

CONCERN[®] Services

We're More Than An EAP...

Our goal is to Help People Live Better & Help People Work Better. The following information from the **CONCERN WorkLife Services** program is intended to help you accomplish that goal and remind you that, as your Employee Assistance Program, we are here for you and your family. Visit us on-line at www.ak.concernservices.com or call (513) 891-1627 / (800) 841-5002 for no-charge, confidential assistance.

Exercise Your Brain: Emotional Intelligence

We now understand that, for most of us, emotional intelligence is more important to succeeding in life than our intellectual intelligence. But what exactly is Emotional Intelligence? And how do we continue working on, and improving our ability to understand our emotions?

Daniel Goleman, one of the primary proponents of Emotional Intelligence, describes it as the ability to understand our emotions and the emotional make-up of others, and to use this insight to manage and regulate our own emotions and make connections with others. He describes it as a life-long process of self-understanding and skills development. There are four basic dimensions of emotional intelligence:

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to “know ourselves,” to understand our own feelings, sensitivities and resources. It also means knowing when to rethink our first reactions, and when to trust our “gut reactions. Some ways to develop a greater self-awareness are:

- In each situation, making an effort to label our feelings, not people or situations
- Keeping a journal of the feelings we experience in a day, and writing why we think we experienced them
- Identifying our “unmet emotional needs,” and how we can begin to satisfy them
- Talking situations over with others, receiving their feedback on what they observe in us

Self-Management

Once we have a better understanding of ourselves and our feelings, we utilize that insight to guide our thinking. This skill is based on the belief that we can't choose our feelings, but we can influence how long and intensely we experience them, and what actions we take as a result of them. It includes the skills of impulse control, self-responsibility, de-escalation, and optimism. Some ways to develop greater self-management are:

- Giving ourselves a “time out” when we're upset
- Using positive statements, called “affirmations” to build up our self-confidence
- Venting our feelings to a supportive person

Social Awareness

In social awareness, we bring our self-awareness and self-management skills to understanding the people in our lives. These are essential skills, because emotions play a role in every human interaction. It includes the ability to read another person's facial expressions, voice and other non-verbal signals in order to better understand their feelings.

Some ways to develop better social awareness are:

- Using our powers of observation to pick up on nonverbal cues
- Asking about each person: What are they feeling? Why are they feeling that? What is their world view?
- Using our own feelings to develop empathy for others

Relationship Management

Relationship management is the highest level of emotional intelligence. Relationships are essential to emotional wellness, and in accomplishing our goals in life. Relationship management includes the skills of communication, conflict management, and building and nurturing our relationships. Some ways to develop these all-important skills are:

- Reframing our words, so that we state our needs in a way the other person can hear them.
- Asking open-ended questions, i.e. questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer, in order to better understand the other person
- Self-disclosing our own situation and feelings

As we continue improving our emotional intelligence skills, we grow emotionally stronger, nurture and develop healthy relationships and are better able to work towards our life goals.