



DISAWORK

Development and Implementation of a Social Emotional Approach to the Workplace

IO1 A6.4

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

**IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS, FINDING SOLUTIONS.
FOCUS GROUP COMMON REPORT.**



Co-funded by the
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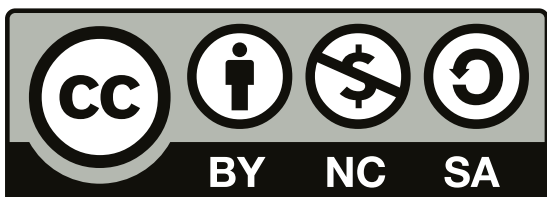
Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

**FOCUS GROUP WITH EXPERTS FOR THE DEFINITION
OF 10 ESSENTIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE**

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About the project

The world is changing and so is the labour market. The skills and competencies needed in the workplace are evolving and therefore, employers, executives, managers and workers have to develop new skills and strategies to adapt to this changing labour market.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is one of these skills required in today's world of work, where emotional connections between people are becoming much more important in the workplace. The more technology we have in this digital age, the more we automate tasks and trust machines to take over duties, the more we realize the importance of emotions.

Every day we make emotionally charged decisions. We feel plan A is better than plan B and we sometimes make choices based on our emotions or gut feelings. When we understand the origin and source of these emotions, especially when working in a team, we are more attuned to each other. With globalization, emotional intelligence is more significant than ever when teams are cross-cultural and global, increasing the complexity of interactions of emotions and how they are expressed. Essentially, emotional intelligence in the workplaces comes down to understanding, expressing and managing, good relationships and solving problems under pressure.

In this context, **DISAWORK** project aims at providing high quality management in emotional skills to European entrepreneurs, managers and SME, as well as their workers and employees. IE has application in multiple productive sectors, always focused in the improvement of results of persons and organizations, from a personal or professional point of view.

By creating training tools for improving emotional intelligence skills of entrepreneurs, managers and employees, the consortium expects to achieve the overall objective of the project: highlight the importance of Emotional Intelligence skills in the new economic environment and globalised world.

The project consortium is composed of 6 organisations from 5 different EU countries (GR, SP, AUT, RO and IT) in a comprehensive partnership under the coordination of InterMediaKT, consisting of a solid group of training companies with long international experience in the application of Emotional Intelligence in their programs and a high demand of this kind of formation: CPIP (Romania), CESIE (Italy), and GROWTHCOOP (Spain). VAEV (Austria) will add its wide range of contacts with Austrian companies and organizations, while INDEPCIE (Spain) is a training company specialized in coaching and EI, which will add a plus of expertise to the program.

To achieve the objectives of the project three Intellectual Outputs will be developed, tested and multiplied: 'EMOJOBS' (O1), 'EIW. Online training in Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace' (O2) and 'EMOTIONS FOR SUCCESS' (O3).

At this point of the project, we are in Output 1, where after having carried out the State of the Art in our first task, in which the partners presented information about the current situation of emotional intelligence in the workplace at national level, in this second task we have carried out a focus group in each country to know the opinion of experts regarding the conclusions drawn in the previous task. The aim of these focus groups is to extract ten essential emotional areas in the workplace, which will be central to the objectives and next steps of this project.

Background

The aim of our focus group was to provide a high level perspective and qualitative information on the main points we have reached after the first activity of the project, the state of the art.

Thus, and according to the previous activities carried out by the partnership, we could put on the table the following situations or issues affecting emotional aspects in the workplace, with the consequences of lack of productivity but also mental stress:

- Relation between emotions and decisions.
- Lack of emotional training. Awareness!
- Emotional balance and atmosphere in the workplace.
- Emotions and interpersonal relationships.
- Emotional impact: the internal customer and the external customer

Moreover, there are other important aspects such as:

- Emotions and mental health
- Negative effects on the company
- Lack of organisation based on a clear and stated vision
- Emotions and productivity

To help partners to run the focus group meeting it was suggested the following agenda:

Welcome
Introduction of the participants of focus group
Presentation of the European project: DISAWORK
Presentation of the results of previous activities
Focus group work
Concluding of the meeting

Also, it was suggested the following questions for discussions; however, project partners could add other questions which in their opinion could be important for their target group.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- What do you think of the importance of emotional balance in the workplace?
- Under what emotion you make most of your decisions? What are they like? What consequences do they have on the organisation?
- What value do you place on balanced relationships between team members?
- If your company were an emotion, what would it be? Can you argue it?
- What strategies have you implemented or could you implement to improve your emotional management?
- How do you think better emotional management could help you? Can you think of a specific situation where you have missed it?

