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Emotional Intelligence in Healthcare: Driving High-Quality Care and Team Performance

Presenter: Robin Arthur, PsyD

Good morning and thank you for taking the time to be here today. I want to begin by recognizing the extraordinary work you do every single day. Whether you're supporting patients at the bedside, coordinating care across teams, or holding space for families in difficult moments. You are the very heart of healthcare. And having worked in healthcare for 30 years, I totally understand your world.

What often makes the greatest difference is those moments that it isn't just your clinical experience, but it's how we're connecting, how we listen and how we respond under pressure. That's what today is about. Emotional intelligence. So here are my disclosures and there are limitations and risks for today. A little bit about me, and I'm sure you've seen my bio already.

And here are your learning outcomes for today. Let's start with a little bit of history, because understanding where emotional intelligence comes from helps us appreciate its relevance in healthcare today. So the roots go back to about 1920, when Edward Thorndike introduced the concept of social intelligence. Essentially, that's the ability to understand and manage people, all people. And this was revolutionary at the time, suggesting that intelligence wasn't just about our logic, our reasoning and our memory was unheard of.

Then in the 1940s, David Wechsler, the same psychologist who you might recognize from IQ testing, also argued that non intellectual intellectual abilities such as emotions play a vital role in how intelligently we behave. By the 1980s, Howard Gardner expanded this further with his theory of multiple intelligences. And that introduced interpersonal and intrapersonal as precursors to what we now refer to as EI or EQ, emotional intelligence or your emotional quotient. Together these became the conceptual building blocks for what we now think of as emotional intelligence. Later in the 1990s, two researchers, Peter Salovey and John Mayer, formally coined the name 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 your own thinking and actions.

This work positioned EI as a measurable cognitive skill distinct from your personality or iq. So for us in healthcare today, it's key. That means EI is not just an innate trait. It's a skill that can be developed to improve our patient care, our teamwork and our leadership as we move forward. And when you hear me talk about leadership, I want you to consider that whether you are in a formal leadership position, you are absolutely a leader.

Because as patient care providers, we all lead our patients to better health, better mental health. Whatever form of interventions you are doing with patients, you are their Leader. So imagine yourself as the leader when you think about leadership.

Then in 1995, Daniel Goleman took all of this research and he made it accessible to the public. He wrote a book called Emotional Intelligence why It Can Matter More than iq. His work popularized the concept and tied it directly to leadership and workplace performance. His later publication, Primal Leadership, expanded that further into different leadership styles that we're going to talk about later on. So self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills were the domains that Daniel Goleman brought forward that we're going to talk about today.

There's also a meta analysis that confirmed that teamwork, communication and patient safety are enhanced by ei. And there are newer studies as well that I've highlighted here. So it's no longer a soft skill to think about emotional intelligence. It is evidence based leadership that's essential to modern healthcare.

So in healthcare, we pride ourselves on our technical skills. You know, I'm the best physical therapist, I'm the best nurse, I know my nursing very well. But what we also need to pride ourselves on are those encounters we have with patients, what determines whether a team thrives, and how we manage ourselves in the moment, especially stressful moments. Because we all know that health care can be extremely stressful at times. So emotional intelligence has direct impact on patient outcomes.

It reduces medical errors, it protects the mental health of your patients and your own mental health as well, and it enhances collaboration. So as a psychologist and someone who's trained and led many healthcare teams, I've seen the difference in these skills and how they, in real time, make us better clinicians and better leaders. Emotional intelligence is not fixed. It is a trainable set of skills that you're going to go over today and it will drive your career advancement also.

So let's look at the difference between IQ and EQ. So the IQ intelligence quotient was developed in the early 20th century. And when I do IQ with people, I'm looking for their ability to reason, their analytic reasoning, their linguistic skills, and their spatial orientation. So there are four main things that an IQ test will give you. Your verbal comprehension, understanding and using language, your perceptual reasoning, analyzing and solving novel problems, your working memory, so holding and manipulating information, and your processing speed.

So how efficient are you at basic cognitive operations? And all of these things are extremely important for every single one of us in healthcare. IQ is what I call the raw cognitive horsepower. And it's needed to master all of our technical skills. However, while IQ predicts our academic performance and technical competencies, research consistently shows it explains only a portion of workplace and clinical effectiveness.

And the other piece of that is your emotional intelligence.

So your EQ is your ability to read the soft skills of human interaction and use it to positive ends. So EQ reflects how your emotions are processed and applied in the real world. So when I'm helping companies hire their executives especially and I'm doing testing on them for employment, I always I want to know how smart people are, obviously what their IQ is. But I really look for these EQ for the how well they've developed their eq. And if I have a choice over a very, very bright human being who

doesn't have high eq, who versus someone who's bright but has a really high eq, I'm going to hire the high EQ first.

That's how important emotional intelligence is, especially in leadership positions.

And emotional intelligence in healthcare does foster our environments that promote empathy, understanding, collaboration. It's really the cornerstone for effective leadership. And this statement beautifully summarizes why. Emotional intelligence is not just a soft skill, but a clinical skill. Because in healthcare it fosters all of those things.

And when empathy and understanding are embedded in your team culture, your communication improves, your trust builds and your collaboration strengthens. And all of those things are necessary for us to give the highest patient care.

For leaders, this means this is also a cornerstone because it helps us as leaders to be very effective with our employees. And I'm going to talk to you about leadership styles later on. And as we move forward, we're going to explore all of these principles.

This slide is just another list of different research that also talks about how important emotional intelligence is. And embedded in this presentation there are also some from as recently as 23 and 24 and some studies from 25 as well. So all of these findings give a strong evidence base that emotional intelligence is not just nice to have. It's a measurable factor in how effectively people lead, communicate and collaborate. And you're going to hear me say that several times throughout this presentation.

I also will tell you that emotional intelligence training is one of the most requested trainings in healthcare and in the private sector in all businesses. So everyone is looking for enhancing your

emotional intelligence.

