

IEC Webinar Recap: Leveraging the Power of Emotional Intelligence

Presenter: Dr. Cheryl Gowdie, Psychologist & Executive Coach, Acezy Empowerment

What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?

- Emotional intelligence is the ability to:
 - Recognize and understand your own emotions
 - Understand the emotions of others
 - Manage emotional responses effectively
 - Use emotional awareness to guide behavior and decision-making
- While technical skills and IQ are important, emotional intelligence plays a critical role in building relationships, navigating challenges, and leading effectively.
- Emotional intelligence has evolved from early studies of "social intelligence" and gained widespread attention through the work of psychologist Daniel Goleman, whose research demonstrated that emotional intelligence can be as important, and sometimes more important, than IQ in determining long-term success.

The Five Core Components of Emotional Intelligence

Self-Awareness

- Understanding your emotions, behaviors, strengths, and areas for growth
- Questions to Consider:
 - How do others experience me?
 - What emotions am I feeling in a given situation?
 - What triggers my reactions?

Self-Regulation

- Managing emotional responses, especially during stressful or challenging situations
- Rather than reacting impulsively, emotionally intelligent individuals learn to pause, reflect, and respond intentionally.

Empathy

- Recognizing and understanding the perspectives and experiences of others
- Empathy helps strengthen relationships, improve communication, and foster greater workplace collaboration.

Social Skills

- Building positive relationships through effective communication, active listening, and constructive conflict resolution

Motivation

- Using emotions productively to pursue goals, remain resilient, and drive meaningful outcomes

Why EI Matters in the Electrical Industry

- Emotional intelligence is particularly valuable in industries where teamwork, communication, and safety are critical.
- Benefits of strong emotional intelligence include:
- Enhanced communication
 - Improved collaboration and teamwork
 - Stronger leadership effectiveness
 - Better conflict resolution
 - Increased adaptability during change
 - Improved workplace culture
 - Greater employee well-being
 - Stronger safety-focused environments
- For women working in traditionally male-dominated industries, emotional intelligence can also support professional growth by strengthening influence, confidence, communication, and leadership presence.

Common Workplace Emotional Triggers

- A key discussion centered around workplace situations that can trigger strong emotional reactions. Examples included:
 - Feeling isolated or underrepresented
 - Experiencing bias or exclusion
 - Not being taken seriously
 - Receiving unfair criticism
 - Lack of support or recognition
 - Safety concerns
 - Feeling pressure to continually prove oneself.
- One recurring theme was the importance of learning to "respond rather than react" when emotions are heightened.

Understanding Emotional Intelligence Scores

- Emotional Quotient (EQ) is commonly used to measure emotional intelligence.
- Individuals with higher emotional intelligence often demonstrate:
 - Strong interpersonal relationships
 - Effective communication
 - Adaptability and resilience
 - Empathy and active listening
 - Balanced decision-making
 - Strong leadership and teamwork skills
- Individuals with lower emotional intelligence may experience:
 - Difficulty managing stress
 - Communication challenges
 - Teamwork obstacles
 - Impulsive reactions
 - Struggles with interpersonal relationships
- The goal is not perfection but continuous development through greater awareness and intentional practice.

Practical Strategies for Strengthening EI

- **Build Self-Awareness:** Take time to reflect on personal triggers, behaviors, and communication styles.
- **Practice Self-Regulation:** Pause before responding in difficult situations and focus on thoughtful, constructive reactions.
- **Develop Empathy:** Seek to understand others' perspectives before making assumptions.
- **Strengthen Communication Skills:** Practice active listening and ask questions to deepen understanding.
- **Seek Feedback and Reflect:** View feedback as an opportunity for growth rather than criticism.
- **Create Support Networks:** Develop relationships with mentors, peers, and professional communities.
- **Promote Safe Spaces:** Encourage open dialogue and respectful discussions around challenges and differing viewpoints.
- **Invest in Self-Care:** Managing stress and maintaining healthy boundaries supports emotional resilience.

Key Takeaways

- Throughout the discussion and breakout exercises, several themes emerged:
 - The value of finding or creating support networks for women in the industry
 - The importance of mentorship and peer connections
 - Recognizing that workplace behavior is often influenced by broader organizational factors
 - Approaching situations with curiosity rather than assumption

- Seeking to understand the full context before drawing conclusions
 - Developing empathy for others facing similar challenges
 - Practicing active listening and thoughtful responses during difficult conversations
- Emotional intelligence is not a fixed trait. It is a skill that can be developed through self-awareness, practice, reflection, and intentional engagement with others.
- By strengthening emotional intelligence, professionals can improve communication, navigate workplace challenges more effectively, build stronger relationships, and create healthier, more productive work environments.
- Emotional intelligence is not only about understanding ourselves. It is equally about understanding others and using that awareness to foster constructive, authentic, and meaningful interactions.
- Emotional intelligence enables us to respond with intention rather than react emotionally, creating stronger relationships, better leaders, and more successful teams.