

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Emotional Intelligence in Teams

ORLD 6750 Leading Teams

Carolyn Dunow & 4 classmates who wish to remain anonymous

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Emotional Intelligence in Teams

In the vast majority of today's work environments, we are increasingly being called upon to work in teams. In the last decade a significant amount of research has been conducted to determine how to increase the effectiveness of teams. Most of this research places the focus on process and task efficiencies. Often teams and organizations fail to realize there is an additional set of skills beyond technical capabilities or subject matter expertise required for teams to truly be successful. Working effectively as a team is more than aligning a set of complimentary expertise or knowledge. "It's how people interact that determines how effectively they work together. What people say and do, and how they say it, what they fail to say or do and how they engage or avoid conflict, all contribute to team interactions" (Lynn, 2007, p. xi).

Bradberry and Greaves (2009) found that emotional intelligence is "the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence" (p. 21). Creating a team that operates in an emotionally intelligent manner requires individual and team awareness and skill in balancing the emotions of each individual as well as those of the collective team. "Group emotional intelligence isn't a question of dealing with catching emotions as they bubble up and promptly suppressing them. It's about bringing emotions deliberately to the surface and understanding how they affect the team's work." (Druskat & Wolff, 2001, p. 83).

In order for a team to effectively use emotional intelligence for its benefit, a variety of knowledge and skills must be gained. Bradberry and Greaves summarize these skills into four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (2009). First, however, team members must understand what emotional intelligence is. Next, each individual on the team must begin to understand his or her own level of emotional intelligence

(self-awareness and self-management). Once that is achieved, each individual needs to consider the emotional intelligence of others with whom they interact (social awareness) and how their personal emotional intelligence can be applied in a team setting to benefit the group (relationship management). After realizing the importance of emotional intelligence in team settings, individuals may take the next step by seeking to improve the emotional intelligence of a team.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

The term “emotional intelligence” was introduced and written about by a number of individuals in the mid 20th century, but was not popularized until the mid 1990s (Feyerherm & Rice, 2002). In 1966, Leuner wrote about emotional intelligence in relation to psychotherapy treatments (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). Payne referenced emotional intelligence in 1986 through his doctoral thesis, *A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence* (Mayer et al., 2004). In 1989, Greenspan published an emotional intelligence model and, shortly thereafter in 1990, Salovey and Mayer also published a model. The term “emotional intelligence” became markedly more widespread in 1995 following Goleman’s bestselling book on the topic, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ* (Bar-On, 2005).

Definitions of emotional intelligence vary widely. Bar-On (2005) highlighted work done by Spielberger in 2004, published in the *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology*, which suggested that there are three major conceptual models: the Salovey-Mayer model, the Goleman model, and the Bar-On model. These models can be classified into either *ability models* or *mixed models*. A model that “mixes” cognitive abilities with other characteristics is considered a *mixed model* and those that do not are considered *ability models* (Petrides, Furnham & Mavroveli, 2007). Salovey and Mayer’s model, created in 1990, is considered an *ability* model and focuses on “the relationship of emotion and intelligence as a skill;” the models created by Goleman in

1995 and Bar-On in 1997 are considered *mixed* models and “describe a construct including mental abilities, dispositions, and traits” (Feyerherm & Rice, 2002, p. 344).

Salovey and Mayer (1997) originally defined emotional intelligence in 1990 as “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (p. 10). Since publishing this definition, the authors felt that it was too vague and omitted thinking about feelings; therefore, they have revised the definition as follows:

Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (1997, p. 10).

Salovey and Mayer (1997) diagrammed emotional intelligence skills and associated abilities that emerge throughout life into the following four branches, which are ordered from the most basic psychological processes to those that are psychologically integrated processes:

1. *Perception, Appraisal, and Expression of Emotion*: “concerns the accuracy with which individuals can identify emotions and emotional content” (p. 10).
2. *Emotional Facilitation of Thinking*: “concerns emotion acting on intelligence; it describes emotional events that assist intellectual processing” (p. 12).
3. *Understanding and Analyzing Emotions; Employing Emotional Knowledge*: “concerns the ability to understand emotions and to use the emotional knowledge” (p. 13).