So high EQ clinicians reduce medical errors because you stay calm under pressure. If you have a high eq, you're able to in those emergency situations or those very stressful situations, maintain your composure and think clearly. Teams with emotionally intelligent leadership show better collaboration, lower turnover and stronger patient outcomes. And that lower turnover, as we know in healthcare, is critical because we already have a shortage of some healthcare individuals and so we don't want to lose our health care people. And when we have to retrain other people, it's very costly to the organization.

So EQ training reduces that burnout and also compassion fatigue. So we are, we want to be very compassionate towards ourselves first and foremost, our patients and our colleagues. And in healthcare, compassion fatigue is one of the things that we find happens when our EQ is very low. So at this point I want to take a couple of minutes and let you take a quiz with me. We're going to look at your EQ right now, so let's take a quiz together.

This is a 33 item measure that was developed to assess emotional intelligence. The scale has been widely validated across healthcare, education and organizational settings. It is freely available for research and educational use. So when you're answering these questions that I'll read, you're going to do 1 is never, 2 is rarely, 3 is sometimes, 4 is often, and 5 is very often. Some of them will be reverse scored and I will tell you which ones.

Let's get started. I know and at the end we're going to summarize, we're going to sum all your numbers. So when I speak about my personal problem, 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 in most things that I try.

Other people find it easy to confide in me.

I find it hard to understand the nonverbal messages of other people. And this is one that you will reverse score. So if it's never, it's a five. If it's rarely, it's a four. Three is a three, often is a two, very often is a one.

Some of the major events in my life have led me to reevaluate what's 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 and I expect good things to happen.

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'm aware of the non verbal messages I send to others.

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

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

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'm aware of non verbal messages other people send.

When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I've experienced the event myself.

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

When I'm faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail. Now that's a reverse score. So when I'm faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail. Reverse score that I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.

I help other people to feel better when they are down.

And our last three. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.

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

It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do. And that one is a reverse score as well.

So I'll give you a minute now to go ahead and add those numbers up and then I will tell you where you fall in the categories low average or high emotional intelligence.

Okay, let's see how you did here. So keep in mind as I give you these, these categories that none of us have perfect emotional intelligence, just as none of us have a perfect iq. And so what we're looking for here is for you to realize, oh, I may need to work harder on certain areas. So don't judge yourself depending on which of these categories you fall in. So if you scored 33 to 87, you're in a low emotional intelligence category.

You might have difficulty identifying, expressing and managing emotions. And you can benefit from this training. If you're 88 to 121, you have average emotional intelligence, you demonstrate adequate emotional understanding and regulation in most situations, you can still improve as we all can. And if you're at 122 to 165, you have high emotional intelligence. You have a strong ability to recognize and manage emotions in yourself and in other people.

So and again, keep in mind that EQ can be learned. So it gives us all hope that we can continue to get better at our emotional intelligence as we move forward.

So let's look at an example of low emotional intelligence here. So hospital is rolling out a new electronic health record. Tensions rise. Physicians complain about the efficacy nurses worry about documentation. Allied health staff feel excluded, stress levels spike and patient care suffers.

I've actually been in this situation in one of the hospitals that I was helping with. So the charge nurse reacts defensively. She raises her voice. This is the, this is the system we have. Deal with it.

She ignores emotions, she rushes the agenda, she dismisses Allied health input, and she focuses only on compliance.

The result is tension is unresolved and staff feel unheard. Resistance grows, patient satisfaction drops and burnout rises and the team starts eroding. And we know that burnout and disengagement happen when leaders fail to have emotional intelligence.

On the other hand, same exact scenario. And this is a nurse with high emotional intelligence. So she regulates her own frustration before speaking, because she's probably frustrated with the system as well. She acknowledges all the emotions in the room that she sees. She listens actively and validates those concerns.

She reframes motivation. So she says, we're doing this to share a goal of safe, high quality care. And she facilitates collaboration by inviting and amplifying the ideas of everyone who's present in the meeting. The result of this will be that the meeting ends with a pilot improvement plan. Staff leave feeling heard and valued and probably less frustrated.

Patient satisfaction scores improve because of how the team is working and the system is reframed as a manageable rather than a threatening new implementation. So you can see how different it was just by having high emotional intelligence and keeping yourself calm. This is a side by side comparison that

shows you very nicely what happened in both of those scenarios.

Now again, Daniel Goleman, who really brought emotional intelligence to the mainstream, says most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way. They have a high degree of emotional intelligence.

Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, be incisive analytical mind and endless smart ideas. But this still won't make a great leader. That is so true in healthcare.

We all work environments that are filled with complexity, high stress. Our expertise and training is essential. When it's not enough, what makes us truly effective is that we can read a room. We can study a team whose tensions are running high, or a patient whose tensions are running high. We can leave with empathy and clarity, even when the pressure's on.

So Goleman's message reminds us that emotional intelligence is not optional. It is the differentiator. It's what turns your technical excellence into human centered leadership and patient care.

So as we're moving forward here, I want to show you some statistics. So IBM did a study. This is an older study, but I wanted to bring it up because 70% of their employees, they studied over a thousand of their employees, 74% felt that emotional intelligence was the most important characteristic. However, only 28% felt that their leaders demonstrated this adequately. That's dismal, right?

Emotional intelligence continues even today to be seen as the most important. More recent organizational studies suggest that while 70 to 80% of professionals view EI as important, fewer than 25 to 30 believe their leaders embody it. So 20, 30 years later, we are still struggling with emotional intelligence, not being widely valued or trained in all business situations. Now, my personal bias is that in health care, we already have high emotional intelligence. It's part of the reason we go into the work we do.

But we can all do more training and get better. I mean, I teach this and I still take trainings on emotional intelligence all the time. It's not a weakness to me. It's just always looking to improve what I'm doing. So strengthening these capacities closes the gap between empathy and improves every facet of patient care as well as helps you.

Now, Warren Benison was one of the most respected voices in the field of leadership. He's often called the father of modern leadership studies. He spent decades at Harvard, Boston University, Southern California, and he also served as the president of my alma mater, the University of Cincinnati. He wrote at least 30 books on leadership, including a classic leadership book if you're ever interested. It's called *On Becoming a Leader*.

