

# 10 Ways to Build Emotional Intelligence in Your Workplace



Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to identify, use, understand and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathise with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.

People with high EQ can recognise their own emotional states as well as the emotional states, needs and concerns of others, and use this understanding to better communicate and interact with others.

According to Jeanne Segal, PH. D. and Melinda Smith, M.A. of [Helpguide.org](https://www.helpguide.org), and authors of **Five Key Skills for Raising Emotional Intelligence** we can all raise our EQs by developing these five key skills: 1. the ability to quickly reduce stress; 2. the ability to recognize and manage your emotions; 3. the ability to connect with others using non-verbal communication; 4. the ability to use humour and play to deal with challenges and 5. the ability to resolve conflicts positively and with confidence.

**Here are 10 ways to develop emotional intelligence skills in your workplace:**

**1. Stress Busting Step 1 - Realise when you're stressed:** The first step to reducing stress is recognising what stress feels like. How does your body feel when you're stressed? Are your stomach or muscles tight or sore? Hands clenched? Breath shallow? Being aware of your body's physical response to stress will help you regulate tension when it occurs.

**2. Stress Busting step 2 - Identify your stress response:** If you tend to become angry or agitated under stress, you will respond best to stress-relieving activities that quiet you down. If you tend to become depressed or withdrawn, you will respond best to stress-relieving activities that are stimulating. If you tend to freeze, you need stress-relieving activities that provide both comfort and stimulation.

**3. Stress Busting step 3 - Discover and use the stress-busting techniques that work best for you:** The best way to reduce stress quickly is by engaging one or more of your senses: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Each person responds differently to sensory input, so you need to find things that are soothing and/or energising to you. For example, if you're a visual person you can relieve stress by surrounding yourself with uplifting images. If you're an auditory person, you might find that listening to music or the sound of a water fountain will quickly help reduce your stress levels.

**4. Develop emotional awareness:** Many people are disconnected from their emotions - especially strong core emotions such as anger, sadness, fear and joy. This might be the result of negative childhood experiences that taught you to try to shut off your feelings. Although we can distort, deny, or numb our feelings, we can't eliminate them. In order to be emotionally healthy and emotionally intelligent, you must reconnect to your core emotions, accept them and become comfortable with them. When you can manage stress, you'll feel more able to reconnect to strong or unpleasant emotions and change the way you experience and respond to your feelings. You can develop your emotional awareness by working with [Helpguide's free 'Ride the Wild Horse' mindfulness meditation](#) in their **Bring Your Life into Balance** toolkit. This meditation will help you get in touch with difficult emotions and manage uncomfortable feelings.

**5. Non-verbal communication:** Successful non-verbal communication depends on your ability to manage stress, recognise your own emotions and understand the signals you're sending out and receiving. When communicating, focus on the other person, make eye contact with them and pay attention to non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, posture and the pace of the conversation.



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**6. Laughter will help you take hardship in your stride:** Moments of laughter and play at work allow you to view your frustrations and disappointments from new perspectives, survive annoyances, hard times and setbacks.

**7. Gentle humour:** Using gentle humour can help you say things that might be otherwise be difficult to express, without creating a flap.

**8. Being playful:** Playful communication can simultaneously relieve fatigue and relax your body, which allows you to re-energise and accomplish more at work.

**9. Loosen up to be more creative:** When you loosen up, you free yourself of rigid ways of thinking and being, allowing you to think more creatively and see things in new ways.

**10. Aim to resolve conflicts in a trust-building way:** Stay focused in the present moment. When you are not holding on to old hurts and resentments, you can recognise the reality of a current situation, and view it as a new opportunity for resolving old feelings. Choose your arguments and consider what is worth arguing about and what is not. Give up any urge to punish or seek revenge. It takes two people to keep a conflict going. You can choose to disengage from a conflict, even if you still disagree.

**Helpguide's Bring Your Life Into Balance Toolkit** is a f.ree training course that can help you develop your emotional intelligence skills. The toolkit is a step-by-step guide for progressively acquiring the skills you need - rapidly reducing stress and connecting to your emotions - to improve your emotional intelligence, help achieve your goals and bring your life into balance.

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