4. *Reflective Regulation of Emotions to Promote Emotional and Intellectual Growth:*

“concerns the conscious regulation of emotions to enhance emotional and intellectual growth” (p. 14).

Emotional intelligence gained popularity in 1995 through the work of Goleman, who defined the concept as “the capacity for recognizing one’s own feelings and those of others, for motivating oneself, and for managing emotions well in one’s private internal life as well as in relationships” (Emmerling, Shanwal, & Mandel, 2008, p. 154). Goleman generated five basic emotional and social competencies of emotional intelligence at work, which include:

1. *Self-awareness*: the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others;
2. *Self-regulation*: the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods; the propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting;
3. *Motivation*: a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status; a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence;
4. *Empathy*: the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people; skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions; and,
5. *Social skill*: proficiency in managing relationships and building networks; an ability to find common ground and build rapport (Goleman, 1998, p. 95).

Goleman views emotional intelligence as complementary to academic intelligence, which is considered to be purely cognitive capabilities measured by IQ (Emmerling et al., 2008).

Goleman (1998) indicated that IQ and technical skills are relevant and should be used for entry level requirements in the workplace; however, to be successful, leaders also need to have a high degree of emotional intelligence: “Unlike IQ, which changes little after our teen years,

emotional intelligence seems to be largely learned, and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences—our competence in it can keep growing” (p. 7).

In 1997, Bar-On published an emotional-social intelligence model. “According to this model, emotional-social intelligence is a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others, relate with them, and cope with daily demands” (Bar-On, 2005, p. 3). The competencies, skills, and facilitators referenced in this definition are further explained through the following five components:

1. *Intrapersonal*: the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings;
2. *Interpersonal*: the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them;
3. *Stress Management*: the ability to manage and control emotions;
4. *Adaptability*: the ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature; and,
5. *General Mood*: the ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivate
(Bar-On, 2005, p. 3).

Emotional intelligence is a relatively young theory that is still at an early stage in development (Cherniss, 2006). Out of the three major conceptual models developed by Salovey and Mayer, Goleman, and Bar-On, Mayer and Salovey’s model has been identified as the most appropriate for research purposes as it “reflects behavior in the real world, it is purposive and directed towards goals, and it involves the automation of high-level processes (crystallized intelligence)” (Jordan & Troth, 2004, p. 197). For the purposes of this paper, we too chose to select the model put forth by Mayer and Salovey.

Understanding Individual Emotional Intelligence and Affect in Teams

Once one has gained a conceptual understanding of emotional intelligence, he or she next needs to better understand his or her own level of emotional intelligence before knowing how to leverage it in a team setting. Individual emotional intelligence has been shown to affect, or emotionally influence, group dynamics. Kelly and Barsade (2001) “suggest that an initial input into the group’s affective [feeling or emotional] experience involves the individual-level moods and emotions of group members” (p. 102). One of the affective factors of group disposition is individual emotional intelligence. Kelly and Barsade (2001) also state that sociocognitive variables, similar to those of emotional intelligence, were a factor in group performance. Kelly and Barsade (2001) refer to a study by Williams and Sternberg, which found that “the group’s mean sociocognitive score was a stronger predictor of group performance than the score of either the highest or the lowest sociocognitive person in the group” (p. 105). These findings support Druskat and Wolff’s (2001) deduction that in relation to awareness and the regulation of emotions, “the goal must be to balance the team’s cohesion with members’ individuality” (p. 84).

To balance team cohesion we must first understand how individuals contribute to the teams’ affect. Kelly and Barsade (2001) list two types of processes involved in affective emotional sharing. The first is an implicit, subconscious process, while the second is an explicit, conscious or intentional process. Whether the affective experiences are implicit or explicit, the collection of individual’s experiences contributes to the affective composition of the group.

