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Emotional Intelligence and Leadership in Health Care

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- Providers should always evaluate the limitations of diagnostic and screening tools, considering their potential for false results as well as any ethical implications.
- It is the responsibility of course participants to critically evaluate the evidence from multiple sources to guide professional practice.

About me

- Clinical and consulting psychologist
- 30 years working in health and mental healthcare
- I work with leaders across healthcare, private business, and elite sports, helping them enhance influence, resilience, performance, and balance.
- I bring a distinctive blend of psychological insight, strategic leadership acumen, and deep commitment to cultivating sustainable success.



Learning Objectives

After this course, participants will be able to

-  List the five core domains of emotional intelligence.
-  Describe the impact of high versus low emotional intelligence behaviors on teamwork and organizational culture.
-  Explain evidence-based strategies to enhance self-regulation and empathy in a healthcare setting.

History of Emotional Intelligence

Early Foundations (1900-1980)

- Edward Thorndike (1920) first described *social intelligence* as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls—to act wisely in human relations.”
- David Wechsler (1940s) broadened intelligence test to include “non-intellective” factors, suggest emotions influence intelligent behavior
- Howard Garner (1983) introduced multiple intelligences, which included intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence-precursors to EI

History of Emotional Intelligence

Scientific Formulation (1990–1994)

- Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) formally coined *emotional intelligence* as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.”
- Their work positioned EI as a measurable cognitive skill, distinct from personality or IQ.

History of Emotional Intelligence

Popularization and Leadership Application (1995–Present)

- Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence* translated academic research into an accessible leadership model, arguing that EI predicts success more strongly than IQ.
- Goleman and colleagues Boyatzis & McKee extended EI to organizational leadership, defining five core competencies: *self-awareness*, *self-regulation*, *motivation*, *empathy*, and *social skills*.
- Meta-analyses confirmed EI's predictive value for job performance, leadership and well-being.
- In healthcare, research demonstrated that EI enhances team collaboration, empathy, resilience, and patient outcomes.
- Recent literature highlights EI as essential in interprofessional education and allied health training, embedding it in leadership, communication, and patient safety initiatives.

Why EI Training is Important

 Direct impact on patient outcomes

 Reduces medical errors

 Protects mental health

 Enhances collaboration

 Drives career advancement

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

-  Logical reasoning
-  Analytical reasoning ability
-  Linguistic skills
-  Spatial orientation



How well you learn, retain and recall information.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to read the soft skills of human interaction and use it to positive ends.



Mass General Hospital Institute of Health Professions

“Emotional intelligence in healthcare fosters environments¹ that promote empathy, understanding, and collaboration, and is a cornerstone for effective leadership.”

Mass General Hospital Institute of Health Professions

- Performance: O'Boyle et al. (2011)
- Satisfaction & wellbeing: Miao et al. (2017)
- Leadership: Harms & Credé (2010)
- Healthcare: Arora et al. (2010); McCallin & Bamford (2020)

Healthcare Relevance

High EQ clinicians reduce medical errors by staying calm under pressure.

Teams with emotionally intelligent leaders show better collaboration, lower turnover, and stronger patient outcomes.

EQ training reduces burnout and compassion fatigue

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

I know when to speak about my personal problems to others

When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times when I faced similar obstacles and overcame them

I expect that I will do well on most things I try

Other people find it easy to confide in me

I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people (reverse score).

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

Some of the major events in my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important

When my mood changes, I see new possibilities

Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.

I am aware of my emotions as I experience them

I expect good things to happen

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

I like to share my emotions with others

When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.

I arrange events others enjoy

I seek out activities that make me happy

I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others

When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me

By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.

I know why my emotions change

When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

I have control over my emotions

I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.

I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on

I compliment others when they have done something well

I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ Emotional Intelligence

When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself

When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas

When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail. (reverse scored)

I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them

I help other people feel better when they are down

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

✓ **Emotional Intelligence**

I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles

I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.

It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do (reverse scored)

1

Never

2

Rarely

3

Sometimes

4

Often

5

Very Often

Low Emotional Intelligence in Action

Hospital EHR rollout — staff frustrated, morale low.

Event: Charge nurse reacts defensively:

- Raises voice: 'This is the system we have — deal with it.'
- Ignores emotions, rushes agenda.
- Dismisses allied health input.
- Focuses only on compliance.



✓ Emotional Intelligence

Outcome

- Tension unresolved, staff feel unheard.
- Resistance grows, patient satisfaction drops.
- Burnout rises, teamwork erodes.



High Emotional Intelligence

Event: During a staff meeting, a charge nurse with high EI:

- Self-regulates her own frustration before speaking.
- Acknowledges emotions in the room.
- Listens actively and validates concerns.
- Reframes motivation: shared goal of safe, high-quality care.
- Facilitates collaboration by inviting and amplifying ideas.



Outcome

- Meeting ends with a pilot improvement.
- Staff report feeling heard and valued.
- Patient satisfaction scores improve.
- The system is reframed as manageable rather than threatening.



Scenario Comparison: Low EI vs High EI in Healthcare Leadership

Low EI Response

- Raises voice, dismisses concerns.
- Ignores emotional cues, rushes agenda.
- Excludes allied health input.
- Focus only on compliance.

Outcome:

- Staff feel unheard, resentment grows.
- Patient satisfaction declines.
- Burnout and turnover risk increase.

VS

High EI Response

- Pauses, regulates frustration.
- Acknowledges emotions in room.
- Actively listens and validates concerns.
- Reframes motivation: safe, quality care.

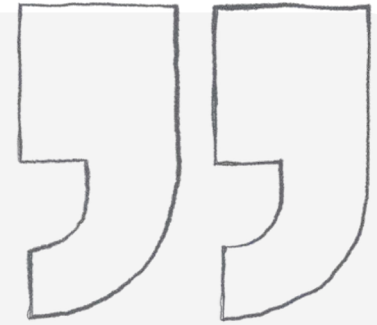
Outcome:

- Collaboration improves.
- Staff feel valued and engaged.
- Patient satisfaction scores rise.

