

## Wellness Tip Sheet

# Improving emotional intelligence

How do you currently manage your emotions when the pressures of work start to mount? When we're experiencing stress it is easy for us to let our rational thinking and decision making slip.



Personal  
resilience

"All learning has an emotional base."

– Plato

People with strong emotional intelligence display more resilience to stress, make better quality decisions and achieve higher productivity.

If you're a people manager, it's particularly important to work on emotional intelligence because this will help you to perceive and influence the flow of emotions between yourself and the people you work with. The ability to evoke and inspire positive emotions in others is equally important.

## What is emotional intelligence?

EI refers to our ability or capacity to perceive, assess and manage our emotions and the emotions of others.

Positive emotions give us high energy levels and enable us to contribute to the working day in a positive way. Negative emotions create negative energy and can cause low morale, raise stress and evoke conflict. The first key skill of being emotionally intelligent is being aware of our emotions and being aware of what it is we are feeling.

Our emotions play a vital part in building and maintaining relationships at work and keeping them in check at times can be very challenging.

## How emotionally intelligent are you?

- Are you aware of the subtleties of your own feelings?
- Do you usually know what other people are feeling, even if they do not say so?
- Are you able to establish and maintain good relationships?
- Can you cope under stressful circumstances, without it affecting your working day?
- When you're angry, can you express this without exacerbating the situation?
- Do you keep trying to achieve what you want, even when it seems impossible and it is tempting to give up?
- Are you trusted by others?

## Components of EI

Psychologists have identified five components of emotional intelligence:

### 1. Self Awareness

Being aware of and understanding your emotions and feelings. Awareness of your feelings increases self knowledge which helps with self-improvement.

### 2. Self Regulation

The ability to control your emotions and impulses. If you self-regulate your emotions, you will be less likely to become angry and make impulsive and careless decisions.

### 3. Motivation

People with high emotional intelligence are motivated. They're highly productive, strive to improve or meet the

organisation's goals and objectives and embrace a challenge. They will persist in their efforts despite any setbacks.

#### 4. Empathy

The ability to understand the wants, needs and viewpoints of other people. Empathetic people are excellent at managing relationships, listening and relating to others and will give praise and encouragement for other people's achievements.

#### 5. Social Skills

People with high emotional intelligence skills are excellent at interacting with others. They have strong interpersonal skills, are good team players, skilled at handling conflict and excellent in building positive relationships.<sup>1</sup>

### 10 tips for building EI

1. Take responsibility for your own emotions
2. Be aware of how you react to other people, especially in stressful situations
3. Work on your negative feelings
4. Think first, about how your actions might affect others
5. Examine your own feelings, rather than the actions of others
6. Rise above uncomfortable emotions by developing coping strategies
7. Respect other people's feelings
8. Listen twice as much as you speak
9. Work at resolving conflict quickly, apologise directly if you are at fault
10. Maintain rapport and others will respond positively.


Once you become aware of your emotions, you can then begin to control your behaviour.

**Reference** 1. Goleman, Daniel. Emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam Books, 1995

**Last updated:** December 2018

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