

City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Quarterly Newsletter: June 2013



Success...

Straight Ahead

Mental Health Apps

Yup, there is an app for that! *Psychcentral.com* recently put out a list of their top smart phone/tablet applications for mental health. Below are a few of those listed along with a brief description. *Reminder: Mental health apps do not replace treatment and diagnosis by a professional.*

- **BellyBio** is a free app that teaches a deep breathing technique useful in fighting anxiety and stress. A simple interface uses biofeedback to monitor your breathing.
- **eCBT Calm** Provides a set of tools to help you evaluate personal stress and anxiety, challenge distorted thoughts, and learn relaxation skills that have been scientifically validated in research on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Lots of background and useful information along with step-by-step guides.
- **Operation Reach Out** This free intervention tool helps people who are having suicidal thoughts to reassess their thinking and get help. Developed by the military, but useful to all.
- **WhatsMyM3** A three minute depression and anxiety screen. Validated questionnaires assess symptoms of depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and PTSD, and combine into a score that indicates whether or not your life is impacted significantly by a mood disorder and recommends a course of action. The app keeps a history of test results to help track your progress.
- **Deep Sleep with Andrew Johnson** Getting enough sleep is one of the foundations of mental health. This app guides users through a Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) session and into sleep. Features long or short induction options, and an alarm.

Be sure to do your own research on your mobile provider's application market for one that best suits your needs.

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What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?

Most folks have a good understanding of the term *IQ (Intellect Quotient)*. However, many people are not as familiar with *EI (Emotional intelligence)*. While IQ refers to a measure of one's intellect, EI refers to your ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. This explains how some folks may be extremely "book smart" but lack the ability to regulate their own emotions or interact positively in social situations. But what is EI more specifically?

EI is made up for four core skills that fall under two major categories.

1. **Personal Competence:** has to do with your ability to know what is going on inside of you emotionally and manage it productively. The two core skills are **Self-Awareness** and **Self-Management**.
2. **Social Competence:** is your ability to accurately pick up on the emotions of others and use this knowledge to maintain positive interactions and relationships. The two core skills are **Social Awareness** and **Relationship Management**.

Why is EI important? A high EI has implications both at work and in your personal life. A study by *Talent Smart* found that 90% of top work performers evaluated also had a very high EI. On the flip side, only 20% of the bottom performers had a high EI. Your chances of being successful at work are greatly influenced by how emotionally "smart" you are. Furthermore, a trend is emerging whereby employers are now measuring EI during initial job interviews and for internal promotions. Why are employers now paying attention to EI?

The answer is simple, a high EI is directly connected to certain qualities employers value: customer service, assertiveness, decision-making, self-motivation, conflict-resolution, stress-

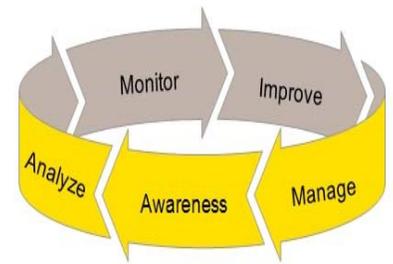
tolerance, empathy, change-tolerance, communication, and social skills to name a few. Simply put, employers are recognizing that being "brilliant" (IQ) is not enough in today's ever changing, fast paced, and complex workplace.

As mentioned earlier, having a high EI in your personal life is extremely important because it impacts both your physical and mental health, as well as personal relationships.

- **Physical health:** Uncontrolled stress can raise blood pressure, suppress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, contribute to infertility, and speed up the aging process.
- **Your mental health:** If you are unable to understand and manage your emotions, you'll also be open to mood swings, while an inability to form strong relationships can leave you feeling lonely and isolated.
- **Relationships:** By understanding your emotions and how to control them, you're better able to express how you feel and understand how others are feeling. This allows you to communicate more effectively and forge stronger interpersonal relationships.

By now you may be reflecting about your own EI. Ask yourself these questions:

- **Self-Awareness:** Do I recognize my own strengths, weaknesses, values, goals and emotions when they occur?
- **Self-Regulation:** Do I adapt to change well? Do I redirect and manage disruptive emotions?
- **Social skills:** Do I manage conflicts well and inspire people.
- **Empathy:** Am I aware of and re-



How to Improve EI?

1. **Start by observing how you react to people.** Don't rush to judgment before you know all of the facts. Try to put yourself in their place.
2. **Look at your work environment.** Practice humility and let others shine sometimes.
3. **Do a self-evaluation.** What are your weaknesses and work to improve them.
4. **Examine how you react to stressful situations.** Keep calm and don't jump to blame others.
5. **Take responsibility for your actions.** If you hurt someone's feelings, apologize directly.
6. **Examine how your actions will affect others** – before you take those actions.

spect other people's feelings, especially when making decisions?