✓ Emotional Intelligence

“The most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence... Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and endless supply of smart ideas, but this still won’t make a great leader.”

Daniel Goleman, *What Makes a Leader*



Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

74%

The most important
leadership
characteristic

28%

Feel their leaders
demonstrate this
adequately



✓ Emotional Intelligence

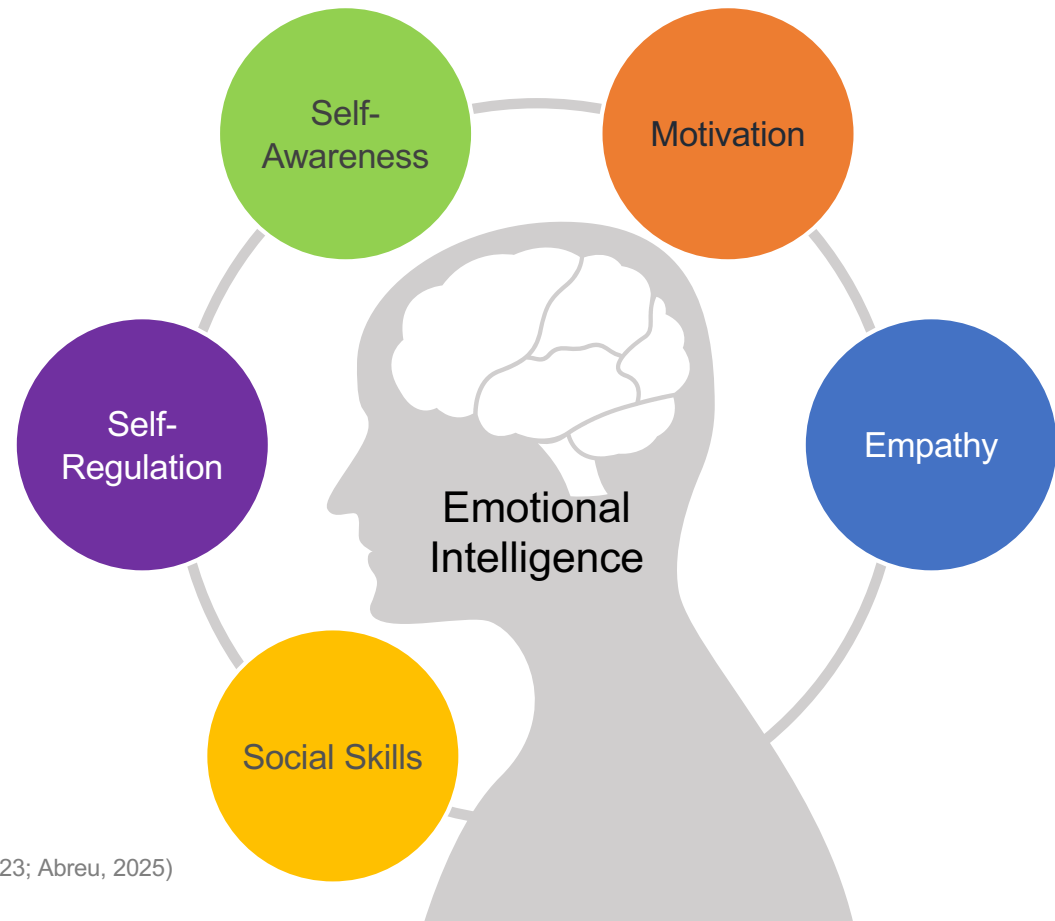
“Emotional intelligence, more than any other factor... accounts for 85% to 90% of success at work. IQ is a threshold competence.

You need it, but it doesn't make you a star. Emotional intelligence can.”

Warren Bennis

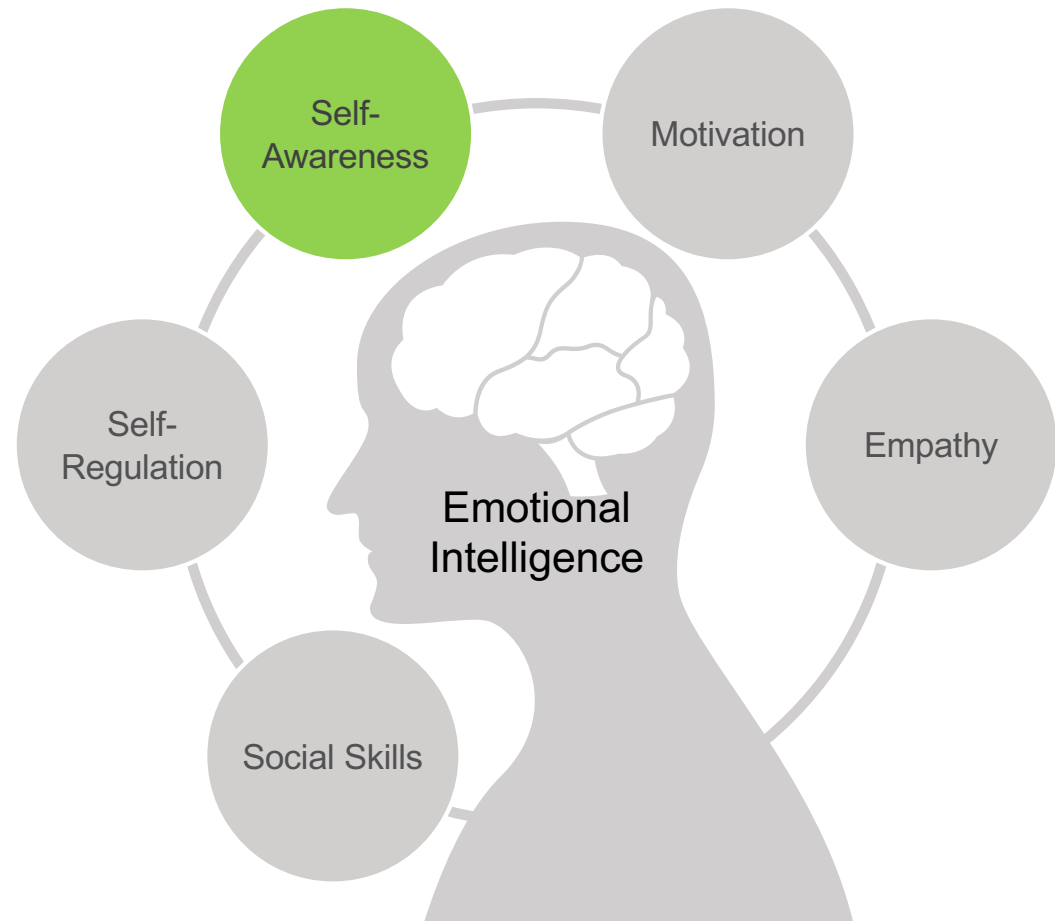


Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains



Maity, 2025; Powell et al., 2024; Sahney, 2024; Hashmi, 2024; McNulty, 2023; Abreu, 2025)

Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains



Examples of Low Self-Awareness

You turn team events into something about you

Being passive aggressive

You avoid emotions or become defensive

You feel the need to be the center of attention



Self-Awareness

- Awareness of your feelings.
- Awareness of intensity of feelings.
- Awareness of the effects of the feelings personally and at work.
- Ability to deal with emotions.



Strategies to Strengthen EI

Self-Awareness:

- Reflective journaling
- Mind/body check in
- 360 feedback
- Guided reflective rounds



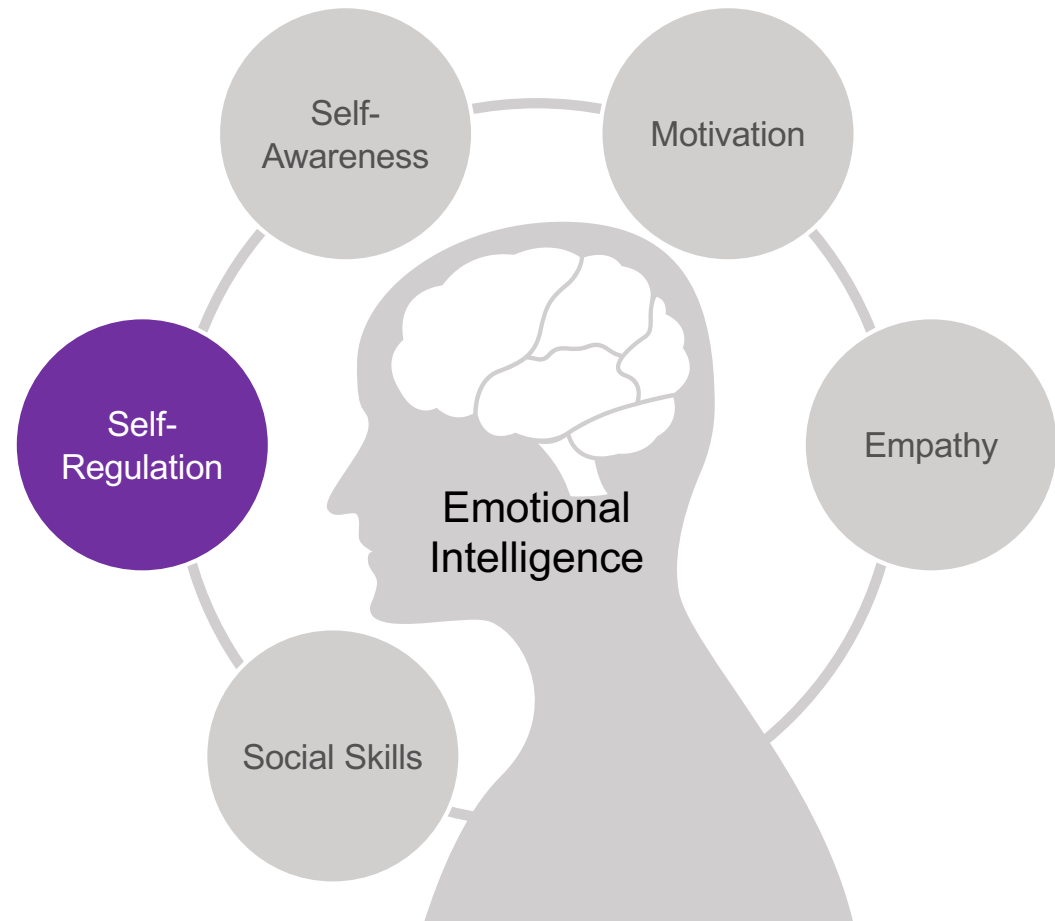
Strategies to Strengthen EI

Self-Awareness:

- Cognitive reframing
- Professional growth strategies
- Mentorship and supervision
- Integrative team activities



Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains





Examples of High Self-Regulation

Identify when your behavior is unproductive and stay focused

You are adaptable and flexible when change happens

You take responsibility for your actions and inactions

Self-Regulation



You manage distressing emotions well



You know your strengths and weaknesses



You are capable under pressure

Your Brain and Self-Regulation

Your brain is remarkable



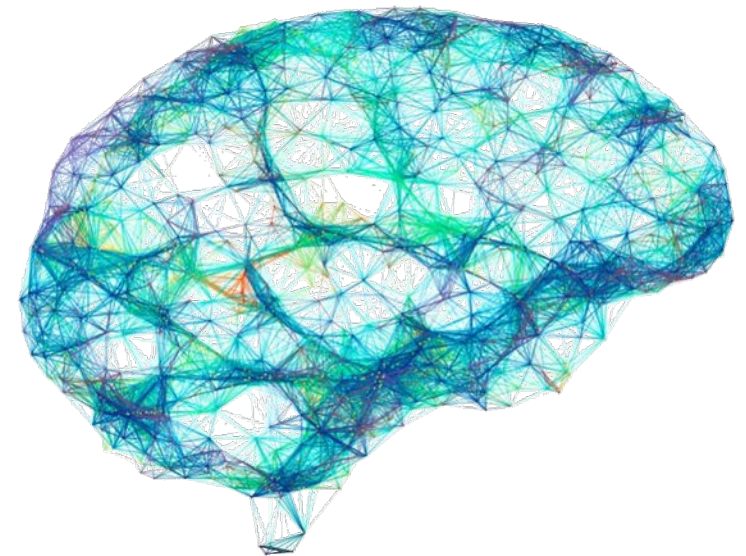
Reptilian Brain

- Six month
- Fight/Flight
- Survival functions
- No sense of self and no impulse control
- Amygdala (0-10) by birth



