale (3 = correct without prompt; 2 = correct with one prompt; 1 = correct with two prompts; 0 = no response or incorrect after two prompts).

The file *Emotion Understanding Manual* contains the administration and scoring manual, score sheet, and line drawings and vignettes. The situational cues line drawings and the general procedure were adapted from Gnepp's (1983) work on children's understanding of basic emotions. Social emotions are included because work by Terwogt & Harris (1993) suggests that at around age 7, children begin to understand the concept of personal responsibility and the role of social standards, and therefore they become able to understand more complex emotions such

as jealousy and guilt. The items that ask about the causes of emotions, or what situations would elicit each of the measured emotions, are adapted from Russell (1990).

Administration: Grade 1

The Emotion Understanding task was administered to children ($n = 101$) during a site-specific home visit at the end of Grade 1.

Scoring

Children’s responses to the items about the causes of or situations that would elicit emotions have not been scored because we do not have instructions about how to code the responses.

Children’s responses to the situational cues line drawings were scored during administration of the procedure. Each emotion is represented by two drawings and vignettes. Scores for the individual emotions are means of the responses to the two items for each. Higher scores indicate greater emotion understanding.

Following from Gnepp (1983), we also computed a single basic emotions score as the mean of the eight items measuring happy, sad, angry, and afraid, and a single social emotions score as the mean of the eight items measuring jealous, guilty, embarrassed, and proud. Additionally, an overall emotion understanding score was computed as the mean of all 16 items. Higher scores indicate greater emotion understanding.

Happy = **EUHAPPY**

$N = 101, M = 2.90, SD = 0.30, \text{range} = 1.50\text{-}3$

Sad = **EUSAD**

$N = 101, M = 2.64, SD = 0.48, \text{range} = 1\text{-}3$

Angry = **EUANGRY**

$N = 101, M = 2.50, SD = 0.58, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Afraid = **EUAFRAID**

$N = 100, M = 2.47, SD = 0.74, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Jealous = **EUJEAL**

$N = 101, M = 0.78, SD = 0.78, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Guilty = **EUGUILTY**

$N = 101, M = 1.37, SD = 1.05, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Embarrassed = **EUEMB**

$N = 101, M = 1.41, SD = 0.99, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Proud = **EUPROUD**

$N = 101, M = 2.27, SD = 0.80, \text{range} = 0\text{-}3$

Basic emotions composite score = **EUBASIC**

$N = 101, M = 2.63, SD = 0.28, \text{range} = 1.88\text{-}3, \alpha = .29$

NOTE: Items B5 and B6 are negatively correlated with the total in alpha computations.

Social emotions composite score = **EUSOCIAL**

$N = 101, M = 1.46, SD = 0.58, \text{range} = 0\text{-}2.50, \alpha = .65$

Overall emotions composite score = **EUOEMOT**

$N = 101$, $M = 2.04$, $SD = 0.37$, range = 1.19-2.63, $\alpha = .67$

NOTE: Items B5 and B6 are negatively correlated with the total in alpha computations.

Analysis Data Set

SSG1

Raw Data Set

C1GEU

In the raw data set, the variable names that start with B are the basic emotions items; those that start with S are the social emotions items. Each variable is labeled with the assessed emotion.