



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 46 – November 11 – 15, 2024
Emotional Intelligence

Introduction

If we are not aware of our emotions and the emotions of others, it can be very difficult to recognize when someone needs support or to ask for help when we need it. Do you check in with yourself throughout the day? If part of our safety ethic is to be committed to act safely and to invest in the safety of others, our effectiveness is often lost with that lost connection.

Monday - Emotional Intelligence

Considering recent events across the United States and around the world, 2024 has turned out to be a tumultuous, divisive, and violent year. At any hour of the day, you can turn on the news and hear reports of tragic loss and indifference. It is clear that there are people in the world who are hurting and struggling. While we can't solve everyone's problems, we can invest in ourselves and our emotional intelligence.

Psychology Today defines emotional intelligence as “the ability to identify and manage our emotions and the emotions of others”. Emotional intelligence includes three skills: emotional awareness, emotion management, and the ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving.

We are commonly tasked with ensuring work is done safely. If we are not aware of our emotions and the emotions of others, it can be very difficult to recognize when someone needs support or to ask for help when we need it. Do you check in with yourself throughout the day? When was the last time you just spent time thinking about how you feel or asking someone else how they were feeling? We go through a lot in our daily lives and we often spend more time with our coworkers than we do with our families. It is natural that we would turn to those we frequently spend time with for support, even just to listen. We can also alienate people very quickly if we don't make time for them or if we are not open and approachable. Once that happens, a connection and the support it can bring are lost. If part of our safety ethic is to be committed to act safely and to invest in the safety of others, our effectiveness is often lost with that lost connection.



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Tuesday - Emotional Awareness

In theory, emotional awareness sounds pretty easy but it can be difficult to apply. EQI.org defines emotional awareness as “knowing when feelings are present in ourselves and others”. Have there been times where you genuinely didn’t know how to feel about something? Have there been times where your feelings about one thing have impacted your feelings on something else totally unrelated? Most likely, your coworkers aren’t telling you everything they are feeling or everything that is going on in their lives. We all know from experience that when we are emotional we can make bad and unsafe decisions. If we don’t recognize when someone is struggling and if we don’t reach out when we need support, how can we truly invest in safety?

One of the quickest and easiest ways to improve emotional awareness is by asking others how they’re doing and listening to their reply. It is obvious when someone is waiting for you to stop talking so they can say what they want to say. It makes it crystal clear that they are not actively listening to you and caring for your emotional health and that is a pretty quick way to lose that connection we talked about yesterday. Also, don’t stop at your ears - listen to them and look at them. Pay attention to their facial expressions and their body language. Often times that will tell you more than the words they speak and will help you to figure out how you can best support them. Don’t forget to spend the time you need to process things and recognize your feelings so you can reach for support and feel comfortable stepping away from a task when your emotions may be working against you.

Wednesday - Harnessing and Applying Your Emotions

Think about the last time you worked with someone who was passionate about the task at hand. Did you feel their energy? Did it impact you? Now, think about the last time you ran across someone who was not happy with where they were or what they were doing. Did their energy impact you? Were you able to feel or sense the emotions of either the ‘happy camper’ or the ‘gloomy Gus’? A person who is motivated and engaged in their work can accomplish great things and motivate those around them. On the flip side, a person who is unmotivated and disengaged can wreak havoc on team spirit and safety.



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When thinking about harnessing your emotions think back to a time that you shared an idea with someone and it wasn't well received. Think back to when you made a suggestion that was immediately shut down or ignored. Sometimes when our ideas are not well received, we can be tempted to fold our arms, sit back in our chairs, and close ourselves off. While reading the travel blog of a top executive within EnPro, a phrase jumped out as something that we need to think about and talk more about. The blog discussed the need to recognize that *we are not our ideas*. It can be very hard to recognize that our value and worth does not simply come from our thoughts and ideas. Just because we have an idea that does not work does not mean we are not capable of contributing. For some of us, this is a hard concept to truly adopt. We want to participate and be part of a team but that enthusiasm can quickly fade when our pride takes a hit. The next time that happens, take a breather and say to yourself 'I am not my ideas and the value placed or not placed on my ideas does not mean that I am not valuable to the team'. Remember that just because someone does not like an idea you have does not mean they don't like you!

Thursday - Emotional Management

The website www.skillsyouneed.com states that "emotions are not consciously controlled". This explains why an emotional response may quite often come off as impulsive and uncontrolled, such as crying, yelling, or avoiding the problem. This also helps to explain why we can at times lose control of our tone and words, why sadness can creep up on us and why we can get lost in frustration.

As we all know, life is not always fun and easy and there are very hard things that people have to deal with. Keep in mind that you likely do not know everything that is going on in your coworker's lives, and you likely don't share all of your troubles with those at work. We must invest the time and effort to recognize emotions so we can invest in others and help them to avoid a potential injury. Have you ever had an interaction with someone that you regretted later because of how you handled it? Do you think that you have missed an opportunity to help someone because you were not open to them when they reached out? Have you shut the door on someone who was reaching out to support you because you were frustrated, angry, or sad?

Be mindful of these concepts and work on implementing them into your daily lives.



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Friday - Find It First Friday

Take a few moments today to talk with your teams about things you learned from this week's Safety Briefing. What surprised you? Did you find something new to focus on or something that you are going to try to be more aware of? Did you set any goals to help increase your emotional intelligence?