- **Motivation:** Am I self-driven and achieve for the sake of achievement and bettering myself?

While it may be true that some people are naturally more in-tune with themselves and others, the good news is that EI may be learned and improved.

The positive benefit of understanding yourself and impact on others will be felt both at work and home.

Managing Morale Across Multiple Work Sites

Managing or supervising multiple work site locations present specific challenges. Be extra careful around the following areas when managing a dispersed work group:

- **Out-of-sight-out-of-mind syndrome**
- **Loss of spontaneous communication**
- **Lack of team cohesion**
- **Supervision/Quality Control**

Pay Attention to Team Dynamics

Managing relationships between team members can be difficult enough within a shared office space, but it's even more challenging when workers are all over multiple locations.

With remote workers, you don't have the advantage of watching body language for signs of trouble. How can you tell if remote workers are unhappy if you can't see them? Watch closely for warning signs such as these:

- Reduced output.
- Short and abrupt emails
- Reluctance to engage in telephone calls or video conference calls.
- Shortage of new ideas.

Communication and Equality

Stay in contact – When managing multiple locations, you simply don't have the luxury of stopping by someone's desk for a quick conversation. However, the need for communication is crucial in your ability to manage effectively. So what do you do? Build in time to touch base with staff in a more formal way. This can mean scheduling a regular teleconference, or carve out a time for email feedback.

Make sure that communication is fair and consistent – When providing feedback and communication, pay special attention to fairness. Remember,

some workers may have face-to-face contact with you, while others may not. Those that don't may feel at a disadvantage. Subsequently, set aside extra time for one-on-one contact with remote workers. Rule of thumb, the more isolated the workers, the more attention they may need. It's easy for remote staff to feel unmotivated and isolated if they're working far away from the rest of the team. Stay in regular contact so that they never feel forgotten.

Ensure that opportunities are equal – When opportunities are available, make sure everyone has the SAME clear understanding of the "rules" and guidelines toward obtaining opportunities.

Develop systems– Create protocols, rules, and process flows for work tasks to ensure that work is being done and approached in the same way across different locations. Their key word is "standardize."

Promote Team Bonding/Building

Folks that work together easily bond over simple things like sharing a lunch, an anniversary pot-luck or

piece of birthday cake. These are all great team-bonding experiences. Unfortunately, they obviously won't work with geographically dispersed teams. As a manager, the creative task is how to achieve team bonding if workers are physically separated. Some ideas may include:

- *Identify and promote group Wellness and/or volunteer activities.* This may be a department walking team for a worthy cause.
- *Use webcams* - Webcams are a very inexpensive way to not only see other team members during department meetings and feel more personally connected.
- *Rotate meeting locations*- If logistically possible, hold meetings at various work site locations.
- *Harness competition*– Create a space or mechanism where progress toward team and/or individual goals are updated and made available to everyone.

Though challenging, incorporating these tips may help boost morale across worksites.

Financial Tips, Information and Education

Finding trusted information on financial issues may be tricky. A good source for financial education and information is available through the Federal Financial Literacy and Education Commission. This Commission is made up of 21 Federal entities that work together to provide reliable and up to date financial education. Their website: www.mymoney.gov offers topical brochures, on-line calculators, various "check-lists", and budget work-

sheets. Don't have access to the web? Assistance is also available toll-free at **888-MyMoney**. By calling the hotline, you can hear recorded financial tips on a range of topics, including identity theft, protecting your home from foreclosure, and avoiding predatory lending. These are available in English and Spanish. You can also order a My Money tool kit, a package of printed financial materials from government agencies, also available in Spanish.



EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/emotional problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.

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Collaborative Divorce?

Traditionally, divorce is an adversarial (me vs. you) process filled with uncertainty. Each party retains an attorney and enters into litigation for which the Court ultimately decides on an outcome.

Collaborative Divorce offers couples ending their marriage an opportunity to agree on a post-divorce plan that best satisfies the needs of the whole family **before** going to Court.

It is a **voluntary** process and works when both parties agree to respectfully work together and with other professionals (lawyers, counselors) to mutually resolve their disputes (e.g. child visitation/placement).

Collaborative Divorce is for those that wish to maintain some control over the process, and are open and flexible to the needs of all involved. Contact EAP coordinator for additional information and/or questions.



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