Implicit Emotional Sharing

Kelly and Barsade (2001) describe three ways implicit emotional sharing can be expressed: emotional contagion, vicarious affect and interaction synchrony. Emotional contagion refers to the transfer of moods and emotions of one individual to others nearby.

People who are better at nonverbal expressions tend to be better able to transfer their emotions to others. The more someone is able to express emotions through body language and facial expressions, the more others tend to receive these feelings. There is also variance in the extent to which one receives another's emotions. Kelly and Barsade (2001) refer to a study by Joiner and another by Tickle-DeGnan and Puccinelli which both suggest that negative moods and emotions are more easily transferred than positive moods. However, Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) state that "cheerfulness and warmth are spread the most easily, while irritability is less contagious and depression spreads hardly at all" (p. 10). Though these findings regarding the degree of contagion with positive or negative emotions are in opposition, perhaps the more important point is that team members should be aware that individual emotions, whether positive or negative, can spread to other team members and change the dynamics of the team as a whole.

The second process involved in affective emotional sharing is vicarious affect (Kelly & Barsade, 2001). This is an association of emotions based on the receiver's previous social interactions and experiences. For example, one person may associate a given emotion with a positive or negative experience from his or her past, while another person may associate the same emotion with a completely different experience. The two varying associations likely result in completely different reactions. One form of vicarious affect is empathy, the ability to intellectually identify or vicariously experience another's emotion. Another type is transference, which occurs when one experiences a feeling about a person based on that person's resemblance to someone else from the receiver's past relationships. The feeling of the previous relationship carries over into the new relationship because the resemblance is associated with the past feeling.

Finally, interaction synchrony (Kelly & Barsade, 2001) refers to the mimicking and sequencing of body movements and speech. This allows for coordinated social rhythms and a

flow of interactions between individuals in groups. Greater synchrony results in greater rapport, a greater appreciation for others engaged in the interaction and a sense of satisfaction with the interaction itself. These outcomes lead to a more positive group affect. While all three implicit emotional sharing affects operate on a subconscious level, they do have an apparent and unique effect on each individual, which then contributes to the whole of a team's dynamic.

Explicit Emotional Sharing

Explicit emotional sharing (Kelly & Barsade, 2001) is a more deliberate effort to affectively influence a group. Charismatic and transformational leaders have a tendency to use explicit emotional sharing to elicit more positive feelings and reduce the negative emotions of group members. However, “[a]ny group member can influence the mood of others in the group to reach a particular goal” (Kelly & Barsade, 2001, p. 111). For example, being enthusiastic about a concept will fuel the fires to encourage participation whether the enthusiasm comes from a leader or other group members. When the intended affect is achieved, a positive transmission of emotion leads to a positive group affect and a negative transmission of emotion leads to a negative group affect. Although the opposite of the intended affect can occur, this discordant affect is less common (Kelly & Barsade, 2001).

Active impression management, another form of explicit emotional sharing, is a conscious or unconscious means of self-presentation to influence perceptions of other people. Active impression management is apparent in companies where all employees display the same, often enthusiastic attitude. For example, travelers can expect the same characteristic enthusiasm when they board any Southwest Airlines flight. Companies do this to promote a consistent and positive corporate image to gain customer loyalty. Another example of group active impression management was the consistently negative emotional display by “crabby” flight attendants of

Northwest Airlines during a major labor union negotiation, in an attempt to gain customer awareness of and support towards their cause.

When team members are engaged in active impression management, they do “not really need to feel or internalize the emotions being expressed, although internalization could occur as a secondary process” (Kelly & Barsade, 2001, p. 112). On a superficial level, whether positive or negative, individuals within groups tend to stick together due to social conditioning. Empathy, personal emotional security and maintaining a social rhythm create positive reinforcement to build momentum, which represses individual and discordant emotional expression. Leaders and group members read each other’s emotional cues to gauge the appropriateness of discussions or decisions. While group affect through impression management can positively promote a corporate culture, it must be balanced with the need for outward signs of authentic individual emotional expression necessary for collaborative decision making.