Mammalian Brain

- Six years
- Purpose is to relieve stress/anxiety
- Develops short-cuts to rational thinking
- Low impulse control so immediate relief
- Wants to belong



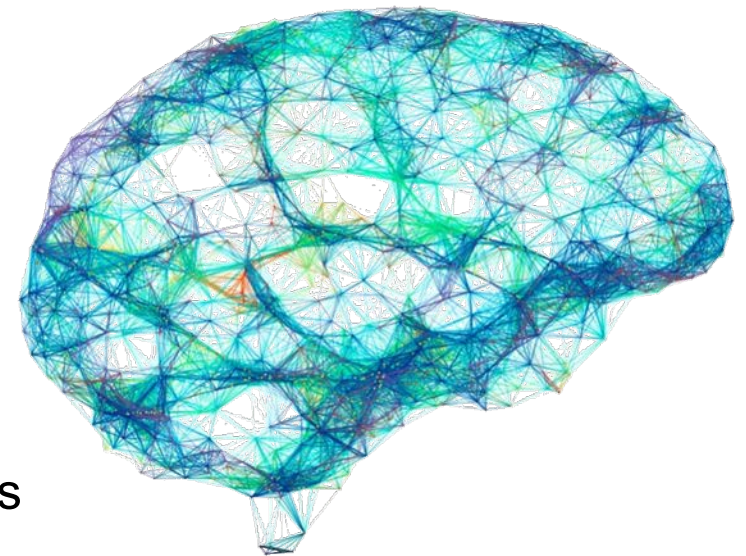
Lower 2/3 Together

- 98% of energy sent to brain
- Processed 4 billion bits/second
- Here and now
- Reacts much faster when not hooked up to third brain
- Self and not wise
- Visual
- Read facial expression
- Reacts from gut feelings



Third Brain is the Neocortex

- Not fully developed until mid 20s
- Only brain that ever rests
- Executive functioning
- Past and future focus
- Parent/mentor for lower two brains
- More highly developed than any other species

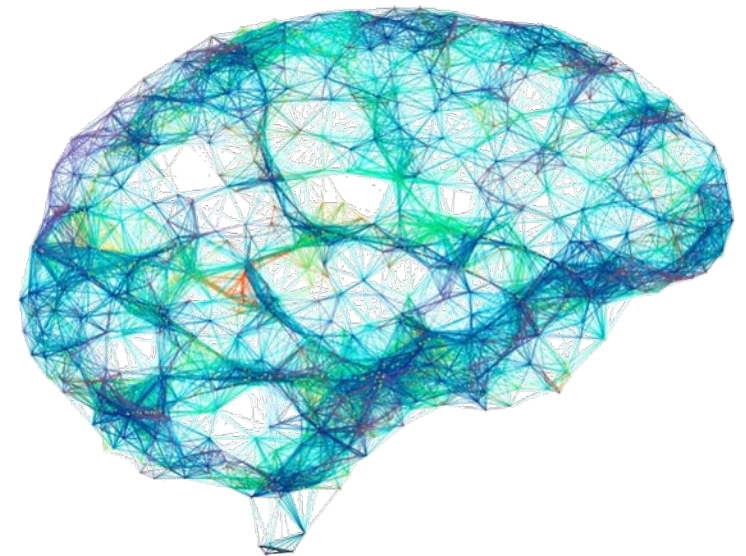


Disconnection of Lower Two and Upper Brain

- Reaction time goes down
- Self regulation is very difficult

How to increase the chances of staying connected

- Plan for disconnection
- Meditative activities
- Self soothe (stress management)





“Helping people better manage their upsetting feelings — anger, anxiety, depression, pessimism, and loneliness—is a form of disease prevention.”

Daniel Goleman, *What Makes a Leader*

Strategies to Strengthen EI

Self-Regulation:

- Breathing techniques
- 90 Second rule
- Mindful micro breaks
- Cognitive reframing