And his work emphasized that leaders are not are made, they are not born. And that's what truly is. A successful leader sets apart from just their iq. But the capacity for self awareness, empathy and connection in others will catapult you to the top of your career. And that's why this quote is so important, that you need it.

It doesn't make you a star, but emotional intelligence can.

I love the work of Warren Benison. I'm sure you can tell.

Okay, so let's jump into these five core emotional intelligences.

In his book in 1995, Daniel Goleman brought forward these five domains. So the first is self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy, and the fifth is social skills. So these are the five domains that we're going to be studying moving forward here. Now, outcomes of low EQ that you may not consider are things like when you have a lower eq, you are more inefficient at work and in your life. When you have a.

And research proves this out. When you have a lower eq, you have more health problems. So you have poor health with a low eq. And I think as we move forward, you'll see how EQ will protect your health. You are more fatigued if you have lower EQ and it even contributes to premature aging.

So if you think about all of those things, of course we want to get better at our eq. So now if you don't have something to take notes already, this might be a time to get something because I'm going to be giving you a lot of tools to use moving forward in how to strengthen each one of these facets of eq. Now, you also might be a person who you're very high in self awareness, but you've never really put a lot of work into your empathy. So this is going to be a time moving forward where you're going to look at, this is the facet I need to strengthen the most. And this facet I feel really good about.

Now, before we get started, I want to read you a scenario called When Pressure Turns to Pushback. So Maria is a lead speech language pathologist in a busy outpatient rehab clinic. The department is short staffed, evaluations are backing up and the admin is pressuring her to decrease wait times. At the morning huddle, One of her SLPs, Jenna, quietly says, I'm overwhelmed. My caseload is full and I don't think I can take an additional swallow study today without pausing or checking in.

Maria snaps. Everyone is overwhelmed. Jenna, you need to figure it out. We don't have time for excuses. The room goes silent throughout the day.

Maria avoids eye contact with her team. She sends brusque emails, need this done by end of day. She doesn't notice that Jenna is on the verge of tears. She blames the team. In a meeting with administration, my staff lacks motivation.

They do not understand urgency. And by the end of the week, two of the SLPs asked to transfer to other areas in the hospital. Documentation errors are increasing and a patient complains about feeling

rushed in therapy. Maria doesn't understand why her morale is dropping. She tells herself that the team just isn't resilient enough.

Now, while that might be an over dramatization of low emotional intelligence, I would venture to say all of us, especially in healthcare, have been in situations where this exact scenario, or very close to it, have happened and handled differently. If Maria had gone to a nice class in emotional intelligence and started to implement them, these outcomes would be very different. So we'll revisit Maria later on and see how she's doing. So let's jump into our first skill here. Our first domain, self awareness.

Why am I feeling these things? What is going on with me? This is what self awareness is. And not all of us have strong self awareness, even when we think we do. And sometimes we are unaware of the places where we need to shore this up.

Now, self awareness goes way back to our childhood. And we're not going to do an analysis session today, but our childhood will influence how self aware we are. Our physiology influences how self aware we are. Our environment influence influences how self aware we are. And our neurochemistry in general influences our self awareness.

Here's the other five we're keeping quiet behind the scenes. Okay, so here are some examples of low self awareness. You turn every team event into something about you.

You're passive aggressive, you avoid emotions or become defensive, and you feel the need to be the center of attention.

So ask yourself these questions. Are you aware that your emotions affect your work?

Are you aware that your emotions affect your relationships? Because those are two main components of self awareness. So if we look at a physical therapist who notices that they often leave patient interactions feeling drained or irritable, they think the patient doesn't like them and that they're upset with progress. Physical therapists might get upset with colleagues who try to point out their reaction. But after doing some self awareness exercises, they start recognizing that it's really their frustration, it's not that the patient doesn't like them, and their interactions with colleagues improve as well.

So self awareness is the awareness of your feelings, the awareness of the intensity of your feelings, the awareness of the effects of your feelings personally and at work, and your ability to deal with that. So your capacity to recognize your feelings and interactions is very, very important. And if you find yourself thinking everything is someone else's fault, you probably need to work on self awareness because we know it's impossible for everything to be other people's fault. So I'm going to share with you some techniques and this is where you're going to want to take some notes.

So reflective journaling. So you're going to document emotionally charged interactions. You're going to note what triggers responses and how those emotions influenced your communication and decision making. This is really looking at yourself and doing reflective journaling.

You're also going to work hard on your body mind connection. So when you start feeling your jaws get tight, your breath getting more shallow, you can feel tension in your body. That's when you need to be self aware. I'm feeling tense. And intentionally reset that breathing exercises are always going to be a good go to for this.

So breathing exercises ground us. So I'm going to teach you one breathing exercise right now. If you've ever taken my stress management course, you're going to get many, many, many ways to ground yourself. But for today, we're going to do the box breathing technique. So what you're going to do is you're going to breathe in and count to four.

You're going to hold that and count to four. You're going to breathe out and count to four. And you're going to hold that and count to four. So I'm going to walk you through the first round, and then you do two rounds after that. Okay, so let's get started.

Breathe in, 2, 3, 4. Hold, 2, 3, 4. Breathe out, 2, 3, 4. Hold, 2, 3, 4. Do two more of those on your own.

Okay, so that should have calmed you a little bit. This is something that's really easy to use after maybe a patient interaction or a colleague that you've had a difficult time with. It's an easy exercise to use that nobody knows you're doing. Also, if you scan your body and your nervous system, that'll tell you when you need to calm yourself down. Okay, here's a great one.

Now, this is going to create vulnerability for you. But if you have the courage to do this and you feel safe enough with your supervisor, your colleague, or maybe even your patients, if you know them a little bit well, then you're going to check in with them. We call it a360 feedback. So you're going to ask people about your communication style, ask them about your listening behaviors, ask them about your emotional tone of voice, and don't be afraid to say to your supervisor, you know what? I'm trying to increase my self awareness and my emotional eq and I would really love some feedback.

You could say the same thing to your colleagues. This is a very powerful way to find out where some of your deficits might be that you can shore up moving forward. And again, I know that makes you a little bit vulnerable, but the payoff to that vulnerability can be huge for you. If you don't want to do it with that many people, you could also do it with just a trusted colleague who you ask about interpersonal challenges. But getting other people's input is very important because we're not always the best judges of how we are in an environment.