Individual measurement of emotional intelligence, if solely based on self evaluation, can be deceptive. Goleman et al. (2002) expose several studies demonstrating discrepancies in executive self evaluations as compared to evaluations by others and corporate performance. For example, Burkle demonstrates that the higher the level of executive status, the greater the difference in the ranking of their emotional intelligence competencies as compared to how others ranked them. Kruger and Dunning showed that while “people tend to over estimate their abilities to some extent, it’s the very poorest performers who exaggerate their abilities the most” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 94). Harter found that “self awareness of leadership abilities was greatest for CEO’s of the best performing companies and poorest for CEO’s of the worst performers.” (Goleman et al., 2002, p. 94). Thus, it appears that group evaluation is necessary to provide the essential information to create an authentic, positive and sustainable affect.

These findings support the need for evaluation and ongoing development of emotional intelligence in leaders. When leaders, as well as other team members, understand the individual influences of emotional intelligence, they will be better tooled to leverage emotional intelligence for positive perspectives and outcomes in their work on teams. But how can one assess emotional intelligence? Emotional intelligence appraisal services provide tests and feedback. TalentSmart (2011) is one such company that offers three testing options using their abbreviated and validated tool for emotional intelligence awareness:

- An emotional intelligence self assessment includes a self evaluation of four components of emotional intelligence: Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management.
- A multi-user version of emotional assessment includes up to 26 users evaluating one subject. This allows one subject to perform a self evaluation and up to 25 anonymously submitted peer evaluations for comparison.
- A team version allows up to 26 team members to evaluate their perspective on the tendencies of their team's emotional intelligence.

TalentSmart claims that teams, similar to individuals, have their own emotional intelligence. Results are compiled to provide a profile to assist teams in developing emotional intelligence.

Applying Emotional Intelligence in Teams

The concept of emotional intelligence in groups of human beings is as complicated and varied as humanity itself, and its usefulness depends on an individual's ability to both achieve a high level of emotional intelligence as described above and cooperate with others. While group emotional intelligence of prehistoric people may seem far removed from teams solving problems in a modern office, neuroscientists Hanson and Mendius (2009) wrote that the two share the

same traits. “In the harsh conditions faced by our ancestors, cooperation aided survival; thus factors that promote cooperation have been woven into [the] brain” over the past several hundred generations (p. 134).

Hanson and Mendius posit that natural emotional intelligence for people working in groups includes common traits like “altruism, generosity, concern about reputation, fairness, language, forgiveness, and morality,” and these traits continue to play an integral role in group emotional intelligence (p. 134). Like modern teams working together using group emotional intelligence to accomplish goals, the ancient groups and teams “with strong teamwork usually beat bands with weak teamwork at getting resources [and] passing on their genes” (Hanson & Mendius, 2009, p. 124). Today, Druskat and Wolff (2001) write that “the reality is that most work is done by teams. And if managers have one pressing need . . . it’s to find ways to make teams work better” to achieve goals (p. 81).

The ability of teams to manage group emotional intelligence remains critical for success, and it requires effort from each team member to be effective. In a study of group emotional intelligence conducted by Feyerherm and Rice (2002), the authors concluded that “groups perform better when they foster an internal state of harmony” (p. 346). This state of harmony comes from the group’s ability to effectively achieve a high level of emotional intelligence. In order to apply emotional intelligence in group settings, a facilitator needs an awareness of both the challenging and positive factors comprising group emotional intelligence.

Challenges facing a group’s performance with emotional intelligence stem from the fact that high group emotional intelligence itself does not always equate to accomplishing a goal. Indeed, Feyerherm and Rice (2002) concluded that “it may be pleasant to work on teams comprised of people possessing high emotional intelligence. However, that doesn’t . . . mean

that such teams will be high performing” (p. 360). They noted that a leader with a high level of emotional intelligence is needed for the team to become high performing. However, Feyerherm and Rice discovered that leaders with extremely high levels of emotional intelligence actually caused poor performance among the other team members (2002, p. 354). A similar study by Jordan and Troth (2004) illuminated this complicated challenge between individual and group emotional intelligence. “Discussion of emotions detracted from performance,” they wrote, “it was ineffective and inappropriate to discuss one’s feelings with fellow members and to successfully complete the task” (p. 211). Ultimately, this challenge demonstrates that a team leader must be aware of the different levels of emotional intelligence within his or her group, but not to be oversensitive to those levels.