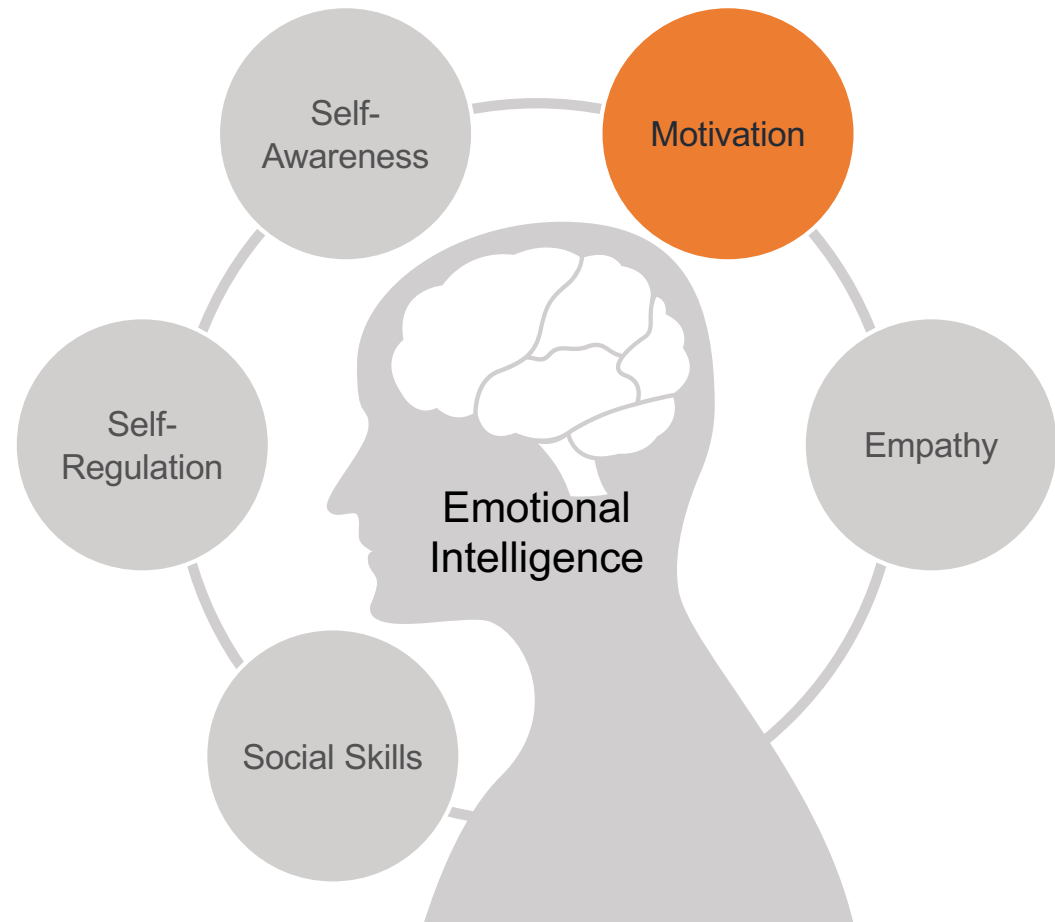
Strategies to Strengthen EI

Self-Regulation:

- Environmental supports
- Reflective learn practices
- Integration into daily routine



Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains



Self Motivation

- Achieve our goals
- Improve our job performance
- Cope with future change
- Be powerful
- Determined in part by our attitude

Examples of Motivation

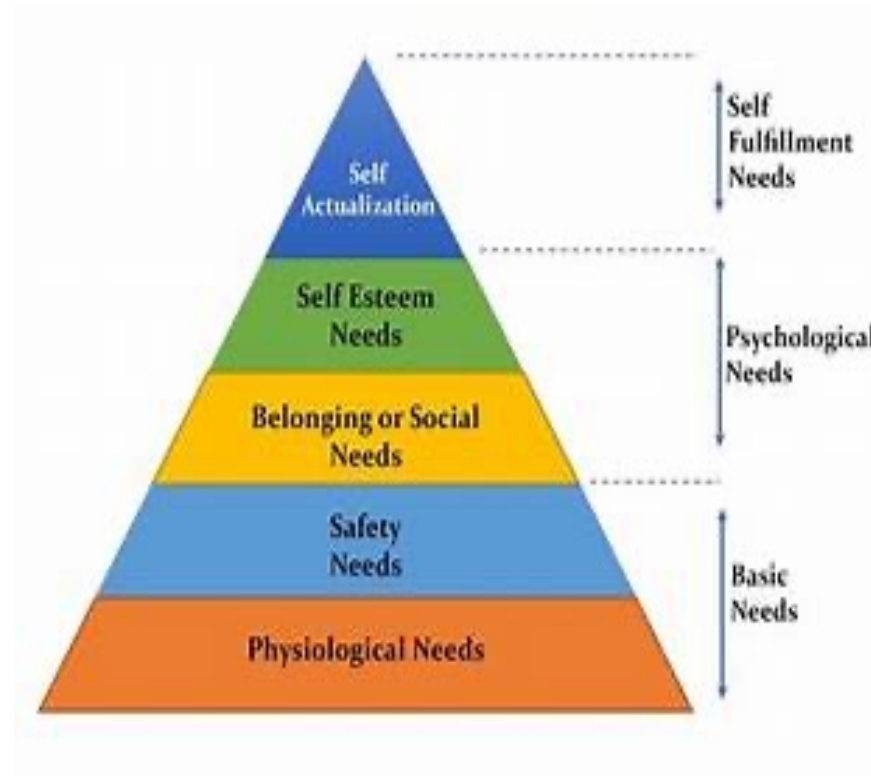
You are driven to improve and meet higher standards

You seek to overcome things that are not satisfactory

You show persistence to achieve at high level

You reflect on what personally motivates you

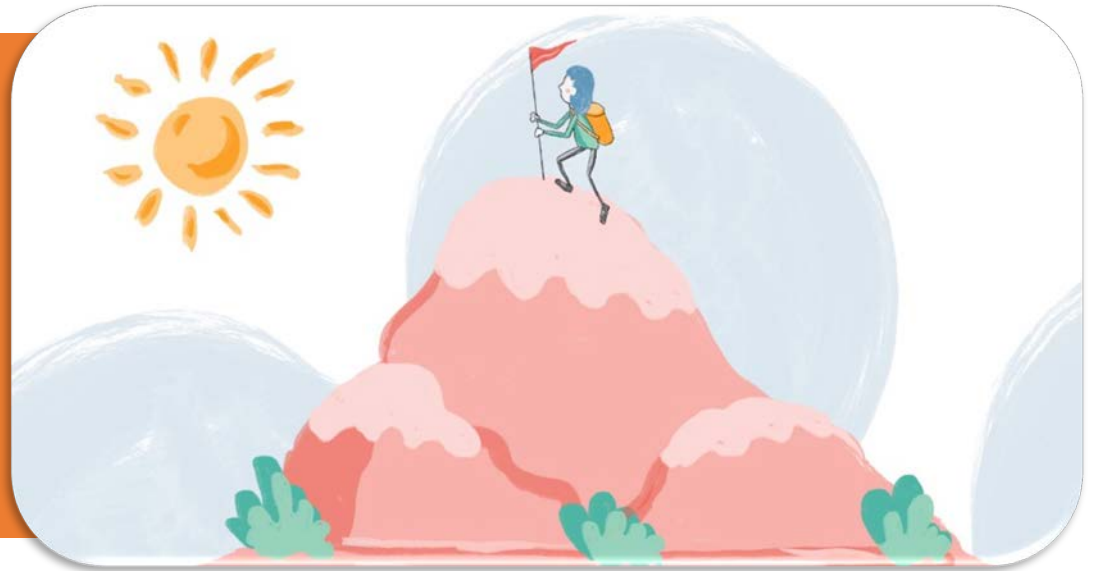
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Strategies to Strengthen EI

