

Working with Emotional Intelligence

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Forms of Human Intelligence



When we refer to “intelligence,” most of us immediately define it as our cognitive ability to think, plan, and reason about the various forms of stimuli we receive.

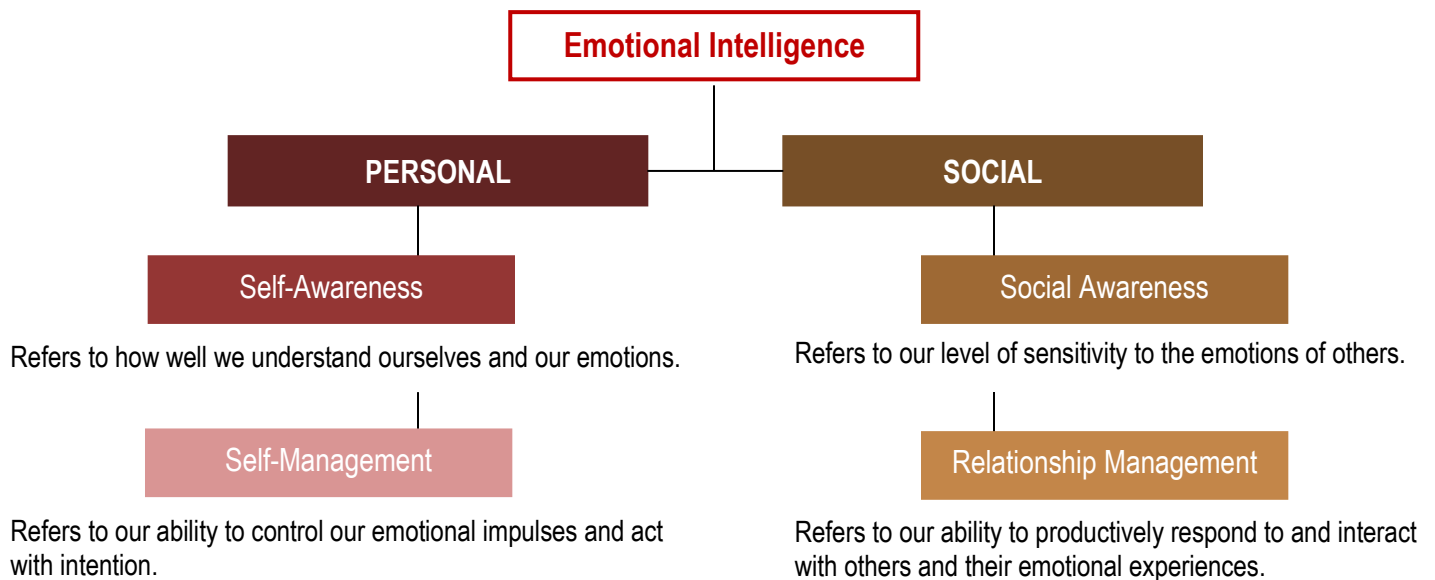
Many people consider intelligence only as our ability to process stimuli in specific ways such as analytically, verbally/linguistically, mathematically, visually/spatially, logically, judgmentally, artistically/ musically, etc. When measured, these cognitive abilities are collectively referred to as our “IQ.”

However, human intelligence also includes the ability to process the feelings and emotions that we experience when encountering stimuli. **Emotional intelligence** (or “EQ”) is our **ability to recognize and understand emotional information and use that information to enhance our thinking and reasoning skills, and to improve our interpersonal behaviors.**

Humans are both thinking and feeling beings and, as such, can use both of those experiences to enhance their effectiveness in just about any situation.

The concept of emotional intelligence is not new. It has, however, gained attention in recent years with advanced study, published research, and more widespread and deliberate application. Increasingly, emotional intelligence is believed to be a better predictor of success than IQ, is being considered a key competency in leadership potential, and is cited among the most desired job skills.

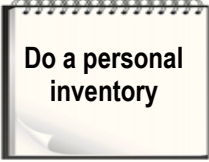
Components of Emotional Intelligence



Increasing EQ and Building Emotional Competencies


Self-Awareness

Individuals with high levels of self-awareness are in touch with their feelings and their impact. They are able to identify what they feel, and how those feelings influence their actions. To develop competency in this area, we must be willing to look honestly at ourselves. Ideas include:



Do a personal inventory

- What do I value most about my professional experience?**
- What are my strengths? And what are my weaknesses?**
- What is my work orientation?** (idea-oriented / action-oriented / people-oriented)
- What excites or motivates me? What causes me stress?**
- How do I typically manifest my stress?** (physically / emotionally / mentally / behaviorally)
- What are key conflicts that arise for me at work?** (personality / workload / process / perceptions / communication issues)
- How do I typically respond to conflict?** (avoid / compete / accommodate / compromise / collaborate)
- What do I believe to be key traits of my personality?**
- What biases do I hold towards others?**



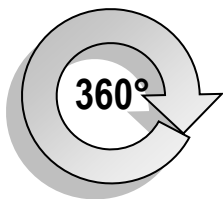
Track your emotions

For a week, make note of any strong emotions you feel. **Identify the emotion** (e.g., happy, sad, angry, worrisome, anxious, frustrated, ashamed, fearful, proud, excited, motivated, encouraged, valued, etc.) **and its specific origin. Also note what language or actions followed that emotion in response.**

At the end of the week, review your notes and reflect on the following...