Furthermore, and according to the results of Task 1.1, we will also present the following list of suggested emotional areas as a departure point for the discussion among the experts. Remember that the final result of these first tasks is the definition of 10 essential emotional skills in the workplace as base for Task 1.3 self-evaluation tool.

- Problem solving in complex situations
- Critical thinking
- Creativity

- People management
- Coordination with team members
- Emotional intelligence
- Judgement and decision-making skills
- Service orientation
- Negotiation skills
- Cognitive flexibility

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

CAN YOU RANK THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT?

DO YOU SUGGEST ANY OTHER?



Analysis of the results

BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

The focus groups in our partner countries were composed of professionals from different sectors and occupations. The varied profiles of the participants allowed for a more diverse, complete and fruitful analysis.

Number of participants per country:

- Romania: 9
- Austria: 7
- Greece: 7
- Italy: 7
- Spain: 8

Occupations and participant information by country:

Romania

- Entrepreneurs and managers: 2 participants
- Experts in professional mobility: 2 participants
- Trainers and facilitators: 5 participants

Austria

- Entrepreneurs from different sectors, based in Vienna.
- The group was diverse in mainly the field of business of participants as well as their personal background like the country of origin.

Greece

The Greek participants were a diverse group of people representing various backgrounds and working fields. Three people coming from the field of human resources and administration, with two representing multinational enterprises and managing large groups of people. Two of them introduced themselves with the title of the director and the CEO, meaning, they were in the highest ranking of management. Finally, there was a freelancer and a social worker. We tried to secure a variety of working areas, including technology and manufacturing. software development, human resources management, pedagogics, and the civil society. They represented both local NGOs and national ones. The age of the participants was a range starting from 30 to 55 and we tried to secure a balance in women and men being represented equally.

Italy

- Participants from the targeted work sectors (HR managers, entrepreneurs, experts in job counselling) plus 2 individual interviews to entrepreneurs: one from the hospitality sector and another from the retail business.
- They have been chosen from different background and different ages in order to gain all the possible point of views and personal experiences.
- They were Alessandra (A.), Silvia (S.), Hanna (H.), Georgia (G.), Benedetto (B.), Gaetano (G.A.), Filippo (F.) and a contribution of Alberto B. (A.B.).

Spain

- Participants from a variety of sectors: education, training, sales, strategy and business development, etc.
- The different age groups and sectors to which the participants belong have made it possible to acquire a more complete and varied view of different work environments and the emotional situation of the participants in the performance of their activities.





QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EMOTIONAL BALANCE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Nearly all participants in the focus groups in the five countries stated that emotional balance in the workplace is essential both for the performance of work activities and in the relationships between team members.

Some of the reasons suggested by participants for this importance are:

- Keeping emotional balance in the workplace can **prevent conflicts and miscommunication** that can occur in the hectic working environments.
- Emotional balance leads to **creation of a strong team** and employees who feel welcomed which can lead to better performance.
- It **prevents burnouts**.
- It is the **basis for worker efficiency and motivation**.
- It leads to a **good working environment**, the **achievement of objectives** and the **personal development** of each member of the organization.
- It is important for the **harmonious development of work activities**.
- Emotional balance entails **empathy** and the ability to understand others, which are indispensable for creating a good working environment.

As also stated by a participant from **Greece**, one may think that a high IQ is a quality to be valued in an employee, but the truth is that this is not enough, other characteristics are needed, such as an adequate emotional balance in order to be able to effectively develop cooperation and teamwork activities, which are essential in companies.

Teamwork, therefore, was a topic that most participants drew on when explaining why they consider emotional balance to be important in the workplace. Many companies depend on good interpersonal relationships to survive, but to achieve this, the first step is to recognise one's own emotions.