And then when you're in. Here's some more strategies. When you're in a team, your team can do these things as well.

Now, cognitive reframing. So in cognitive reframing, we are looking at self critical thoughts. So many of us judge ourselves more harshly than we judge others. So instead of saying things like I failed, you want to look for a growth oriented reflection like, I learned how to approach this differently. So instead of I can't do this, I'm working on becoming better at this skill.

So replacing self critical thoughts with more positive thoughts is a very good way to increase your self awareness and your skills. And I practice from a positive psychology perspective and in all my work, in my executive coaching work, in my trainings and in my clinical work. And I think positive psychology is all about finding your strengths and shoring them up.

Also, professional growth strategies might be things like mentorship and supervision. So seek mentors who model emotional intelligence and provide constructive reflection on relational challenges. So I'm sure in your work environment you know who are the people who are better at emotional intelligence. If you seek mentorship from them, you're automatically going to grow and eventually you'll be a mentor yourself to someone else.

And then on your teams, I want you to consider doing emotional check ins at your rounds. So begin your huddles with one word, emotional states to normalize emotional expression. Now the way I do this in many of the meetings I lead is I have what's called a feelings wheel. And you can find the feelings wheel online. So if you just Google feelings wheel, you'll come up with five or 10 different ones to find online and you have it available at the table.

And you just ask everybody before the meeting begins, let's do a check in. What, what emotion are you feeling today? It gives you, as the leader and as colleagues, a good read on how is everybody in the

room feeling right now? And it models bringing emotion into the room. So also even outside of your work setting, in your personal life, let's say you've had a long training day.

You walk in the house and your partner says, what's for dinner? You immediately feel your irritation spike and you want to snap. But if you're really thinking about your self awareness, you recognize it and you say, I'm not actually upset with them. I'm exhausted and hungry myself. And because you identified that, you say, I need 10 minutes to decompress before we talk.

That prevents an unnecessary conflict. So those are some of the many, many ways you can strengthen your self awareness. Let's move on to self regulation.

So we did self awareness. Now we're going to look at self regulation. This is your ability to manage those disruptive impulses. We sometimes refer to self regulation as self control. And self control is about being competent in emotion regulation.

It's also about being accountable, being flexible and being authentic.

So here are some examples of high self regulation or self control. You identify when your behavior is unproductive and you stay focused. You are adaptable and flexible. When change happens, you take responsibility for your actions and also your inactions. Okay, so here's an example of.

During an evening rounds, a patient's family confronts a speech therapist. They're angry. Progress is way too slow. Therapist can feel their chest tighten. They feel themselves wanting to be defensive, but instead of snapping, they do some of the techniques they've learned already, like the 90 second rule.

They pause, they take some deep breaths, and then they're able to respond more calmly. I can see how worried you are about your loved one's progress. Let's walk through the treatment plan. The result

is the family feels validated and you have a higher professionalism under stress. So self regulation is not about suppression.

We don't want to suppress our emotions. It's about harnessing that physiological feeling that you had and then using your psychological tools like breathing, reframing to preserve trust and safety in your relationships.

So when you have good self regulation skills, you manage distressing emotions well.

You know your strengths and weaknesses and you're capable under pressure. But this is not always easy. Let's take a look at what makes this difficult. So I am a neuropsychologist and I'm a geek about the brain. I love the brain.

Understanding the neuroscience of emotional intelligence provides you a very strong framework for what's happening. Your brain is remarkable. I'm hoping you all agree with that. Your brain is remarkable. It processes 86 billion neurons and they all connect with one another.

There are trillions of connections, more than all the computers on Earth, 25% of all energy. So 500 of your 2,000 calories in a day is used by your brain. It's 30% faster than the most advanced supercomputers. I think that's even true today with chat, GPT and all of those. Let's look at the three main components of your brain and see how they facilitate self regulation.

Because understanding this can help you moving forward with I get it now I understand why I exploded and things like that. So basically I think of. You have three brains, we have one brain with three components. Okay, the first component. Many of you, I'm sure, have heard of the reptilian brain.

We hear a lot about this in popular literature and TV shows and movies. Today. So your reptilian brain is your brain stem and your basal ganglia. It is our most primitive system in our brain and it's responsible for our survival functions. So by six months of age, this reptilian brain is developed.

It is your fight or flight response. It is also your survival functions like respiration, elimination, fear, pain, pleasure.

It has no sense of self and it has zero, none impulse control. So it just reacts, reacts, reacts, reacts. And even the part of the brain, your amygdala, which is where all of your fight and flight and other emotions sit, is developed by birth on a scale of about 0 to 10. So some people are born with an amygdala that makes you very sensitive, makes you very hyper towards any kind of stimulus coming in. Other people are born calm, cool and collected.

And we can see this in babies when we study them. So this is your reptilian brain. The next brain that developed is your mammalian brain. So this is your limbic system, your amygdala, your hippocampus, your hypothalamus. This regulates your emotions, your motivation and your social bonding.

So you can see how important this brain is for emotional intelligence. It allows us to experience fear, anger, joy, empathy and attachment. So this brain is developed by about the age of six. So if you think about a six year old, how they act when they're upset. So when their primal brain says, danger, danger, danger, a six year old is not going to sit and think, how am I going to get out of danger?

They're going to react very quickly or they're going to freeze. The primal brain is going to make them freeze.

But the six year old's purpose is to try to relieve that stress and anxiety. And we know six year olds do not always relieve their stress and anxiety in a healthy way, so we don't want to behave that way as

adults. The mammalian brain develops shortcuts to rational thinking. So it's a little bit rational, but it's just coming into the age of reasoning. It has low impulse control, not no impulse control, but low impulse control.

But it seeks immediate relief and it really wants to belong. You could see that in 6 year olds who are playing together. Boy, they want friends, they want to belong. We're like that as adults too, but we've developed the third brain, the neocortex, which I'll talk about in a couple of minutes. So in healthcare, these two brains together enable us to emotionally connect with patients, but they can overwhelm us if they're unchecked as well.