Motivation:

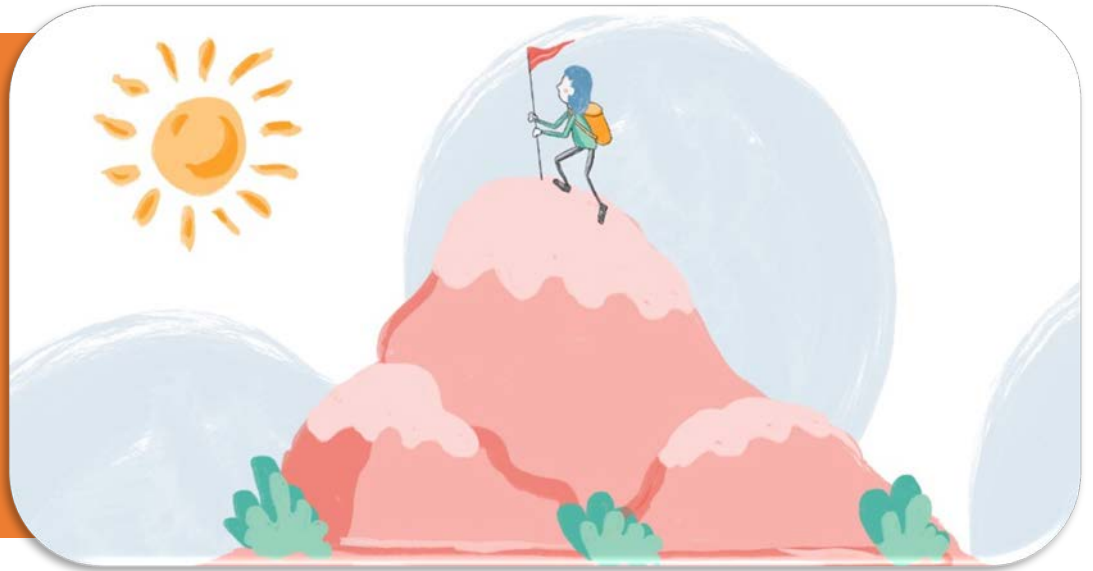
- Clarify the why
- SMART micro goals
- Strength based practices
- Energy management



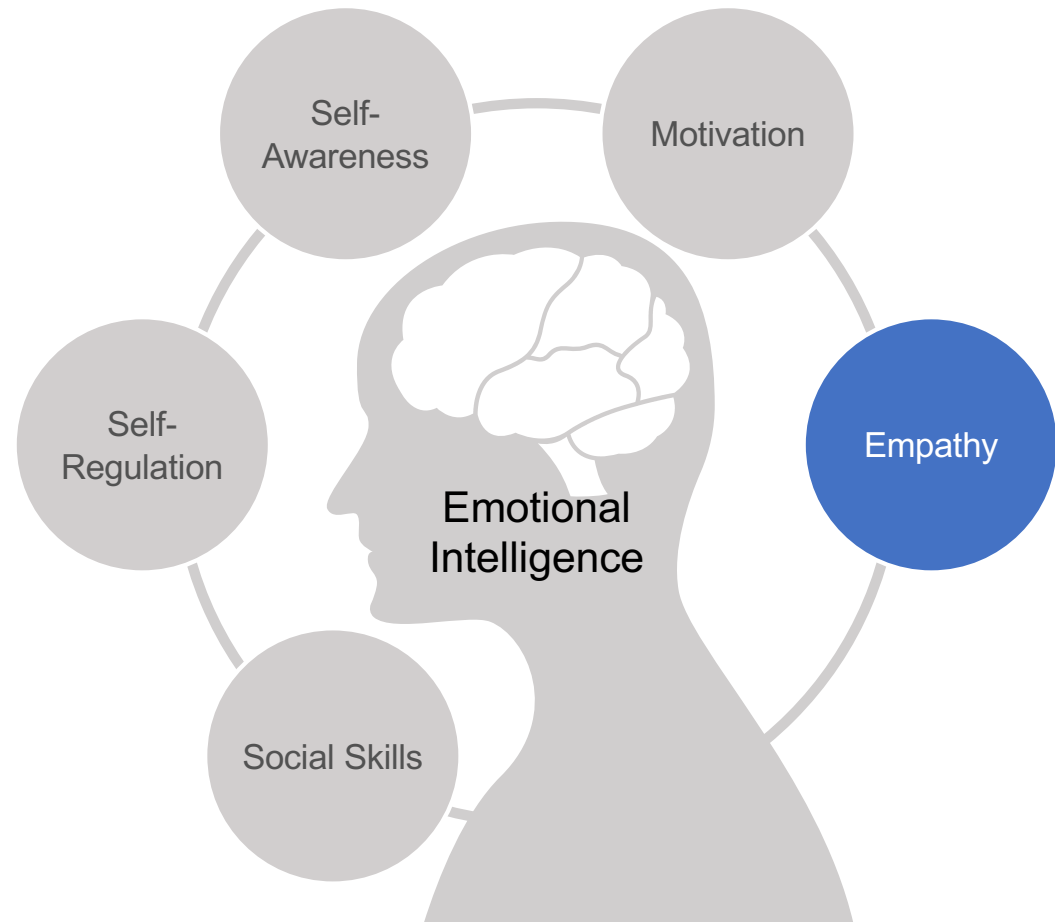
Strategies to Strengthen EI

Motivation:

- Recognition rituals
- Transparent communication



Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains



✓ Emotional Intelligence

Awareness of Others

- Empathy
Being aware of other's feelings and concerns
- Service orientation
Meeting customers needs (and colleagues)
- Active listening
Be positive, confirm what you heard, quiet your inner voice
- Rapport
Matching and mirroring body language