- Do I frequently feel strong emotions? If so, in what situations or with what people?*
- Do I feel a variety of emotions or am I repeatedly feeling the same one or two?*
- Do I tend to carry strong emotions over from day to day, or do I quickly return to an emotional equilibrium?*
- Do I tend to express the emotions that I feel in my reactions? Is that generally productive?*

Self-assess



- Do I value feedback (compliments & corrections) from others?**
- Do I seek to learn something from my mistakes and disappointments?**
- Am I curious about how my manner, positions and interactions may be perceived by others?**
- Do I use trusted resources (leaders, mentors, therapists, coaches, spiritual directors) to help me build self-awareness?**



Do a personal audit

Personal audits assess whether your language and actions reflect who you believe yourself to be and the values you hold. That is, it is a check of whether your actions are aligned with your intentions.

e.g., If you believe you are a respectful colleague, is that reflected in the language you use and the actions you take when working with others? Do you act respectfully in most situations and with most people – or just some? Do you demonstrate respect in conflict situations?

Behaviors that indicate a productive level of self-awareness include: **introspection; reflection; ability to self-question.**

Self-Management

There's a difference between stifling emotions and managing them. We should allow ourselves the freedom to experience the emotions we have, but also the power to prevent emotions from contributing to outcomes that may not be productive or satisfying. Tips for developing competency in this area include:

- **Be mindful** and without judgment, identify the emotion you are feeling and its origin to acknowledge it. Scan your body for signs of stress.
- **Practice stress management techniques** in the moment (e.g., deep breathing, count to 10, an affirmation) to handle emotions that may prompt unproductive responses.
- Momentarily pause to **connect with your values and principles and use them as a guide** for what you will say and do.
- **Be mentally deliberate** by setting an intention before reacting (e.g., *I will handle this with professionalism...*) and by using consequential thinking to explore the potential outcomes of a particular response (e.g., *If I respond like this... then...*)

The past is often a good teacher, so reflect on past situations and consider how it made you feel about yourself and what you learned from it. For example, reflect on a time when...

- ...you lost your composure or your self-control.
- ...you sacrificed something important to you because you felt intimidated or lacked confidence.
- ...an emotion consumed you, distracted your focus, or stole your attention from something else.

Behaviors that indicate that you are able to productively self-manage include: **adaptability; attention; initiative; objectivity; optimism; persistence; resilience; restraint.**

Social Awareness

Emotionally intelligent individuals are skilled at seeing things from perspectives beyond their own because they pay attention and seek to understand the feelings, experiences and positions of others. This requires the ability to read others' **non-verbal cues** and the practice of good **listening skills**.

Reading non-verbal cues provides insight into potential barriers that may threaten a positive experience. The act of fully listening to others conveys respect for them and builds rapport that will help with the interaction.

When observing a strong emotional expression from someone else, especially when the expression is perceived to be a negative one, many people have a tendency to match it with their own strong emotional expression. Doing so often causes the situation to escalate into an unproductive interaction.

A better strategy is to use **curiosity** and explore what might be behind the emotion. This often keeps us from immediately (and often prematurely and incorrectly) judging other person. So, when we see others who are expressing strong emotions, we might consider...

- What just happened?
- What feelings are being suggested by the person's expressions, words, or actions?
- What belief, expectation or need might the person have?
- What might the person be concerned about?
- What choices or level of control does the person have?



From there, we can **respond with empathy** to the other person. Empathy is the ability to recognize the feelings and perspectives of others and to convey that recognition with an appropriate response. **“That was frustrating for you...” “Clearly, it wasn’t what you expected...” “You believed that to be inappropriate...”**

Another strategy in building social awareness is to **study interpersonal dynamics** to better understand things like power gradients and communication styles between different groups. One way to do that is to **expand our social experiences**. Doing so creates opportunities to increase our understanding of different people and circumstances, challenge pre-conceived notions and assumptions we may hold, and identify areas of productive connection. Networking, cross-enterprise work groups, and volunteerism are all good opportunities to consider.

Behaviors that indicate that you possess higher levels of social awareness include: **compassion; open-mindedness; organizational awareness.**

Relationship Management

Emotionally intelligent individuals are skilled managers of relationships, with highly developed interpersonal skills. People competent in this area recognize interdependencies and appreciate the impact of positive connections with others. They do not seek to emotionally manipulate others, but rather they seek to positively engage the emotions of others to get the best out of them and/or to create the best shared outcome for the situation.

Tips for developing competency in this area include:

- **Be fully present** when interacting with others – it is both respectful and efficient.
- **Seek to serve**, by valuing the person with whom you are interacting and taking the opportunity to support her/his needs and/or success.
- **Do the “little things”** that can make a big impact on others.
- **Shadow someone who you perceive to have a high level of EQ.** Specifically observe how he/she engages others, behaves in stressful situations, deals with uncertainty, handles criticism, builds consensus, conveys respect for others, asserts him/herself, etc. Observe how others respond to him/her.

Behaviors that indicate that you possess higher competency with relationship management include: **coaching; collaborative conflict management style; inclusiveness; influence; respect; validation.**

Additional Resources

The following web-based modules are available on-demand from www.OptimaEAP.com.

Web-based trainings:
Applying Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace
Emotional Intelligence

Webinar recording:
Developing Exemplary Emotional Intelligence