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Topic 1

Identify the impact of your emotions on others in the workplace

All people are creatures of emotion, whether they choose to be or not.

We have instant, neurological, emotional responses to the things that happen around us every day. Humans are built to connect with each other emotionally and our feelings are fundamental to our decision-making capabilities.

The emotions associated with human interactions in the workplace have a powerful impact on the success and performance of individuals, teams, managers and organisations as a whole. With knowledge, training and experiential learning, frontline managers can learn to control their own emotions in the workplace intentionally, instead of being ruled by them.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify and evaluate your emotional strengths and weaknesses
- 1B Identify personal stressors and emotional states in the workplace
- 1C Analyse and document potential emotional triggers
- 1D Evaluate the impact of your work behaviours to manage emotions
- 1E Use self-reflection and feedback to improve your emotional intelligence

Emotional signs

- Negative thoughts
- Disappointment in self
- Heightened emotional reactions
- Increased sensitivity
- Loneliness
- Loss of motivation
- Lack of self-confidence
- Mood swings

Mental signs

- Confusion
- Lack of concentration
- Poor memory
- Indecisiveness

Behavioural signs

- Changes in diet
- Increased smoking or drinking of alcohol
- Consumption of stress-related medication
- Nervousness
- Arriving late to work
- Taking time off

Team observations

- Increased staff turnover
- Complaints
- Staff illness or reports of stress
- Staff absences
- Poor performance
- Customer dissatisfaction
- Disputes within the team
- Unresolved personal conflicts between team members
- Difficulty in attracting new staff

Alleviate workplace stress

Your ability to remain calm in stressful situations makes it easier for team members to remain calm too.

As a manager, it is essential that you discover ways to manage and reduce workplace stress to ensure your physical and emotional wellbeing, and that of your colleagues. The more you are able to manage your own stress, the more you will positively affect the people in your team.

If you are concerned that aspects of your job role or your team's responsibilities are contributing to stress levels, you should take prompt action to alleviate this, such as speaking to senior management, consulting your human resources department or brainstorming ways to reduce stress as a team.

Below are some ways of reducing both personal and team stress in the workplace.

Reducing personal workplace stress

- Learn better communication skills.
- Improve your relationships with colleagues and senior management.
- Identify negative attitudes or habits that add to the stress you experience.
- Take steps to improve your physical wellbeing, including having adequate sleep, a healthy diet and doing aerobic exercise.
- Adopt better time-management skills, prioritise tasks and follow work schedules.
- Delegate responsibilities to team members where appropriate.
- Be willing to compromise on how you approach tasks.
- Avoid overcommitting yourself.

Reducing team workplace stress

- Offer rewards and incentives.
- Show team members that they are valued.
- Provide opportunities for career development.
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for harassment and discrimination.
- Clearly define job roles and responsibilities.
- Share information with colleagues to reduce uncertainty.
- Clearly communicate organisational policies and procedures.
- Praise good work performance, both formally and informally.
- Include employee contributions in decision-making.
- Communicate in a friendly and positive manner.
- Consult team members about scheduling and work tasks.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction.
- Support team members through coaching, mentoring and training.

Emotional states

Your emotional state brings a certain set of feelings that come about with a particular activity or under certain circumstances.

For example, if a colleague accuses you of saying something you didn't actually say, it is likely that you will feel angry as a consequence, even though you may not immediately perceive your own angry state. This rapid change in your emotional state will be evident by how you respond verbally, as well as through your facial expression and body language.

Identifying a particular emotional state can be difficult, particularly as you may experience several different emotions at the same time. Every mood has a corresponding emotional state. Learning to understand your emotional states and those of your colleagues, as well as how to deal with them, will help you to make better organisational decisions and form positive relationships.

Examples of emotional states are feeling:

- pleasant
- fearful
- kind
- amused
- disgusted
- anxious
- angry
- expectant
- frustrated
- happy.



