Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Emotions and the Workplace: A Look at Emotional Intelligence

As human beings, we display a wide variety of emotions (anger, happiness, anxiety). So wouldn't it be unrealistic to assume that we are able to shut down our emotions when we walk through the doors at work? Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a buzz term that is being frequently used in more in organizations when selecting and training employees in leadership positions. Most organizations look at technical skills, previous experience or education as deciding factors in the workplace. But what about our "soft skills", like the ability to communicate with others, work well in a team, or have self-awareness? How do those skills factor into our workplace success?

What is Emotional Intelligence (EI):

Daniel Goleman, psychologist and leader in philosophy of EI, describes EI as "managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals."

What are the components of EI?

- **Awareness of oneself** – the ability to recognize emotions within yourself and understand the impact they have on others. Those that are strong in this dimension can manage their emotions and express a wide range of emotions appropriately.
- **Awareness of others** – the ability to accurately read the emotional states of those around you.
- **Interaction with others** – the ability to use your awareness of others to build relationships, work in teams and develop support.
- **Resilience** – the ability to handle changes, learn from mistakes or recover from setbacks.

Someone with healthy emotional intelligence will have the ability to manage their emotions, communicate honestly yet respectfully, and handle stressful situations. These are skills that are needed in the workplace, especially if your job includes interaction with others (whether they are customers or coworkers).

The big question is: Do our emotions and our ability to manage them appropriately affect our success in the workplace?

Research would say yes. Studies have been conducted to make a case for EI in the workplace on positions of every level from top-level executives to telephone customer service representatives. Here's one example: At a major skin care company, sales agents that were chosen based on their Emotional Intelligence competencies sold an average of $91,000 more than other sales agents for a net revenue increase of over 2 million dollars. The employee turnover rate also decreased 60%.

If you would like to explore your own Emotional Intelligence visit the following site for more information: http://www.eiconsortium.org/: A group of leading researchers have compiled the most recent information about Emotional Intelligence here. One can find recommended books, studies and a list of different EI assessment tools on this website.

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