

Intelligently Manage Your Emotions

The daily stress of being a manager can easily make us vulnerable when it comes to controlling emotions. The best way to regulate your feelings and reactions is to hone your ability to understand and label your emotions, as well as those of others (in this case, your employees). This skill, known as emotional intelligence (EI), is deemed by some behaviorists as being more critical to a person's success than their IQ. And, in the same way that intelligence differs from person-to-person, emotional intelligence varies by individual. The good news is that with practice, you can improve your emotional competence. Keep reading for more information and tips you can use to sharpen your EI and become a better, more empathetic leader.

The fundamentals of emotional intelligence

According to author and science journalist, Dan Goleman, the concept of emotional intelligence is comprised of four specific competencies:

1. ***Self-awareness*** – knowing your internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions
2. ***Self-management*** – your ability to manage your internal states, impulses, and resources
3. ***Social awareness*** – the way you handle relationships; your ability to perceive others' feelings, needs, and concerns
4. ***Relationship management*** – your skill or adeptness at bringing out desirable responses in others

While these abilities come more naturally to some people, they can be learned by almost anyone. The more you consciously apply what you learn about EI to your life, the more permanent the behavior will become.

Enhance your emotional acumen

Record and reflect – The best way to become more self-aware is to routinely write down your thoughts and feelings, then ask yourself “why?” How did you feel/react this morning when an employee made a mistake? Why did you feel/react that way?

Mind the moment – Being mindful means being aware of what's happening in the moment and being able to stop and truly assess a situation. Practicing mindfulness helps you to manage your emotions rationally and gives you time to redirect your thoughts more sensibly. If you feel an employee is rude or doesn't like you, for example, pause to reflect on your feelings, then depersonalize them and offer yourself an alternative view that perhaps the employee is just shy or introverted.

Be empathetic – When an employee brings up an issue, put yourself in their position and try to see the situation from their perspective in order to help find a solution. Also be sure to acknowledge your employees' feelings: pay attention to body language and the distress in their voice, and offer a supportive, compassionate response.

Strengthen social skills – Communication, community, and conflict resolution are the keys to relationship management. Interact with intention – not only verbally, but also physically with your own body language, as well as by reading the body language of others. Foster a safe, communal environment for your employees and take note of how they feel and react during your time together. And, when tension rises among employees, intervene immediately, then help those involved work toward mutual cooperation, offer your support, and keep an open door.

What's your Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EQ)?

To find out, try these **free assessments** recommended by Harvard University.

[Psychology Today](#)

146 questions

Comprehensive and poses questions in various ways to ensure accuracy.

[Mind Tools](#)

15 questions

Quick and easy; provides a baseline understanding of your EI.

[Institute for Health and Human Potential](#)

17 questions

IHHP is dedicated to helping organizations leverage the science of emotional intelligence.

Harvard.edu – EI Tools We Love

For more information on how emotional intelligence can help you be a better leader, call the EAP to speak with a consultant and to schedule a Management Skills Consultation.

The EAP is a voluntary and confidential employee benefit available to federal employees and their family members at no cost.

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