To balance, the group itself—leader included—must collectively manage emotional intelligence to be successful. When forming the team, wrote McCallin and Banford (2007), the key question must be whether an individual can function with emotional intelligence in a group, rather than which skill the member brings to the team (p. 388). Much like a leader who over-communicates to others with high emotional intelligence, group success can be challenged by members with low levels of emotional intelligence. “Team members described [individuals who] were so taken up with personal problems that they lacked any awareness of their individual impact on team function” (McCallin & Banford, 2007, p. 388).

Indeed, Druskat and Wolff (2001) found that “some teams suffer because they aren’t aware of emotions at the group level,” (p. 84). Conversely, Othman, Abdullah and Ahmad (2009) found that team members with overly developed emotional intelligence can become “complacent [and] idle, unable to contribute to team effectiveness” (p. 9). To compensate for these diverse challenges and imbalances, individuals in the group must connect with each other

by forging a unique group emotional intelligence out of their own, individual emotional intelligence skills.

All the above challenges—and many challenges regarding group emotional intelligence—point to a lack of set norms for proper emotionally intelligent behavior within the group. The team must create these norms, which “strengthen [the team’s] ability to respond effectively to the kind of emotional challenges a group confronts on a daily basis,” (Druskat & Wolff, 2001, p. 85). Norms “create resources for working with emotions, foster an affirmative environment, and encourage proactive problem solving,” (Druskat & Wolff, 2001, p. 85).

Norms are created by teams “both through self-evaluation and by soliciting feedback from others,” wrote Druskat and Wolff (2001, p. 84). As noted above, a combination of both forms of evaluation is particularly useful. For example, the authors found that one of the most effective norms that emerge from this feedback is the “group’s ability to respond to emotionally challenging situations [with] proactive problem solving,” notably because the “team was in control of its own emotions” and did not let individual egos hinder productivity (p. 86). Paul Martiz, CEO of an international software company, echoed the importance of this norm for handling emotions during a challenge. “If you look at successful groups, inevitably there’s an amalgam of personalities that really enable the group to function at a high level,” he said. “Really great teams have team members who know they are and who they’re not, and they know when . . . to let the other team members make their contribution” (Bryant, 2010). Norms such as these lay the foundation for cohesive group performance.

When norms are in place, group performance is fueled by three general conditions, noted Druskat and Wolff: trust among members, a sense of group identity, and a sense of group efficacy. The norms provide the guidelines for these conditions to create natural behaviors

within the group (2001). Research by Othman et al. (2009) found that together, these conditions and norms often serve to moderate group levels of emotional intelligence. This notably avoids the challenge that individual high and low levels can have on collective performance. “The optimal team effectiveness is achieved when moderate [individual emotional intelligence] combines with high motivation” throughout the team’s performance (p. 8). Ultimately, whether facing high or low group emotional intelligence, moderation through norms and conditions is what creates a high-performing team. This team will also be effective in communicating with other teams, Othman et al.’s study noted, because the desire to be open and cooperative is a natural byproduct of the norms and conditions.

Leadership plays a role in fostering high group emotional intelligence as well. While the onus for maintaining norms and conditions rests on the entire group, McCallin and Bamford (2007) found that transformational leadership “set the tone of the team creating a secure, safe communication climate thus fostering team spirit” (p. 389). Transformational leadership is especially effective because, like the group’s norms and conditions, the leader’s behavior is a moderate and positive influence within the group (Northouse, 2009, p. 3). Research by Kouzes and Posner (2007) backed up Northouse’s findings: “a leader needs to develop cooperative goals and roles, support norms of reciprocity, structure projects to promote joint efforts, and support face-to-face interactions” (p. 233).