✓ Emotional Intelligence

Examples of Empathy



You recognize
body language of
others and adjust

You form alliances
and relationships
easily

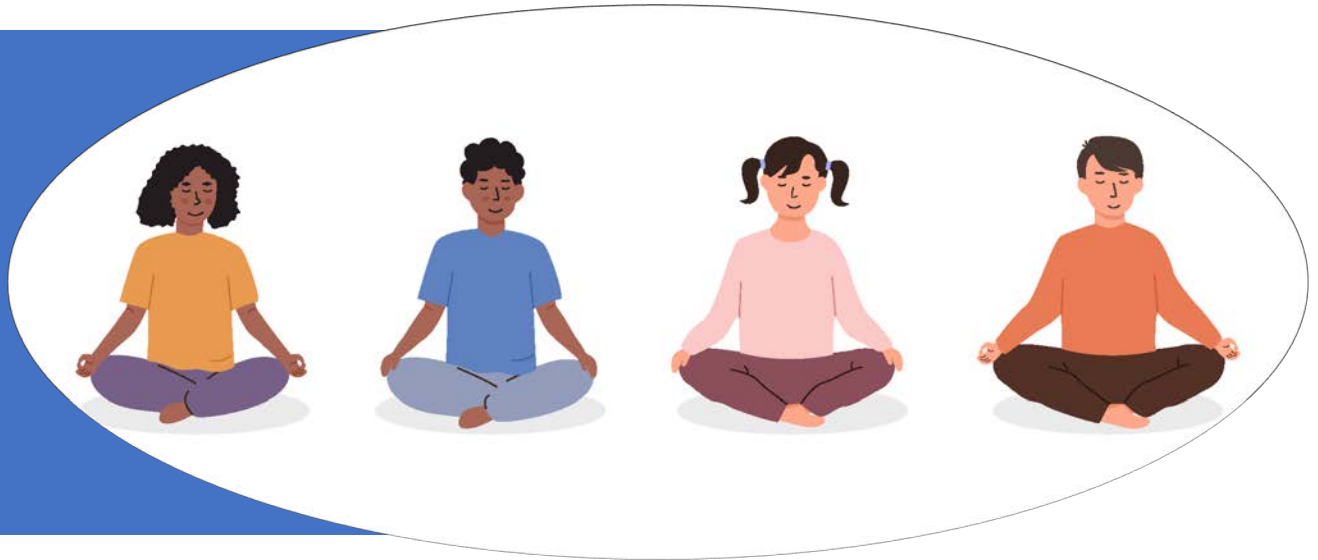
You can deal with
the extreme
emotions of others
easily

You are able to
lead others with
better
understanding

Strategies to Strengthen EI

Empathy:

- Perspective-taking
- Narrative medicine
- Boundary training
- Simulation training



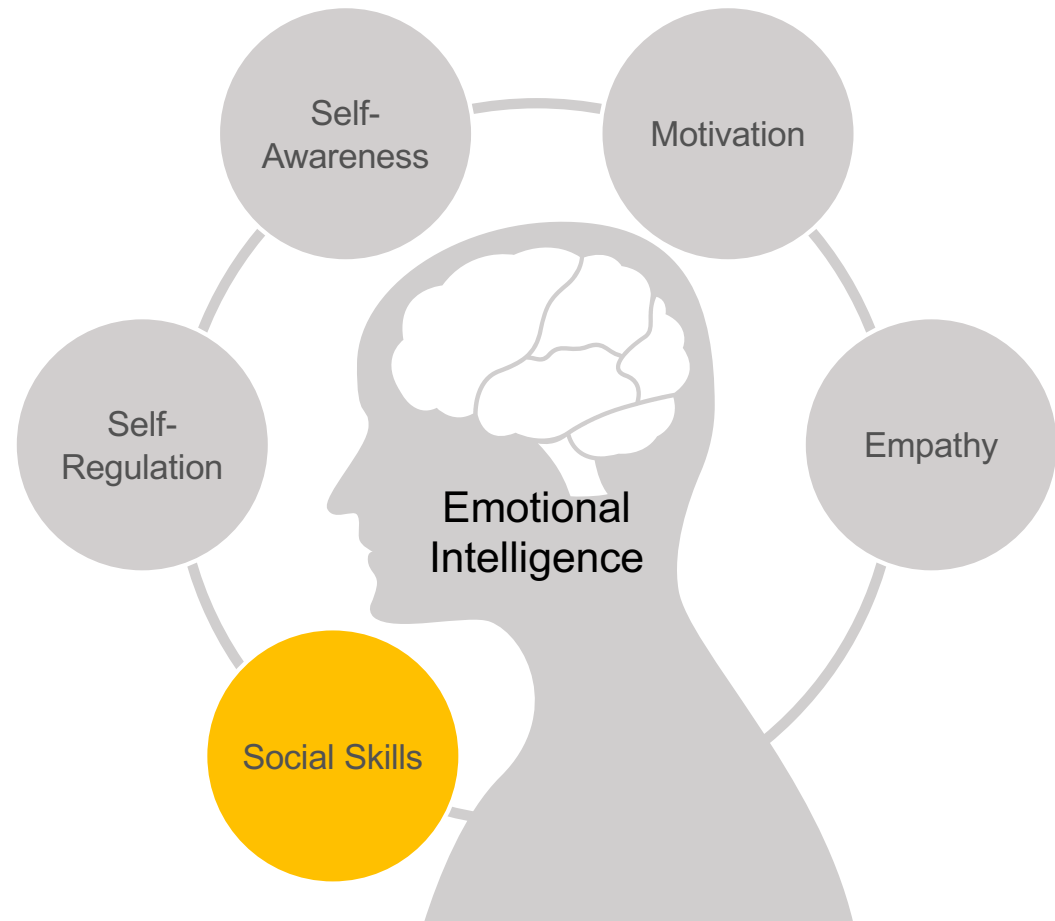
Strategies to Strengthen EI

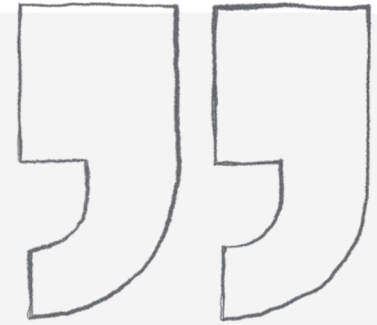
Empathy:

