

Action Plan

Emotional Intelligence is a collection of skills that can be built. Use this step-by-step activity plan to help guide you closer to your goals of improving your abilities with specific EQ skills. Remember to use the **SMART** goal setting criteria for each goal.

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Realistic
Time Bound

Below are the three EI skills or behaviors identified by other Safety Professionals as most necessary for success in this career.

1. **Flexibility**
2. **Problem-Solving**
3. **Interpersonal Relationships**

Write down up to three strategies that you will undertake to improve on any or all these skills. See Pages 2-3 Sample Strategies for EQ Skills Improvement for a list to choose from or develop your own.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now, transfer your SMART goals into the action plan template below.

SMART Goal	Time Frame	Benefits	Measure of Success	Support and Resources Needed	Potential Barriers
EXAMPLE- Listen to others	In team meetings Starting from today	Other people will listen to me I will get to hear everyone's views	Feedback from the team to say that I am listening to them more Take actions that other people have suggested	From the team to give me honest feedback	Time - often do not have time to listen to views but just need to give instructions. If this is the case need to tell people at the beginning of the meeting

I commit to this action plan _____
(signature and date)



Sample Strategies for EQ Skill Improvement

Flexibility

Definition: adapting emotions, thoughts and behaviors to unfamiliar, unpredictable, and dynamic circumstances or ideas.

- Keep track of any time you are swayed or influenced by other's perspective. Too much flexibility can pose as many challenges as too little.
- Identify three core beliefs or values in your work life (ex. Integrity, Honesty, Partnership, Compliance, etc.) Come back to these when flexibility is asked of you.
- Share the reason(s) why you veered from a particular course of action, so that your colleagues can understand your logic.
- Reward and praise your employees/clients/colleagues for their new ideas and creations.
- Review key metrics to see if they allow flexibility in how to achieve these goals.
- Host a brainstorming session with a client and/or other partners (underwriters, etc.) to see alternate perspectives.
- Delegate tasks to practice building your flexibility.
- Try a new method of communication that you are comfortable with.
- Accommodate different learning styles amongst your clients, colleagues, and team, and offer them alternatives (i.e., mentoring, e-learning, hands on training).
- Change is made easier when you are armed with sufficient information to make a credible decision, so write a business case for your idea.
- Check in with your instinct before you say yes to a proposed change.
- Write a list of what emotions you feel or your fears when you resist a change.
- Encourage constructive disagreement and be open to hearing it.
- Before you speak or communicate about a change, practice taking 5 deep breaths or counting to 20.

Problem Solving

Definition: able to find solutions to problems when emotions are involved and understand how emotions impact decision making

- Explain the problem to a trusted peer. Have them ask questions but not provide solutions. (A question to which you do not know the answer is a sign that you need a greater understanding of the problem before you begin to solve it.)
- Label the emotions involved in your problem- yours and those involved.
- Check out how a colleague would or is approaching the problem
- Explaining your interpretation of a problem to at least two people, one who is connected closely to the problem and the other who is a neutral third party.
- If leading a change, communicate positive emotions within the group (e.g., recall a successful event, use humor, or hold a meeting outside of the office).
- Alternatively, share details and analysis of the costs of the problem for those that may be more receptive to that.
- Step back and manage the conflict as a leader and use it as an opportunity to develop your team. This principle is conflict management instead of conflict resolution.
- However, be aware that you still want to appear emotionally invested in the decisions you make—you just



aren't allowing your emotions to derail you from making a decision

- Commit to written prioritization of problems by severity, frequency, and other factors (overall risk, customer importance).
- Use an alternative perspective- ask "What would happen if..."
- Break problems into smaller parts and subgoals.
- Review recent decisions and consider how the solution could have been different but still successful
- Complete a [problem statement](#) for your biggest problem.
- Complete a 5 Why for a problem you currently have

Interpersonal Relationships

Definition: the skill of developing and maintaining mutually satisfying relationships that are characterized by trust and compassion.

- Set up frequent 15-minute chats or check-ins
- Swap stories of imperfection; Share a story of a failure of yours and what you have learned. Bonus points if you share this with someone or a group after *they* have failed.
- Find some work- and culture- appropriate humor to use.
- Recognize others for their work in the way that they may benefit from. Not everyone wants to be brought to the front of a room. Consider reading [The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace](#).
- Practice [Radical Candor](#) after learning about it and raising your empathy. If you need to share honest truth, write it down first and rephrase with the [Sandwich Method](#).
- Make a list of people in your organization who have helped you in the past year. Use that list to develop a "favor" chart. Ask them what they need help with and follow through.
- Try switching from closed ended questions (e.g., "Is your part of the report complete?" or "Did you have a good weekend?") to open ended questions (e.g., "How have you been finding your part of the report?" or "What plans do you have for the weekend?")
- Brainstorm a list of questions that spark conversation and keep it handy so you can show your interest in the individual and not just in the work they do.
- Write down how you interact with others when you are in a comfortable environment. For example, are you more talkative with close friends? Can you joke with your family? Try applying some of these strategies to other, less comfortable situations. For example, if you joke with your family try using lighthearted humor when you feel uncomfortable meeting new people.
- Join additional teams, specifically cross functional, within your organization to help build connections.
- With clients, front line workers, and members of management, build a rapport before you start talking about Safety.
- If you have difficulty remembering names, say the person's name three times in a conversation when you meet them. You can also take notes on the back of business cards or in Outlook Contacts. Before you meet with them again, refresh your memory on their personal details.
- Ask people for favors, particularly if they don't like you! This is called the Ben Franklin effect and can actually turn an enemy into a friend.



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