

Team Emotional Intelligence

Can a team be emotionally intelligent? Absolutely.

A team and its work can be influenced by the predominant emotions of its team members. And teams can improve their emotional intelligence by understanding the *tendencies* of the group *as a whole* and learning to manage them effectively. In developing Team Emotional Intelligence (EQ), a little bit can go a long way toward producing real results. Read on for a description of what team emotional intelligence is, how to develop it, and the return on investment waiting for your organization if you help your teams develop it.

First, a quick description of emotional intelligence: it's a person's ability to understand and manage emotions. It differs from intelligence because it is an ability that can be learned and improved. Biologically, it is a completely different activity in the brain than regular intellect. You usually see EQ in how a person manages his/her behavior and interacts with others. Daniel Goleman's book Emotional Intelligence brought this decades-old idea to people in business on a wide scale. The book is now available in 20 countries in more than 30 different languages.

Since Daniel Goleman released his first EQ book in 1995, he has simplified his model to four basic skills.

Team Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is...

	WHAT I SEE	WHAT I DO
WITH ME	Self-Awareness	Self-Management
WITH OTHERS	Social Awareness	Relationship Management

- 1) **Self-Awareness.** Can I accurately identify my own emotions as they happen?
- 2) **Self-Management:** Can I manage my emotions to a positive outcome?
- 3) **Social Awareness:** Can I accurately identify your emotions as I interact with you or a group?
- 4) **Relationship Management:** Can I manage the interaction I have with you constructively and to a positive outcome?

Team Emotional Intelligence

Team EQ

An intact team actually has its own EQ. To some degree it is based upon the emotional intelligence skills of each team member. To a large degree it is based upon the standards for behavior that the group accepts as a whole. No one on the team has to be emotionally intelligent all the time, but everyone on the team has to have the ability to contribute in an emotionally intelligent way some of the time. Together the team has to choose what action it is going to take *as a group*. This is the point to remember about team emotional intelligence.

Team EQ is a set of skills that describe how team members perceive emotions and what they do to manage these emotions effectively. There are four team emotional intelligence skills.

Team Emotional Intelligence

EMOTIONS

RELATIONSHIPS

Emotional Awareness	Internal Relationship Management
Emotion Management	External Relationship Management

Team Emotional Intelligence

- 1) **Emotional awareness:** Can people on the team accurately identify the emotions in the group and understand each member's general tendencies for responding to situations?
- 2) **Emotion management:** Can team members respond to the emotions in the room and the group's overall mood to manage emotions constructively and achieve team objectives?
- 3) **Internal Relationship Management:** Can team members interact with each other effectively to better respond to difficult or challenging situations within the group?
- 4) **External Relationship management:** Can the team interact effectively across the organization and with outside parties?

Simply exploring the topic of emotions as a group in a discussion can go a long way toward developing and using team emotional intelligence skills. Some groups schedule opportunity to better understand each other and the strengths that each member offers. Skills and habits that seem to be missing in the group are candidates for more formal development opportunities.

Some methods for developing team emotional intelligence skills include:

- 1) Assessing the team using a team emotional intelligence measure and working with a consultant to build the skills
- 2) Scheduling a retreat to better understand team member interpersonal styles and to build team emotional intelligence skills
- 3) Distributing articles on the subject
- 4) Establishing group norms about working relationships
- 5) Developing an in-house emotional intelligence seminar that aligns with your organization's business goals and values

Team Emotional Intelligence

Will developing team EQ make a difference?

A 2001 research study shows emotionally intelligent teams perform better than teams with low emotional intelligence scores. Teams who scored low on an emotional intelligence measure underperformed compared to their high Team EQ counterparts. Low EQ teams do not focus well on the task at hand and do not achieve goals like their high EQ counterparts.

The study above also shows that developing team emotional intelligence works. The same work groups who scored low on team emotional intelligence attended weekly training in emotionally intelligent behaviors and were again measured on team performance. Groups who attended the training improved their EQ to the point that they performed just like their high EQ counterparts in goal achievement and task focus.

About the Authors:

Jean Greaves and Travis Bradberry are co-authors of the Emotional Intelligence Appraisal™, the market-leading emotional intelligence survey for individuals and teams. Jean and Travis consult internationally in emotional intelligence and speak frequently on the topic.