2. UNDER WHAT EMOTION YOU MAKE MOST OF YOUR DECISIONS? WHAT ARE THEY LIKE? WHAT CONSEQUENCES DO THEY HAVE ON THE ORGANIZATION?

STRESS, PRESSURE

Many participants stated that they make most of their decisions under pressure or stress. These participants recognise that they are overworked or simply required to act quickly, resulting in a constant state of alertness that sometimes prevents them from switching off from work.

Sometimes working under stress can have positive consequences such as increased productivity and focus, but in most cases the consequences are negative.

For example, one focus group participant from **Spain** states that working under this emotion has negative consequences such as:

- Making **mistakes** due to lack of time.
- Feeling of **disaffection** with the company's objectives.
- **Demotivation**.
- **Passive attitude**.

In turn, an Italian participant mentions that pressure is what makes her run, but the consequences are often negative. On the contrary, when she feels powerful and valuable for her work, then she takes actions that have positive consequences.

On the other hand, the opinion of a participant from **Italy** is noteworthy as it

shows some support for “negative” emotions such as stress, stating that: “bad emotions lead to the majority of actions and decisions, because they are stronger in their impact. Nice emotions are easily forgotten”.

ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm is an emotion mentioned several times, as it is considered to be the main driver of performance. In the **Austrian** focus group it was mentioned that in sectors such as sales enthusiasm is especially important, participants in the management position stated that it is an emotion they possess and want their employees to have in order to perform better. However, many of the participants from the sales areas acknowledged that stress is highly present, meaning the areas of high enthusiasm were also areas where stress was highly present.

SERENITY

In the **Spanish** focus group, this emotion was mentioned several times, adding that autonomy and the capacity for analysis make it possible to make decisions in a state of serenity.

For example, one of them indicated that what makes her able to make decisions with serenity is the fact that she is analytical: “I try to have the resources to be able to make an intelligent decision, and this requires prior analysis. This gives me the serenity to make the best possible decision”.

This is also supported by what was said in the focus group in **Romania**: “Behind every decision we make is a thought, and behind it lies the entire emotional and mental baggage we have. Many times, without knowing it, most of us live our lives on the basis of mental programs implanted from childhood or learned over the years from family, school, or society”. The participants of this focus group assumed that the act of leadership is equivalent to the act of thinking and making decisions. You must be a good decision maker to become a good manager.

3.

WHAT VALUE DO YOU PLACE ON BALANCED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEAM MEMBERS?

Most participants placed **great value** on balanced relationships between team members.

Some of the reasons mentioned:

- It involves **happiness**
- It is very necessary for **feeling comfortable** at work
- It is essential for the **development of the organization**
- It is fundamental for the **effectiveness of the work**
- The faster a climate of cooperation between members is established, the faster you get to a state of **mutual trust**
- Some teams depend on interpersonal relations in order to **survive**
- Not just personal performance, but also **cooperation** with other members of the team, **is what matters**.
- **Communication is fundamental for the good exit of the collaboration**

In the focus group in **Italy** it was mentioned how these relationships have changed during Covid's time and what are the consequences of these changes. It was commented that with the birth of so-called "smart working" new forms of distance communication have appeared and that the relationships between colleagues are in danger: "The pandemic has fixed that blurred line between friendship and work, so it had a negative effect on one side (taking out the interaction) and a positive side making clear that there's a difference between friends and colleagues. Covid has also made difficult the integration of new people in a structured new place of work where there are many unwritten rules and where the relationships with colleagues are already set for the majority of people. This creates a boundary, an emotive barrier for understanding each other and work well, without fear of insecurity. The creation of informal moment at work could be a way to create more balance".

Many of the participants stated that they are always trying to improve relations between members. For example, in **Austria** they have said that they are always working on creating the strongest team they are leading, and they try to do that by improving the relationships within the team.

In the case of **Italy**, one participant states that he listens a lot to others, takes emotions into account and analyses what is referred to him in terms of the problems he has to deal with and emotions. With this in mind, he makes his own decisions. If conflicts arise, he analyses them, tries to understand the reasons, puts himself in the employee's place and analyses the emotions from his point of view and tries to understand.