Here are some workplace stressors with examples of the emotional states that may arise from these triggers.

| Stressor or trigger | Emotional response |
|---------------------|--|
| Lack of time | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiencing anxiety• Making poor decisions• Producing poor-quality work• Becoming short-tempered and impatient with colleagues |
| Too many projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiencing fatigue• Having high blood pressure• Loss of motivation |
| Lack of clarity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiencing self-doubt• Feeling fatigued• Experiencing confusion• Feeling dissatisfied and unmotivated |



Practice task 3

Use this table to list **six** emotional triggers relating to your job, and identify the positive and negative ways that you might respond.

| Emotional trigger | Positive response | Negative response |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Social awareness

Social awareness means recognising the feelings of others, and knowing how and when to assist them.

Managers must show empathy and respect for team members to better understand their perspectives, emotional states and particular needs. This facilitates positive, safe and respectful workplace relationships.

By developing empathy and listening to others, you will become more attuned to how others feel and be able to select the appropriate thing to say or do in any given situation. Social awareness enables you to promote a diverse, cross-cultural and non-discriminatory workplace culture.

The following outlines leadership capabilities that define your competence in social awareness.



Empathy

This is sensing others' emotions, understanding their perspectives, listening attentively and taking an active interest in their concerns. It involves getting along with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Awareness

This involves understanding the current issues, decision networks and politics at the organisational level. It involves detecting crucial social networks and understanding key power relationships.

Service

This is fostering an emotional climate so that people directly in touch with clients or customers will keep these relationships on track. It involves monitoring customer satisfaction carefully to ensure needs are met.

Relationship management

Relationship management combines self-awareness, self-management and social awareness to effectively handle relationships in the workplace.

Rather than showing mere friendliness, relationship management has a purpose: inspiring, motivating and moving people in the right organisational direction. Frontline managers must tune into the emotions of team members to encourage positive and productive workplace interactions.

By developing relationship management skills, you will learn how to find common ground, build rapport with your colleagues and develop valuable professional networks both within and outside of your organisation. Relationship management skills help you to create a workplace where the sharing of ideas and information is encouraged, supported and coordinated effectively.

1E

Use self-reflection and feedback to improve your emotional intelligence

Self-reflection and feedback from others are both valuable tools in developing your emotional intelligence.

It is essential that you reflect on your personal attributes and consider the impact you have on others. This assists you to modify your management approach and know where to focus to refine your leadership strengths.

As a manager, you should aim to create an atmosphere where the giving and receiving of constructive feedback is welcomed, appreciated and acted on. Managers who seek a full and accurate picture of themselves from feedback and self-reflection will be well prepared to address their strengths and weaknesses.



The importance of self-reflection

Self-reflection involves thinking about, or reflecting on, what you do and how you act.

Self-reflection requires a conscious effort to think about specific events or situations, and to develop insight into them. Reflective practices, or experiential learning, allow you to step into a new paradigm of thinking, reframing your ideas and thoughts in order to change what you do or how you feel.

Taking time once a day to reflect on the day's events, how people reacted to you or how well you managed others requires a high degree of emotional intelligence. Conscientious introspection can cultivate emotional intelligence in everyone.

Self-reflection allows you to:

- reframe your ideas and thoughts
- gain perspective about how your emotions affect you and your job performance
- understand your limitations and strengths
- be honest with yourself
- know when and where to ask for help
- know where to focus to develop and improve your leadership strengths
- have self-assurance about the things you are doing well.

The importance of feedback

The path to self-awareness can be challenging, as it is often difficult to see in yourself what others see so easily.

Seeking honest feedback on your leadership qualities is vital for developing your self-awareness. As a manager, it is important that you are conscious of what you are good at, while acknowledging the areas where you could improve. This includes owning up to mistakes and admitting when you do not have the answer.

Feedback can encourage leaders to significantly modify their management approach, having a ripple effect on the team and generating important changes throughout the organisation.

Emotionally intelligent managers actively seek out negative feedback, understanding the value in gaining accurate views of how well they are performing as leaders. Less effective leaders most often seek positive feedback to confirm their own self-worth. Soliciting negative or constructive feedback is vital to a leader's continued growth and effectiveness in the workplace.