These behaviors, when incorporated and modeled in a group with a strong, moderate transformational leader, can avoid many of the challenges associated with poor group emotional intelligence. Indeed, these behaviors can create a high-performing, proactive, and emotionally-intelligent team. The question then becomes: how can a team with a low level of group

emotional intelligence begin to take steps toward becoming a high performing team? A number of experts have created tools, activities and exercises to help answer that question.

Tools to Enhance Emotional Intelligence in Teams

As described above, Druskat and Wolff (2001) identify three critical components to team effectiveness: a sense of shared trust, identity and efficacy. It is their belief that while individuals are capable of working together to productively complete tasks without such foundation, “to be most effective, the team needs to create emotionally intelligent norms – the attitudes and behaviors that support behaviors for building trust, group identity and groups efficacy. The outcome is complete engagement in tasks” (p. 82).

The formation of group norms described in the section above is crucial to enhance a team’s performance. Setting defined norms provides the team with a common language and set of expectations, which then become a shared set of standards of behavior. Building and maintaining a set of behavioral norms within a team allows individuals to identify clear expectations. It also creates an agreed upon set of standards by which members may hold each other accountable. Creating a set of team norms creates a mechanism by which members may share their perspective, provides a language for constructively addressing gaps and allows members to constructively challenge one another.

One tool that could be utilized at this stage is a charge and charter (Weaver & Farrell, 1999). The charge involves defining the team’s overall assignment, what are they expected to produce, what the work would look like if done successfully and how it fits within the broader organization. The charter defines the purpose, goal, roles and supporting procedures (Weaver & Farrell, 1999). Implemented effectively, this discussion and its final documentation provide a great tool for conducting an active dialogue and clear expectations within the team.

In terms of developing team identity, leaders need to be attuned to team emotions and in particular, frustration points which, if unaddressed, can impair team identity and efficacy. Leaders need to constantly create forums that challenge the team to self evaluate, collectively identifying their team's strengths, weaknesses, and modes of interaction. Creating safe methods for team self evaluation is instrumental to helping teams recognize and effectively navigate emotions. "No group ever becomes a team until it can hold itself accountable as team" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 6). At a high level, this would include regularly scheduling time for the team to discuss team effectiveness. Such discussions can be aided if they are anchored by review of data in the form of performance, cost, schedule or process. One quick means of engaging the team in such discussion would include inviting team members to call a process check or norm check. This involves engaging team members by explicitly asking the team "Is this working for us?" It also includes starting meetings by verbally reminding the team of defined norms, then debriefing the team at the end, asking if those norms were followed.

Team Building: SWOT Analysis

The first tool to aid in team building is a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Teams can utilize a SWOT analysis to review team performance, a process or a strategy. With the exercise team members are asked to share beliefs and observations respective to what is working well, not so well, what can be improved and areas of risk.

Materials and Activity

- Flipchart or Whiteboard
- One member draws a large two by two grid, creating four distinct sections down the center.

- Within each quadrant, one of the four following words is written: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

This exercise allows team members to openly share both successes as well as concerns.

Team members identify positive and constructive gaps in the team's performance today (Strengths and Weaknesses), as well as brainstorm solutions and additional concerns of the future (Opportunities and Threats). Done effectively, such an exercise allows team members to share in a controlled format items to celebrate, items to improve and collective thinking and commitment to team identity and efficacy. This exercise can also be utilized to allow a mechanism for teams to express emotions in structured and professional manner, which aids in building the team's trust, identity and belief in their ability to achieve. Are you able to pull in any sources to the SWOT section? Perhaps one that talks about its importance for EQ?

Team Building: Five Team Weaknesses

A second team building tool for use with more advanced teams who have experienced both successes and failures together is the "Five Team Weaknesses" (Lynn, 2007). The exercise is designed to identify the greatest weakness within the team, determine the impact of the weakness, and identify tactics to address those weaknesses.

