

## 6.3: Emotional and Social Intelligence in Leadership

### Overview

The position of either leader or follower does not hold power. Rather, it is how we respond when we are in these roles, based on our emotional intelligence, that gives power to each role. **Emotional intelligence** has been described as the “ability to monitor and discriminate among emotions and to use the data to guide thought and action” (Pangman & Pangman, 2010, p. 146). Goleman (1998), a researcher who has completed excellent work in the area of work performance, studied the importance of emotional intelligence in achieving personal excellence. He defines emotional intelligence in greater depth, stating that it is composed of “abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathise and to hope” (Goleman, 1995, p. 21). Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence contains five skills that comprise personal and social competencies (see Table 6.3.1 below). The three skills of self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation relate to the individual’s personal competence. The remaining skills of empathy and social skills are classified as social competencies (Sadri, 2012, p. 537). Goleman stressed that all of the skills can be learned.

Table 6.3.1 Emotional Intelligence Skills and Competencies (*Data Source: Table based on material from Sadri, 2012.*)

Competency	Skill Area	Description
Personal	Self-awareness	Knowing one’s self
	Self-regulation	Managing one’s self
	Motivation	Sentiments and passions that facilitate the attainment of goals
Social	Empathy	Understanding of others and compassion toward them
	Social skills	Expertise in inspiring others to be in agreement

### Developing Emotional and Social Intelligence

Students are at an ideal stage of their lives and careers to check their emotional intelligence. Completion of the emotional intelligence quiz at the link below may help you identify areas for growth.

#### Essential Learning Activity 6.3.1

Visit [Queendom.com](https://www.queendom.com/emotional-intelligence-quiz/) to access an emotional intelligence assessment.

Now that you have identified an area for growth, you may ask, “How can I increase my emotional intelligence?” Your brain has been developing neural pathways in response to your environment since early childhood. Over time these pathways become hard-wired in your brain, allowing you to respond rapidly to circumstances in your environment. In fact, it is believed that emotional responses occur faster than cognitive responses, thus you seem to act before you think. Siegel’s (2012) research in the area of interpersonal neurobiology shows that there is a way to change your brain’s response to stressors. Increasing your “mindfulness” can provide you with an opportunity to “break the link between environmental stimuli and habitual responses” (Gerardi, 2015, p. 60) and to choose a different course of action. Daniel Siegel (2010) coined the term *mindsight* to refer to the phenomenon of becoming aware of emotional reactions and changing them in real time. Gerardi (2015) stressed that working on developing mindsight is hard but valuable work for those who wish to become successful leaders.

### From the Field

It is important to step back, take a few deep breaths, and look at all aspects of the situation before reacting.

As a nurse, gaining emotional and social intelligence and using mindsight are all critical to becoming a successful leader in the field. You will encounter and be required to cope with many different types of people, both colleagues and patients. It is extremely important to be self-aware, reflect on your feelings, and think about how emotions can influence both actions and relationships (or social interactions). That is, you must learn to reflect on your clinical experiences and think of how you could have changed a situation by using self-awareness or mindsight. In the words of Pattakos, “Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that

space lies our freedom and our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our happiness” (as cited in Gerardi, 2015, p. 60).

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