

Mental Fitness Practices Checklist: Emotional Intelligence Practices



- Encourage team members to be aware of their own emotions. This can be done individually by completing the following activity. Ask yourself, How do I feel today? Begin by rating your overall sense of wellbeing on a scale of 0 to 100, and write the scores down in a daily log book. If your feelings seem extreme one day, take a minute or two to think about any ideas or associations that seem to be connected with the feeling.
- It is essential to understand what motivates us because this is the driving force that moves us toward our goals. At a staff meeting, invite team members to think about the times when they were most energized or passionate about their work. Discuss what was happening. Have them make a list of the specific environments or activities that were most motivating for them, and that increased their positive energy.
- Encourage team members to demonstrate a sincere interest in getting to know each other. Hold a team-building activity that involves asking questions and gathering information about the people, places or things that are important to team members. As part of this activity, team members can ask questions about the hobbies, interests and aspirations of their colleagues.
- Discuss with team members the importance of being sensitive to the nonverbal cues of others. Key discussion points could include:
 1. Listen carefully to hear and observe the emotions that people are communicating when they speak to you.
 2. Be attentive to their tone of voice, pace of speech, facial expressions and gestures.
 3. Remember that emotion expressed nonverbally may communicate even more than the words that people use.

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- Encourage team members to listen actively to others by completing the following activity. Take a colleague for coffee and practice being an active listener. Demonstrate key skills for active listening, such as focusing, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing what is heard. When something is not understood, active listeners ask for clarification.
- Carry out team-building activities with staff that build positive emotions about being part of the team. Team activities that foster mutual understanding of personal preferences and appreciation of individual differences contribute to the cohesion of the team and to greater ease in working as a collective.
- Complete an Emotional Intelligence Skills inventory with the team and use the results to learn about ways to increase awareness of emotions, and effective ways to manage emotions and communicate positively with others. (An example inventory is available through WMA).
- Applying Calming Strategies is an important consideration in managing emotions. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing can calm us during stressful events. They help interrupt negative thoughts and move forward in a calm and more positive way. Breathe in slowly for five seconds, and then breathe out for five. Focus on your breathing, and repeat this at least five times.
- Encourage team members to build Purposeful Pauses into their daily routines. This involves the practice of noticing or focusing on the present moment through simple actions such as :
 1. *Choosing to start your day rather than letting the day start you.* Begin each day by noticing the sensations of breathing for a few minutes before jumping out of bed.
 2. *Using transitions wisely.* Choose to drive to and from work on some days without the radio or phone. When you arrive at your destination, allow yourself a few moments to sit in the car, noticing your breathing.
 3. *Nourishing yourself.* Mindfully eat your lunch attending to the colours, tastes and smells of the food.
 4. *Walk between meetings.* No emails or texts—feeling your feet on the floor, the air on your skin, and the possibility of greeting colleagues as you pass by.

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- Encourage team members to take emotional breaks when feelings become stressful or overwhelming. Emotional breaks could include taking a walk, recording or writing down stressful emotions, or chatting with a trusted friend in order to regain composure or perspective.
- Hold a discussion with team members on Positive Communication. Begin the discussion by identifying strengths and successes associated with communication practices within the team. Next, identify areas for potential enhancement or development related to team communication and action-oriented strategies that might be beneficial.
- When conflicts arise in the workplace, encourage team members to apply win-win problem-solving approaches. Such collaborative approaches place emphasis on developing and maintaining positive relationships that work toward mutual need or goal fulfillment. Targeted training in conflict management or resolution practices may be a beneficial professional activity to pursue with the full workplace team.