Materials and Activity

- Team members identify 5-10 people with whom the team works on a regular basis.
- Each of these individuals is asked for five words that describe the team's greatest weakness.
- Team members create one combined list of all words collected.
- Concurrently, each team member creates his or her own list, adding those words to a second combined list of the internal team.

- Ask team members to study both lists. How are the lists similar and different within each list? How are they different? How do the two lists compare?
- Additional questions to discuss: Why is assessing weakness valuable? What surprises were there? What can we do with this information?

This activity can be extremely helpful in allowing a team understand weaknesses and create strategies and tactics to improve those weaknesses. In addition, the exercise can be helpful in identifying types of work that are more prone to create stress points and thus potentially identify categories of work the team is not well suited to take on. Collectively both the SWOT and the Five Weaknesses exercise provide team members structured formats and forums for the team to objectively discuss their work and create opportunities for teams to practice reviewing their work and building their sense of shared trust, identity and efficacy.

Creating High Emotional Competency Against Challenges

We know that all teams – even high performing teams – will encounter moments of high emotion which, if ignored or handled poorly, can significantly harm performance. There are a number of actions and tools that can be employed to create high emotional competency against these challenges. One tool is to proactively establish time to openly discuss challenges and in particular the emotions that can arise. This can be addressed in multiple ways.

Materials and Activity

- Dedicate time for personal check-ins at the beginning of team meetings (a 2-minute verbal check-in, ask participants to choose a color that represents them, use mood as a descriptors, etc).
- Teams should strive to be creative, looking for ways to find humor or positive reflection in the midst of challenge.

Aiding teams in regulating emotions involves proactively anticipating that myriad emotions will arise. With that knowledge, teams can work to identify resources and or internal language to talk through the emotion, therein minimizing the opportunity for the emotion to derail team performance. Creating an acceptable space and method for dealing with the emotion creates the opportunity to use emotion to affirm the team's environment. Teams who can openly and safely share adversity possess the power to bond and turn challenge into a means of further unification!

Principal to effectively sharing challenging emotions is bringing members back to focus on the elements of the situation within their control. Teams need to be reminded that they have work beyond the individual challenges that may be creating anxiety in the moment. Solidifying as a team around the problem to be solved is key to success.

Recognizing Emotion: The Pause Elf

A tool to assist teams in recognizing emotion and appropriately pausing the action to refocus and repurpose energy is called "The Pause Elf" (Lynn, 2007). In the height of emotion, it can become challenging to recognize the potential for emotion to escalate and result in derailing the work of the team. This exercise assigns a specific team member to watch for such signs and call out a literal PAUSE. In addition to putting a stop to potentially derailing emotion, by practicing the pause, each person on the team becomes more aware of his or her own individual behavior when observing emotion in others.

Materials and Activity

- A member of the team draws a pause button.

- The team selects a Pause Elf. This should be someone who team members believe possesses good observation skills. They must also be someone whose opinion the team members will accept.
- The Pause Elf is responsible for pressing the PAUSE button anytime during the meeting, should the Elf believe a team member is at risk of pulling the team off purpose by expressing excessive emotion.
- Following the discussion, members debrief the following questions:
 - Was each team member aware of their need to pause, prior to the Pause Elf calling it out?
 - What signals did the Pause Elf read?
 - What alternative, more productive responses could have been used?

These activities are only a sampling of the many available resources which can be utilized to increase a team's emotional intelligence. After an individual has gained knowledge of the concept of emotional intelligence, a better understanding of his or her own level of emotional intelligence, and how it can be applied in group settings, teams will be poised to take advantage of the activities mentioned above to facilitate a high level of team emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is no longer simply a buzz word; it is a concept which is critical to a team's success. As Bradberry and Greaves state, "those who employ a unique blend of reason and feeling achieve the greatest results (2009, p. 22). The importance of emotional intelligence should never be overlooked. As Druskat and Wolff point out, "a team can have everything going for it – the brightest and most qualified people, access to resources, and a clear mission – but still fail because it lacks group intelligence" (p. 89). Those who achieve a high level of team emotional intelligence will be well positioned for success.

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