So the mammalian brain Fuels empathy, but it has to be regulated from emotional flooding. Now, these two brains together, your reptilian brain and your mammalian brain, they are very powerful, okay? They together, they ensure that we respond quickly and we feel deeply, okay? They Also use up 98% of your brain's energy. They get a lot of brain power.

Now, they are five times faster when they're hooked up to the neocortex, which I'll talk about next. But they have basically these two brains together have a lot of information, but not a lot of self control and wisdom, okay? They are processing about 4 billion bits a second. They are focused on the here and the now.

They react much faster when not hooked up to your neocortex. And they are extremely self focused and not wise, okay? And they're, they react to their gut reaction in three seconds. They are very visually based. So 90% of what they see and experience is visual.

That's facial expressions, all the visual things plus colors.

And they react from their gut, gut feelings. In about three seconds, they have a gut feeling reaction. Now, fortunately for all of us, we have also developed a neocortex, okay? And this is your prefrontal cortex. It's your executive center.

It is your reasoning, planning, reflection, impulse control, empathy, modulation. It only gets 2% of energy. 2% is all this part of your brain gets. It can rewrite. It cannot rewrite the bottom two.

Okay, so what's going on in the bottom two? This can't rewrite. It's also not fully developed until about your mid-20s. It's the only brain that ever rests. So the other two are alive and well all the time, even in your sleep.

And it is focused on the past, the present and the future, where your other two brains are not. It understands abstract things as well. And what its function is to be the parent or the mentor to the lower two brains. So it is the brain that says, we're not in that much danger. Let's calm down, let's use all of the tools we've learned to act effectively in situations.

It is more highly developed than any other species.

Now, this is where we get in trouble. So under high stress, you're what I say there's like a trap door between your lower two brains and your neocortex, okay? When that trapdoor is open, they all function really, really well together. When it's not, and what I call the trapdoor shuts, your reaction time goes down. It re leads to impulsive actions, poor judgment errors, emotionally charged outbursts.

Also, your self regulation is very Very difficult. Your self control almost goes out the window and you probably have felt this in your body. So I think on a scale of 0 to 10, if you feel like you're revved up from 7 to 10, your trapdoor shut, your brains are not thinking well together and we need to open that trapdoor so your neocortex can control what's going on and you can act most effectively. Fortunately,

there are ways to increase the chances of staying connected and keeping that trapdoor open. We're going to talk about those moving forward, but basically you're going to plan for that disconnection.

You're going to be ready for it. You're going to do meditative activities that help keep that trapdoor open and you're going to do a lot of self soothing. So again, if you've taken my stress management class, going to get many, many, many self soothing techniques to keep that trapdoor open. So you are acting most effectively in all of your environments. So that's a picture of your brain helping people better manage their upsetting feelings.

Anxiety, anger, depression, pessimism and loneliness is a form of disease prevention. And that's why emotional intelligence is so important for us physically and and mentally.

Now I'm going to about to give you some ways to strengthen your self regulation. First is that 90 second rule I talked about earlier and breathing techniques. So we did the box breathing in for four, hold for four, out for four, hold for four. And the 90 second rule is that when you have that emotional surge and you can feel that that trap door may be ready to shut, you're going to stop. You're just going to allow that urge to pass if possible.

And then you're going to act with all of your brain effectively together.

Another way to strengthen your self regulation is called progressive muscle relaxation. If you've never done progressive muscle relaxation, you can google it and it will walk you through how to do it. I'm just going to walk you through your, the upper body for a second so you can see how it feels. So basically what you're going to do is you're going to clench your fists really tight and you're going to hold it for, we're just going to do three seconds. When you really do progressive muscle relaxation, you hold it for 10 seconds, but we're going to do three.

So go ahead and clench your fists and hold it for three seconds and then relax it. And now act like you're doing a bicep curl and hold it really tight for three seconds and then relax it. Bring Your shoulders up to your ears and hold it for three seconds and then relax it. Now I want you to close your eyes and scrunch your face up for three seconds and relax. Okay.

So hopefully you're feeling a little bit of tension. Has all that stored tension has disappeared from your body when you do your whole entire body. It's a great way to calm yourself down and regain self. Regain self control.

We also can take mindfulness micro breaks during our day and that could be breathing techniques as well. And then cognitive framing we've talked a little bit about. It's replacing reactive thoughts with constructive thoughts. So instead of they're not listening, you could say I bet they're under stress too. So positive psychology is in there.

Cognitive reframing is in there. If you want to look up cognitive distortions, you'll get a whole list of cognitive distortions and you can look through and see which cognitive distortions cause me to not have good self regulation. And then you could work on just those. So cognitive distortions, sometimes we call them thought traps.

Another technique is called if then planning. I really like this technique. So this is pre deciding what your responses will be. So like we talked about, how to keep the brains working together is to pre plan for times when it's not going to. So if I feel defensive in a meeting then I will pause and ask for clarification.

If I feel like my boss is bullying me, then I will just do some box breathing. If I feel like my day is going to be overwhelming, I will make sure I take micro breaks. So pre planning, if then planning.

And a really easy one is just pause between listening and speaking. And then as you're pausing you ensure that your emotional tone matches your intention. So pausing between listening and speaking.

Some other ways to self soothe are yoga, exercise, aromatherapy, listening to music that's calming. Looking at things that are pleasing to you. All of these things will help your self regulation.

Here's a few more. So environmental supports. Many organizations now have places where their employees can go and just be calm for a little while if your environment does not provide that. And that is tough in healthcare because we can't just walk off a unit or out of the office all the time. Try to create that in your personal space at work so that you feel like you just have a place to calm for a few minutes.

It's also important for supervisors to normalize emotion regulation by by openly practicing it and talking about how they do it in huddles and potentially giving your teams all of these things that you're learning.

And another good way we talked a little bit about journaling before is an emotional diary. So record your triggers, record your responses, record lessons that you're learning. If you find yourself needing more self regulation techniques, journaling is a great way to say okay, I can see what's going on here, how am I going to deal with this? And then there's after action, reflections. So do some debriefs.

