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INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING MODULE



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Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

The module in the professional environment

03

Impacts recognized through gender stereotypes

04

Good practices and tips

05

Conclusions

1. Introduction



Emotional intelligence encompasses several key areas of interpersonal skills and highlights how emotional intelligence can enhance interpersonal interactions and relationships. Interpersonal skills refer to the set of abilities and qualities that enable individuals to interact, communicate, and build relationships effectively with others. These skills involve a wide range of behaviours, attitudes, and competencies that facilitate positive interactions and connections with people in various social and professional settings.

Interpersonal skills are essential for establishing rapport, collaborating with others, resolving conflicts, and fostering a harmonious and productive environment. The development and refinement of these skills can significantly enhance one's personal relationships and career prospects, as well as enhance one's overall success. These are the main areas of interpersonal skills within emotional intelligence:

- **Social awareness:** The concept of social awareness, as a component of emotional intelligence, is discussed by Daniel Goleman in "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ." The skill encompasses the ability to perceive and understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of others. It involves being attuned to social dynamics, non-verbal cues, and the underlying feelings and perspectives of those around us. Goleman emphasizes that social awareness goes beyond mere observation; it requires empathy and genuine concern for others. Within the context of emotional intelligence, social awareness involves skills such as empathy, social Perception, organizational awareness, and service orientation.
- **Relationship management or social skills:** As presented by Goleman, refers to the ability to build and maintain positive and healthy relationships with others. It involves effectively handling interactions, conflicts, and collaborations in a manner that fosters understanding, cooperation, and mutual benefit. Within the context of emotional intelligence, relationship management encompasses several skills, including communication, conflict resolution, collaboration, teamwork, leadership, and building relationships.



2. The module in the professional environment



Interpersonal skills can have a powerful impact on both women's professional and personal development, made even more significant by a variety of social and cultural factors. The benefits provided by interpersonal and other soft skills are important because we are working more closely with a greater number of people than ever before. A Harvard Business Review study in 2016 found that the time managers and employees spent working collaboratively increased by more than 50% over the past two decades. Organisations value interpersonal skills highly because of this increased emphasis on teamwork.

In the professional environment, interpersonal skills are fundamental to building strong working relationships, collaborating effectively in teams, leading with empathy and networking. Developing these skills can help women overcome gender barriers, gain confidence in their ability to influence and negotiate, and advance in their careers. In addition can also have a positive impact on personal women's well-being, because building healthy and meaningful relationships, both personally and professionally, can provide emotional support, strengthen self-esteem and promote a sense of belonging and connectedness. As a 2017 Harvard Business Review article noted, positive work relationships can help prevent burnout, exhaustion and even loneliness. These skills can help women develop a strong support network, manage stress effectively and cultivate healthy relationships in all areas of their lives.

It is important to keep in mind that interpersonal skills are not innate, but can be learned and developed over time. For women, especially in settings where they may face additional challenges due to gender inequalities, investing in the development of these skills can be especially valuable. This can include seeking out training and development opportunities, seeking out mentors and role models, and actively practising soft skills in different contexts.

In conclusion, soft skills can empower women and have an overall positive impact on their professional and personal development. These skills enable them to lead successfully, establish strong networks, negotiate and advocate for their rights, collaborate effectively and promote their overall well-being. By investing in the development of these skills, women can maximise their potential and overcome barriers they may face on their path to success.

3. Impacts recognized through gender stereotypes



Interpersonal skills are equally important for women as they are for men in the labour market, but it should be noted that women have historically faced unique challenges and prejudices in the workplace. The glass ceiling is based on several assumptions compared to other forms of discrimination and inequality, this phenomenon is a particular and specific form of inequality due to several criteria (Cotter et al., 2001, Elacqua et al., 2009). However, possessing strong interpersonal skills can help women overcome these challenges and thrive in their careers.

Some considerations on interpersonal skills in the work environment to promote professional competencies:

- Effective communication skills are crucial for women to confidently convey their ideas, requirements, and concerns in the workplace. By cultivating assertiveness, women can overcome biases related to gender and ensure that their opinions and perspectives are heard.
- Establishing professional networks and cultivating relationships is essential for advancing one's career. Women can utilize their interpersonal skills to effectively connect with mentors, actively seek opportunities, and foster supportive relationships that contribute to their professional growth.
- Negotiation skills are of particular importance for women in advocating for fair compensation, promotions, and opportunities. By developing negotiation skills, women can empower themselves to navigate salary discussions and other professional negotiations with success, ensuring that their value and contributions are properly recognized and rewarded.
- Women often excel in collaborative settings due to their natural abilities in building relationships, empathy, and teamwork. Leveraging these interpersonal skills allows women to contribute positively to team dynamics, promote collaboration, and drive successful outcomes.
- Leadership plays a critical role for women who aspire to advance in their careers and take on leadership positions. By assuming leadership roles, women have the power to inspire and motivate others, drive team performance, and overcome the gender biases that exist in leadership positions.

4. Good practices and tips



Developing interpersonal skills requires constant practice and self-reflection. These good practices and tools can help you establish healthy and effective relationships with others in a variety of contexts. Below are some general strategies and tips for developing effective interpersonal skills in a professional setting:

Perceptual positions tool

The Perceptual Positions exercise is taken from Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Its goal is to show you, in a structured way, how to see other people's points of view. It's a straightforward exercise that you can do in just a few minutes.



The Johari window tool

The online exercise provides a simple visual reference for examining your personality, and for improving understanding between individuals. Most people use it to develop self-awareness, but you can also use it as a personal development tool, and to build better workplace relationships.



10 tips for effective interpersonal communication

Whether we communicate from behind a screen or face to face, interpersonal skills allow us to share ideas, points of view, and information effectively. On this document, you will find the best communication strategies for effective workplace collaboration, and reflect on your own personal communication style.



Interpersonal Skills: Definition, Tips and 20 Examples

More detailed information, tips and 20 Examples of Interpersonal Skills Employers Look for in 2023.



5. Conclusions



Interpersonal skills play a crucial role in our professional environment, as companies systematically classify interpersonal skills as a critical competency for job success. Since organisations need interpersonally competent people who can interact successfully, professionals must acquire effective interpersonal skills to adapt successfully to the labour market. Developing strong interpersonal skills is important not only for professional development but also for personal growth. By improving communication and relationship-building skills, individuals can enhance their ability to connect with others on a deeper level, build stronger friendships, and maintain healthier relationships.

It is concluded from this module that interpersonal skills are essential in the workplace to establish effective relationships, foster collaboration and promote a healthy work environment free from gender stereotypes. By developing these skills, professional women can improve their ability to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, work in teams and manage conflict constructively.

Good practices such as clear and effective communication, active listening, mutual respect and the expression of appreciation and recognition are examples of how these skills can be applied in the work environment to break the gender gap and the phenomenon known as the glass ceiling. The development of interpersonal skills is an ongoing process that requires practice and self-reflection. Through constant improvement of these skills, professional women can strengthen their presence and leadership in the workplace, build strong relationships and contribute significantly to the success of organisations.

It is important to note that soft skills are not unique to women, but are relevant to anyone in the workplace. However, due to social and cultural dynamics, women often face additional challenges in the workplace, and developing interpersonal skills can help them overcome these barriers and excel in their professional roles. Promoting an inclusive and respectful environment, where all voices are valued, is essential to maximising the potential of soft skills in the workplace. In conclusion, interpersonal skills are essential for professional and personal success in any field and for any gender. By cultivating these skills, professional women can achieve greater impact, contribute to a positive work environment and open up opportunities for career growth and advancement.

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