- Role swap
- Patient
- Reflective team practices



Five Core Emotional Intelligence Domains





“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

John Quincy Adams

✓ Emotional Intelligence

Management of Relationships

- Influence
- Develop others
- Manage conflict
- Collaboration



✓ Emotional Intelligence

Management of Team Relationships

- Manage change well with team
- Allow team to feel empowered
- Allow team to understand their contribution to the strategy
- Inspire team to feel motivated and inspired to do their best work
- Treat others fairly
- Inspire them to feel proud of where they work



Influencing Strategies

- Friendliness
- Empowerment
- Vision/Inspiration
- Building alliances
- Bargaining
- Position power





Examples of Social Skills

You empower patients to set targets and monitor their progress

You give positive feedback to patients and colleagues

You inspire others to be their best and do their best work

Strategies to Strengthen EI

Social Skills:

- Active listening
- Team rituals
- Influence in leadership
- Mentorship



Strategies to Strengthen EI

Social Skills:

- Active listening
- Structured communication
- Conflict de-escalation train
- Team rituals for cohesion



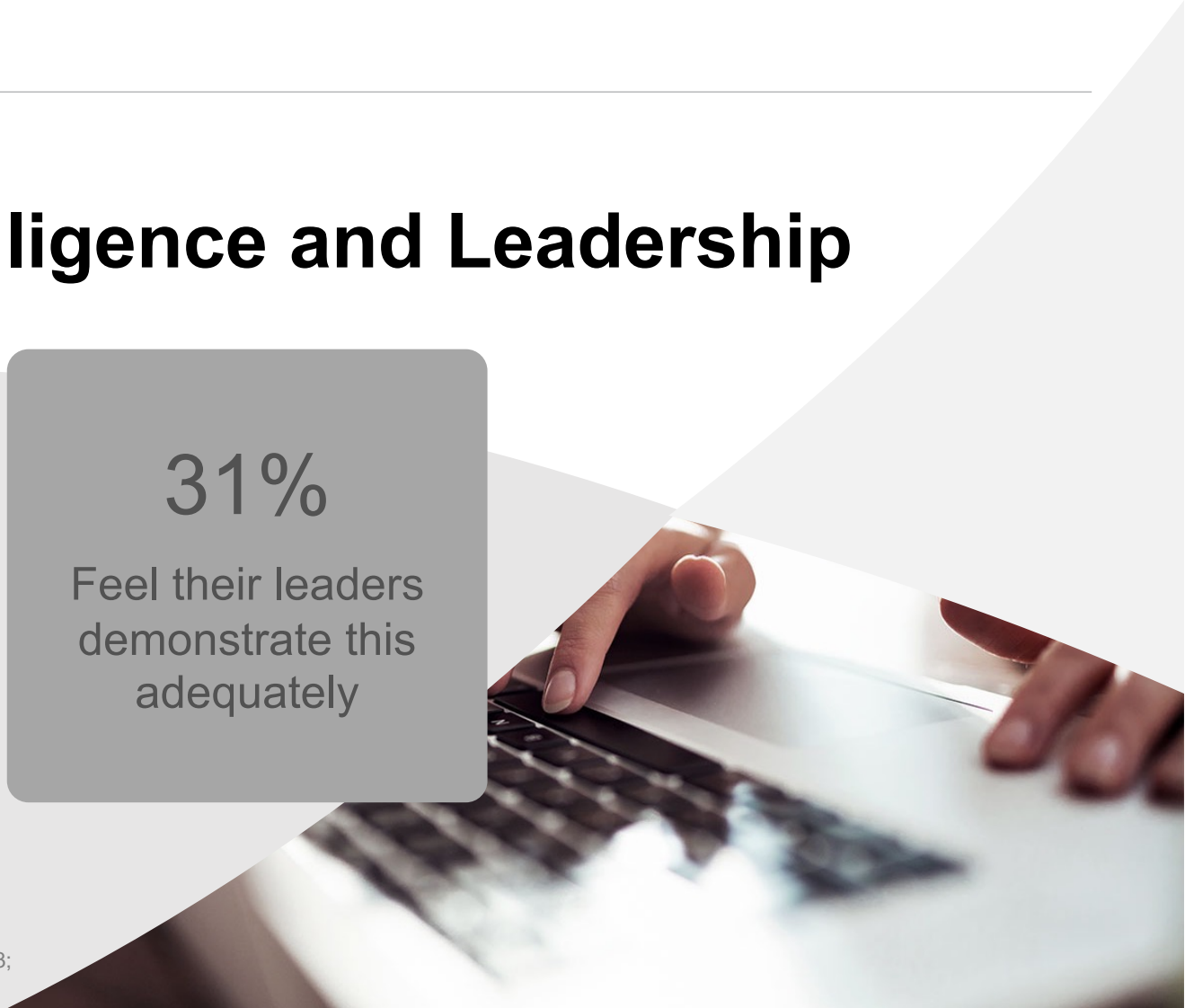
Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

81%

The most important
leadership
characteristic is
empathy

31%

Feel their leaders
demonstrate this
adequately

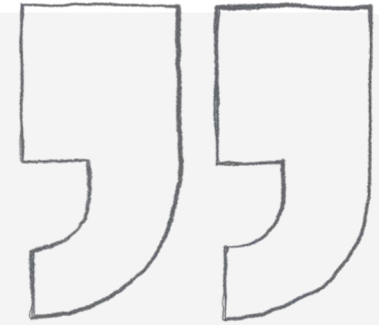




Leadership Style is not Stagnant

- No single leadership style is sufficient
- Important in healthcare to adapt fluidly
- Adaptability equal high EQ





“Team Intelligence is the essential emotional and interpersonal capacity needed for safe, collaborative care teams.”

Suzanne Gordon, Patient Safety Advocate



“As more and more artificial intelligence is entering into the world, more and more emotional intelligence must enter into leadership.”

Amit Ray
Compassionate AI Pioneer

✓ Emotional Intelligence

Call to Action

- Commit to one EI practice daily for 30 days
- Use self-assessment tools
- Apply in high-stress scenarios
- Aim for measurable improvements in teamwork and patient care



Thank you!

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