Start your day with a ritual deep breathing, positive intention and end your day with a ritual deep breathing and talk about an interaction that went well in your day. So those are some of the many, many ways that you can work on your self control, your self regulation.

Now we're going to move on to motivation. Motivation is your inner drive to work beyond rewards. So motivation is that deep inside of you, it's not about learning or money or surroundings or people or power. It's about purpose, passion and persistence.

So when you have strong self motivation, you want to achieve goals, you want to improve your job performance, you want to cope with future change and you do it well. When you have good motivation, you use be powerful. That's in a healthy way of being powerful. And so it helps you meet challenges. And it's determined in large part by your attitude, which is again where your positive psychology techniques come in here.

So a healthy attitude will enhance your life motivation. Here's some examples of having strong motivation. You are driven to improve and meet higher standards whether it's recognized or not by other people. You seek to overcome things that are not satisfactory.

You share persistence to achieve at a high level even in the spite of stress or things that are overwhelming. And you reflect on what personally motivates you and that is key, that personal motivation deep inside of you.

Also if we think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the lower levels of his hierarchy of needs, the physiological needs, the safety needs, those come from external motivation. But as you move toward the top with your self esteem needs and your self actualization needs, those absolutely come from inside of you. So many of us are motivated by external things when we're younger, but the older we get, the more we're motivated by inside of ourselves.

So here's some ways to strengthen your motivation. First and foremost, clarify your why I think this is so important for us in health care because health care does become overwhelming. Health care can be tough, we all know that. And we get into times and I've worked in so many healthcare environments, I know this is true. But where you're like why didn't I go into the business world, or why did I become a nurse?

Or this is so hard, or nobody understands how hard health care is. When you're starting to feel things like that, I want you to clarify your why. Revisit your personal and your professional reasons why you became a nurse, why you became a physical therapist, and connect that to your values. Because we're driven to this work for a reason. Okay?

And in doing that also, you can create your mission reflection. Okay? So your mission reflection is one sentence describing how your daily work contributes to patient well being, team outcomes, and your well being. So a mission reflection, one sentence describing how your daily work contributes to patient well being, teams, and your personal well being.

And here's one I love. It's called legacy thinking. So ask yourself, what impact do I want to leave behind for my patients and colleagues in your workday? Legacy thinking, what impact do I want to leave behind? That's what will motivate you for the day.

Smart micro goals are basically taking that big goal like creating a workflow design and make it into small trackable wins. We know whenever we have small trackable wins, we are likely to stay motivated towards the end goal.

Also look at your competence. List three professional strengths that you use each week and acknowledge your evidence of growth in any of these strengths.

Also do some strengths mapping. So I talked about positive psychology. You can look up the VIA character strengths. So it's capital V, capital I, capital A via character strengths. If you Google that or however you get to your information now on the Internet, if you do that, it'll come up with a quiz and it's a free quiz that you could take and it gives you your positive character strengths.

Positive. Positive psychology is all about identifying our positives and using them to optimization in our environment and in our lives.

And then there's a skill called appreciative inquiry. Appreciative inquiry, focus on what's working well before tackling problems. Okay. Again, a positive psychology tenant. Appreciative inquiry.

Focus on what's working well before tackling problems. It will enhance your motivation and morale.

And then there's microhabits that you can have like 10 deep breaths or hydration breaks, sunlight exposure. All of these things increase our energy management. And be sure that you're tracking what is it that energizes me and what is it that drains me? Because you absolutely want to spend time focusing on what energizes you as much as possible and minimizing what's draining you.

So a few more things on enhancing your motivation is recognition rituals. Now, some people don't like this. Some people are like, I hate those meetings where they do all the awards and things like that. But research says that if we begin or end staff meetings by recognizing things like acts of compassion or times when people were empathic or something somebody did, well, it increases our motivation in the work environment to keep doing that. Now these have to be real rituals, okay?

Don't just make things up. We want them to be meaningful so that it's not just oh, okay, threw out another compliment to someone. Make it a meaningful recognition to people and have your staff do it for each other. So peer inspirations, so staff share stories of what they saw someone else do. And lastly, if you are a leader in an organization, transparent communication motivates your teams so it will link their daily tasks to the larger organizational goals and patient outcomes.

So it's important for us as leaders to be as transparent as possible in our communications.

And don't forget to celebrate your milestones. When you're celebrating your milestones along the way, you are much more likely to stay motivated. So celebrate achievements, celebrate anniversaries, celebrate patient outcomes. So we frequently in healthcare hear about the bad patient outcomes. Let's talk about the good patient outcomes as well.

So we stay motivated in our work again because we all chose this work for a reason. Now we're moving on to empathy. So empathy is recognizing others emotions as well as the intensity of those emotions. So it's your awareness of others. It's broken into three components.

So empathy is being aware of others feelings and concerns. It is also a service orientation. It's meeting customer needs and colleagues. It's active listening and it's establishing rapport. So if I think about the three main parts of empathy, it's cognitive, it's emotional and it's compassionate.

So that cognitive is I understand what you're going through. It connects to the emotional experience. It supports also accuracy when you're assessing someone and reduces miscommunication. And the affect of empathy is I feel with you. So if you are attuned to what somebody is experiencing, you might feel that with them and it supports that connection and therapeutic alliance.

And then when you communicate understanding, it's behavioral. So it's compassion, empathy, I'm here with you, I can help. What can I do? And it prevents emotional overload. And also what we want to be careful about with empathy though is that we also have good boundaries around it because if we're too empathic and we take on everything other people are feeling, we we're going to burn out.

So Empathy is an emotional and a clinical skill and it supports assessment, accuracy, adherence, teamwork and safety. Here are some examples of empathy.

You recognize body language of others and you adjust to it. So if you see someone is sad, you adjust to that. You form alliances and relationships easily.

You can deal with the extreme emotions of others easily and you're able to lead others with better understanding. If absent, you may seem uncaring to patients or dismissive to colleagues. So it's important for us to increase our empathy if we're not strong in this area.

Let me share some tools with you for increasing that empathy. First is perspective taking. So it's important for us to realize other people's perspective as much as our own. So focus on the speaker. Avoid multitasking, even mentally.