Feedback can be:

- formal or informal
- verbal, written or digital
- public or private
- ongoing or one-off
- immediate or periodic
- positive or constructive.

Informal feedback

Feedback can be solicited through both formal and informal processes.

You should choose a method that aligns with your organisational policies and procedures, and is appropriate in the context of the feedback sought.

In the case of a dispute between yourself and another team member, feedback should be given and received with all parties present so that it is fair and transparent.

Tips for soliciting feedback

- Ask good questions relating to your performance, even if such questions elicit constructive or negative feedback.
- Be open to all types of feedback, and demonstrate a willingness to learn from it.
- Accept feedback without defending yourself; otherwise people may stop giving you feedback or you may miss what the person is trying to say.
- Create a bond of trust that enables the person giving feedback to feel as though they have helped to improve your performance.
- Do not pretend to know what the person giving the feedback is trying to say.
- Admit when you have made mistakes.
- When receiving feedback, always thank the person for their openness and honesty.

Provide stability to team members during the planning phases of change

- Ensure your team members are provided with a period of stability leading up to a period of organisational change.
- Reassure your team that management does not intend the change to be rushed, and provide them with as many details as possible, including fixed dates, the workload involved and mechanisms for employee consultation and feedback.
- Make draft change-management plans available and accessible for your team members to review.

Analyse the impact of change on employees, job roles and work responsibilities

- Be aware of the standard emotional reactions to change, so that you understand the extent to which organisational change will affect individual team members. For example, team members could react by retreating from the situation, rejecting the change, passively accepting it or challenging certain aspects of the change.
- Ensure you are fully informed about all aspects of the change yourself before communicating it to your team to avoid expressing any uncertainty or confusion to your team members. This may cause them to feel vulnerable or anxious about their job security.

Provide meaningful work for team members during their transition

- It is important that during all stages of the organisational change, you provide meaningful work for your team members.
- Discuss with individuals the type of work they would prefer to do during any interim periods when job roles may be ambiguous.

Design a process to match employees to different jobs roles

- Design a method of matching jobs with the right individuals who have the requisite skills.
- Identify the level of support you are able to give your team members immediately after transferring into new roles or varying their current roles.
- Carefully formulate an action plan to assist employees and their representatives should they not retain their current positions after the organisational change takes place.
- Where employees have the opportunity to apply for new or different positions within the organisation, or to be transferred to other teams or offices, ensure recruitment and selection processes are open, fair and equitable.

Provide training to support team members

- Organisational change is unlikely to succeed without targeted training and development to assist team members in their transition.
- Relieve staff from their work responsibilities to attend training and development where necessary.
- Identify the key areas that require updated or additional skills and knowledge.
- Guide trainers with clear organisational objectives to assist them in preparing and delivering training programs.



Learning checkpoint 2

Recognise and appreciate the emotional strengths and weaknesses of others

Part A

1. Explain the difference between emotional responses and moods.

2. Describe **three** ways to identify and assess the non-verbal emotional cues of colleagues.

3. Describe **three** culturally intelligent communication behaviours for responding to the emotional cues of a diverse workforce.

Open communication is essential when you are part of a team that needs to increase its productivity because it can help to solve challenges so that your team can perform at its best.

