

Resource 6: The emotional intelligence of staff

(Below is an extract from *The Courage to Teach* by Parker J. Palmer, p1.)

'I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy. When my students and I discover uncharted territory to explore, when the pathway out of a thicket opens up before us, when our experience is illumined by the lightning-life of the mind – then teaching is the finest work I know.

But at other moments, the classroom is so lifeless or painful or confused – and I am so powerless to do anything about it – that my claim to be a teacher seems a transparent sham. Then the enemy is everywhere: in those students from some alien planet, in that subject I thought I knew, and in the personal pathology that keeps me earning my living this way. What a fool I was to imagine that I had mastered this occult art – harder to divine than tea leaves and impossible for mortals to do even passably well!

Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. If I am willing to look in that mirror and not run from what I see, I have a chance to gain self-knowledge – and knowing myself is as crucial to good teaching as knowing my students and my subject.'

(Below is an extract from *Working with Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman, p54)

'Intuition and gut feeling bespeak the capacity to sense messages from our internal store of emotional memory – our own reservoir of wisdom and judgement. This ability lies at the heart of self-awareness, and self-awareness is the vital foundation skill for three emotional competencies:

- *Emotional awareness*: The recognition of how our emotions affect our performance, and the ability to use our values to guide decision making.
- *Accurate self-assessment*: A candid sense of our personal strengths and limits, a clear vision of where we need to improve, and the ability to learn from experience.
- *Self-confidence*: The courage that comes from certainty about our capabilities, values, and goals.

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Emotional awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their effects

People with this competence

- know which emotions they are feeling and why
- realize the links between their feelings and what they think, do, and say
- recognize how their feelings affect their performance
- have a guiding awareness of their values and goals

Accurate self-assessment: knowing one's inner resources, abilities, and limits

People with this competence are

- aware of their strengths and weaknesses
- reflective, learning from experience
- open to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self development
- able to show a sense of humour and perspective about themselves

Self-confidence: a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities

People with this competence

- present themselves with self-assurance; have 'presence'
- can voice views that are unpopular and go out on a limb for what is right
- are decisive, able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures

(Below is an extract from Nurturing Emotional Literacy by Peter Sharp, p26)

Managing emotions

'The way feelings are handled or managed is crucial to developing emotional literacy. People who are good at managing emotions don't have any less powerful emotions, but they do routinely take responsibility for their feelings and commit to action in trying to handle overwhelming feelings more effectively. Effective management of emotions implies a prerequisite average or better self-awareness, and resolution to use feelings positively. Being able to manage emotions well confers advantage in many settings, but particularly improves emotional resilience to major life events such as moving home, changing jobs, redundancy, marital breakdown or bereavement. People who are good at managing emotions are better able to express emotions, and do so in a way that is timely and doesn't violate the best interests of others. Higgs and Dulewicz incorporate another element under this heading which they call 'Conscientiousness and Integrity', which encompasses the individual's ability to accept personal responsibility and accountability for their actions and decisions as well as being open and transparent in their dealings with others.'