One thing that people don't think about is silence. So silence is empathy. Silence allows pauses in your patient or team conversations and it shows like respect and space for emotions. So if somebody's talking and they start becoming emotional, rather than jumping in, trying to solve a problem or even trying to comfort them, I want you to just consider silence as empathy and that will bring about more understanding between you. Keep that in mind.

Silence is empathy. It's not taught a lot. And then listen for other people's values, not just what they're saying, but listen to what they are saying matters to them. Okay? And that perspective taking is placing yourself in a patient or a colleague's position and imagining their emotional experience.

You can also do what we call life mapping. So you visualize your patient or your colleague beyond that clinical moment. You think about what's their family like, what's their culture like, what trauma have they experienced? How resilient are these people? When you life map a patient, you see them as a whole person, not just a sick person in my office or in the bed in the hospital.

And do empathy interviews. So ask open ended non clinical questions such as what's been hard for you this week may have nothing to do with what's going on with their physical body, but what's been hard for you this week? How was your day yesterday? Anything that's not clinical brings empathy. It shows you care more about them whole as a person.

Now I'm going to talk about boundary training because that's very important with empathy. So we have to learn empathic detachment. So practice emotional connection without over identifying. So it's empathy with boundaries. Okay?

Like I said earlier, if you're with a patient and you're being so empathic and they're crying about their pain and you start crying with them. Unfortunately, that conveys to the patient that things are even worse sometimes. So we want to have that empathy for their tears or for their emotions, but we don't want to take it on ourselves wholeheartedly. And that's tough sometimes. I mean, it's really hard to see patients suffer at times and not feel that.

But you really want to be able to put up a boundary and what we call emotional contagion awareness. Notice inside of yourself when you're absorbed into others emotions and then go back and use a lot of those grounding techniques to bring yourself back to a grounded position so you can be most effective. So emotional contagion awareness and do trainings about this in simulation within your teams. A few more things are role swaps. I'm sure you all know what role swaps are.

Each discipline shares an emotional challenge or you shadow each other. Team empathy rounds. So highlight an example each week of a staff member who showed exceptional empathy.

And then use what I call the teach back tone. This is part of empathy, the Teach Back tone. So ask patients to restate instructions and don't listen just for the accuracy of the instructions, but listen for how confident they are or do they hesitate. So just because they can recite it back to you doesn't mean that

they feel ready to use something. And then practice your empathy scripting.

So use simple authentic phrases. Okay, all. And find, find a mentor who does empathy well.

All right, let's look at social skills. Social skills are vital. Obviously it's our ability to build rapport, resolve conflict and foster effective collaboration. So if you inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader. I just really like that quote, so I threw it in.

So management of relationships is a capstone. This is how we manage our relationships. We manage it through influence, we manage it through developing others, which is critical in healthcare. We manage it through just managing the conflict. It's not about avoiding it, it's about managing conflict.

Because in healthcare we do have high stress conflict at times, but emotional intelligence helps us to deescalate that and finally collaboration. So true collaboration requires psychological safety. And if we have strong emotional intelligence skills, we create psychological safety within our environment. So when we talk about managing relationships, we're really talking about creating the conditions for trust, growth, shared purpose. And that makes us better colleagues and better caregivers.

Now, specifically, when we look at this as teams, emotionally intelligent leaders don't simply give directions, they build connection. Going to give you four questions to ask yourself when you're managing A team. Okay, what can I control, what can I not control? And what am I trying to control and what am I trying to control that I cannot control? So I'll give you those one more time.

What can I control, what can I not control, what am I trying to control? And what am I trying to control that I cannot control? Okay. If you go into team relationships and management with those questions in mind, it's going to help you to do these things better. So you're going to allow your team to feel empowered.

So if you manage a team well, you build clarity and consistency. When people feel treated with respect and trust it they are better able to be on your team and then allow them to feel empowered and allow them to understand their contribution to the strategy. It's just as important for your team to feel like they're part of the team, not just being talked at.

So inspire your team to feel motivated and inspired to do their best work and treat others fairly. It's really important to treat others fairly. Inspire them to feel proud of their work.

So when we're influencing people, there are a lot of strategies we can use. We think about influence as healthcare. It's not manipulation or control. It's about guiding people to shared goals. So emotional intelligence gives us multiple strategies for doing this effectively.

First and foremost, if you're trying to influence people, just be friendly, okay? Empowerment. Influence otherwise others by giving them ownership. Influence them by your vision. People are more likely to follow you if they see a bigger purpose.

Influence them by building alliances. Collaboration across disciplines is essential in healthcare. By bargaining. Sometimes we have to give to get so bargaining. And every once in a while, finally, there are times when influence relies on formal authority.

And we have to know when to flex between all of these strategies when we're looking to influence people.

Okay, so here's some ways that you can strengthen your social skills. Some of them we've covered on other slides. So they overlap. You'll notice that emotional intelligence skills overlap. Active listening and validation.

If you've taken any of my transformative communication course, you will learn a lot about how to do social skills through your communication. Micro clarifications, things like summarizing. Can I summarize what you said to me? And purpose linking. So remind your teams how their individual roles connect to patient outcomes.

And then go from an empowerment mindset. So shift from managing people to enabling contribution and model calm confidence. So regulate your tone, your body language, your pacing during high stress situations.

Also that mentorship that I talked about. It's important for us to be Mentoring our younger clinicians as they come up in the workforce and professional compassion. So recognize when colleagues are struggling. Be grateful for things that are going well. I try to write one thank you note at least every other week to someone in my life and especially in the work environment and give gratitude for what's going on.

Also active listening. We talked about.

So a little bit more statistics for you. 81% of employees in healthcare felt thought that empathy was very important, but only 31% thought their leaders were empathic. So important for us in leadership to understand. Okay, so let's revisit Maria quickly. So now Maria has taken this course and it's the same situation, staff shortages, same evaluation backlog.

But this time Maria uses high emotional intelligence. At the morning huddle when Jenna says, I'm overwhelmed, my caseload is full and I don't think I can take an additional swallow evaluation today. Maria pauses. She takes deep breath before responding and she says calmly, thank you for being honest. I hear you're at your capacity.