Tips for developing your team's communication and active listening skills

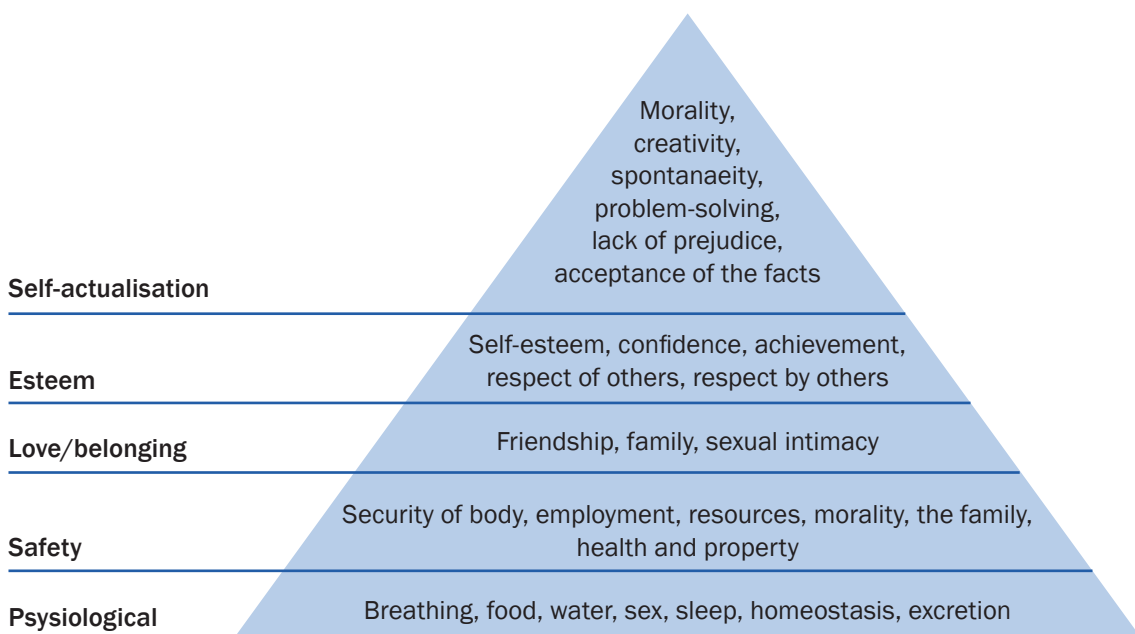
- Consider putting your entire team through active listening training.
- Pay attention to the full communication of your team members – both verbal and non-verbal – then feed it back to them to check your understanding.
- Encourage team members to ask questions, reflect on what has been said, clarify the correct message and summarise the key points.
- Build understanding and empathy among your team members to help nurture workplace relationships.
- Let your team members know you have listened well by matching their emotions with what they have told you.
- Practise different styles of leading team meetings; for example, taking extra time to listen and let others speak.
- Consider developing a formal tool for evaluating how aware team members are of each other's emotions and how well these feelings are communicated within the team.
- Demonstrate active listening skills by using positive reinforcement, smiling, making eye contact and using a forward-facing posture.

Meeting the needs of team members

Human behaviour is generally motivated by the desire to improve quality of life.

Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs to understand what motivates people. Maslow's theory suggests that an individual's most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will focus on the secondary or higher level needs.

Here is a diagram that shows how Maslow's hierarchy is structured.



Example

Using team strengths to achieve workplace outcomes

As the sales team leader at a car dealership, Adam knows the huge benefits that come from knowing and tapping into the strengths of his team members. For the car dealership to retain its competitive edge, Adam makes it his priority to delegate tasks and responsibilities amongst his team members in ways that accomplish the highest amount of sales as efficiently as possible.

During his weekly team meetings, Adam asks his team members to identify any challenges they are facing in performing their role. Leslie, a luxury car salesperson, shares with the team that she is struggling to communicate effectively with her customers. While she enjoys selling luxury cars and has good technical knowledge about the vehicle range, she doesn't relate to the needs and preferences of her customers.

Adam asks Leslie and the rest of the sales team to think about Leslie's strengths and discuss how these could be best utilised within the business. Harrison points out that Leslie is very popular with customers who have families with young children. These customers respond very positively to Leslie because she is a young mother herself and is able to provide personalised and informed advice.

Adam suggests that Leslie could take her skills and expertise and apply them to selling family-sized vehicles, including 4WDs and SUVs instead of the luxury car range. She agrees that this would make her feel more enthusiastic about her role.



Practice task 14

Question 1

A client has threatened to move their business elsewhere after they have had a particularly poor experience with the service they received from your company. The employee looking after that client's account has been feeling stressed, and requested to move to another division. You need to assign one of your team members to managing the client. What strengths would you be looking for in the person you now assign to handle this client account?