Let's walk through options so your workload feels sustainable. She asks, who has room for an evaluation? What are some things we can do to help here and what support do you need from me? Throughout the day, Maria checks in with Jenna. Privately.

She emails the team, thanking them. She advocates upward to the administration, saying my team is highly committed to but the current volume is not sustainable. And by the end of the week, the caseloads are redistributed equitably. Team members feel heard and valued. Patient satisfaction scores go up and the team begins offering process improvement because they trust Maria.

So you can see just by incorporating these things that Maria is a much more effective leader and it trickles out into her staff and she doesn't have people wanting to leave her.

Now let me go over these leadership styles that was that Goleman proposed in his second book, Primal Leadership. So the first style is your visionary leader. This is a person who provides clear long term direction and connects daily work to a broader mission. Like in healthcare. This would be a leader who uses a new.

If you have a new patient safety initiative coming out or you're adopting an electronic health record, they help you to see the vision of how this is going to help throughout the organization.

Okay. The second is coaching leadership. So we all do a lot of this if we're teaching students coach coaching leadership focuses on individual growth, feedback and long term development. So like I do this with my doctoral students when I'm training them. I do a lot of coaching with doctoral students and with medical residents.

So as a senior therapist or senior person in your field, you mentor new graduates.

It enhances professional efficacy for them and for you. Actually.

The third is what we call affiliative leadership. So this builds harmony, emotional connection and strong team bonds. In healthcare, it's especially valuable after an emotionally taxing event. So if you have a death of a patient or staff morale is getting very low or pandemic related stress, which we've all been through, Affiliative leadership says we are all in this together. We have psychological safety and resilience.

The fourth is democratic leadership. So it seeks input, fosters collaboration and encourages shared decision making. This is really well suited for interdisciplinary teams which are ubiquitous in health care. And democratic leadership improves staff engagement, job satisfaction and team performance. The fifth is what we call pace setting leadership.

So it sets high standards, models excellence and expects rapid achievement in healthcare. This would be like an effective high functioning teams that thrive on autonomy and competence. So surgical teams, elite trauma teams are very much pace setting leadership styles. Now we have to keep in mind that if this is overused, it can cause stress and burnout. So you have to balance pace setting leadership.

And the sixth is commanding leadership. So directive, authoritative use in crisis situations. So we all know that we have a code blue or mass casualty event or an infectious disease breakout or things like that, you're going to want a commanding leader to be in charge. We also want to be careful using too much commanding leadership because it can be linked to low morale if it's excessively used. So like a trauma team leader will give direct rapid fire instructions during a resuscitation, but you don't want them acting that way when you're not in a trauma situation.

So these six styles are important to remember and they are not stagnant. So no one single of those styles is sufficient. We really need to be flexing in between them, be adaptable, be fluid. So adaptability equals high emotional intelligence. So team intelligence is essential.

So Suzanne Gordon is an award winning journalist who also did a lot of work with with. She's written 20 books, teamwork in Healthcare and beyond the Checklist, Quality Improvement. And her concept about team intelligence stresses that clinical expertise alone is not enough. And we've heard that over and over again in this training. We really have to teach emotional intelligence as well.

Amit Ray is also an Indian authority and ethicist who emphasizes that emotional, that artificial intelligence, as it grows, emotional intelligence has to guide our leadership. And I put this in here because we all know that AI is becoming more and more relevant in the world, and it will be infused into healthcare as well. So our emotional intelligence is going to help us as we adapt AI into our, our, our healthcare work. So in my work as a psychologist, I watch healthcare teams firsthand who have high emotional intelligence and it transforms the situation. And we saw that with Maria, when her EQ was low, it was not doing well.

In the hospital situation, it was dismal. People wanted to get out of her environment. But when she learned her emotional intelligence skills and she started using them, her people wanted to be with her. And there was a lot of improvement in the patient care as well as the interpersonal situations with all the employees. So those are our five domains and our six leadership styles.

As we close, I want to leave you with four simple but powerful steps you can begin using right away. First, commit to just one emotional intelligence. Practice for 30 days. So go and look at which one of these domains do I need to strengthen the most for my emotional intelligence, and then pick one of the skills to practice and do it for about 30 days. Okay.

It could be something easy like just taking mindful pauses before responding or intentionally listening without interrupting, but that small, consistent action will build lasting change. Second, I want you to use self assessment tools to track your progress, your progress. And you can find these on the Internet. Lots of self assessment tools. These help you to notice patterns in your strength and growth areas and they keep you accountable to yourself.

Third, apply these skills in your high stress scenarios, the moments when emotions run high and the stakes are the greatest. And you want to keep that trapdoor open so all of your brain parts are working together. This is where you can make the most difference, whether it's with patients, with families or with colleagues. And finally, you want to aim for those measurable improvements in teamwork and patient care. Look for evidence of fewer conflicts, more collaboration, higher patient satisfaction.

These outcomes show that your growth in emotional intelligence is not only personal, although it will absolutely enhance your personal life as well. It's professional and it is transformational. Again, going back to the beginning, having high EQ protects your health. It makes you more efficient. It actually adds to your lifespan.

And hopefully, as you went through all of these domains with me and saw how if you just strengthen each one, in essence, your stress level is going to go down. And we know that our stress level being low gives us longevity. I understand from my 30 years in health care that environments in healthcare are really hard. Okay. I also understand that we don't always get accolades for our work, nor do we expect them many times.

But I want to applaud each of you for being committed to your own growth, as I understand how demanding and also how absolutely rewarding healthcare work is for each of us. We came to this for a reason. We probably all started out with a higher emotional intelligence than many people. I appreciate you making the time today to continue to enhance that. I appreciate your time and attention, and I

strongly encourage you to take this out into your world.

Pick one Practice start today. Don't put it off. Start today. Commit to making emotional intelligence part of how you show up every day in your healthcare environment, in your home environment, for yourself, your team, your patients and your own well being will benefit from this. So thank you for being here today and good luck with developing your emotional intelligence moving forward.