Also, a participant from **Greece** mentioned that his company had recruited new members, who did not have much experience and therefore this creates some difficulty in managing emotional intelligence. However, he believes that it is important to understand how these new team members work and how they react to different incidents. Therefore, he considers that it is necessary to manage one's own emotions properly in order to be able to manage the emotions of the people he helps.

“Working experience is not always the most important factor, sometimes the attitude matters”.

All in all, the majority of participants consider that **balanced relationships between the members of a company are essential**, as they generate general well-being within the workplace, ensure the effectiveness of work activities and the improvement of the company, as well as its survival in some cases.

4. IF YOUR COMPANY WERE AN EMOTION, WHAT WOULD IT BE? CAN YOU ARGUE IT?

The emotions mentioned in the five focus groups were:

STRESS

In all focus groups in the five partner countries, some participants described their company with this emotion.

In **Romania** it was stated that, “when the pressure of time intervenes or too many tasks gather on the agenda, then the company is the emotion of stress, fear”.

ANXIETY OR FEELING OVERWHELMED

Anxiety or feeling overwhelmed are also emotions with which several participants describe their companies.

In **Austria**, feeling overwhelmed has been described as an emotion that is above and beyond stress. “Participants who experienced a burnout have said that feeling overwhelmed was the last level of stress to feel before a burnout occurs”

ENTHUSIASM

This emotion has been mentioned by some participants. In **Romania**, for example, it has been mentioned that the organisation can be “surrounded” by the emotion of enthusiasm when the team or employees communicate very well with each other or when they have common pre-occupations or tasks.

HAPPINESS

Besides happiness as such, many participants have named similar emotions such as: Joy or self-fulfillment.

The latter was named by a participant from **Austria** who was incredibly happy with her job, the success of her company and the role of her company.

Other emotions mentioned:

- PRIDE
- OPTIMISM
- PASSION
- EXCELLENCE
- GROWTH
- ACCEPTANCE
- OPPENNESS
- DETERMINATION
- UNCERTAINTY
- INDIFFERENCE
- ANGER
- FEAR

Several participants described their companies with emotions such as: **stress, indifference, anger or fear**. With this we can see that the workplaces to which these participants belong do not have an adequate emotional management, neither at the individual level nor at the level of interpersonal relationships.

However, the rest of the participants (who are the majority) have named **positive emotions**, which is a good sign as it means that these people enjoy doing their job and experience some well-being, so there must be a good emotional management behind this.

5. WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU IMPLEMENT, OR COULD YOU IMPLEMENT TO IMPROVE YOUR EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT?

Romania

- **The thought stops:** this strategy aims to control thinking and can be used before, during or after the situation that generates the negative emotion. It

is about the fact that when you start to notice yourself, nervous or angry, pay attention to the thoughts you have and identify the negative connotations it has for you. Then, replace the thoughts detected as negative with positive statements.

- **Mental repetition:** It consists in visualizing the fact that the negative situation develops without problems, and you feel safe and relaxed because you are satisfied with the way you act. You can also repeat slogans like: I do well, I am relaxed, etc. With each mental repetition, the level of anxiety will decrease, and this feeling will give you more confidence to overcome the situation successfully.
- **Release tension with sport**
- **Get involved in workshops for emotional management**

Austria

- **Self-help literature:** using literature to understand different strategies of emotional management and ways to improve ourselves. Affordable and reliable resource.
- **External coaching:** a more cost demanding form of improvement, by involving coaches, therapist, and other experts. It helps in understanding yourself and your enterprise through different point of views.
- **Attention training:** Useful method to improve people skills, management skills and personal productivity.
- **Yoga and breath work** help in regulation of negative emotions, especially stress.
- **Journaling:** a good way to process your emotions.
- **Open communication:** within the team as well as in the close circle like family, friends or a partner.

“By being open about issues and stresses we face we will be able to deal with them in a healthier way and understand different point of views, free of charge.”

Greece

- **Communication**
- **Empathy**
- **Outdoor activities as a team:** but always trying to maintain balance and avoiding the creation of a clique in the workplace, as it is an environment where co-workers often change, and new members come to the team.

Spain

- **Relativising:** when facing with negative situations or problems, it is useful to relativise these problems and think of the positive aspects.
- **Assertiveness**
- **Perseverance**
- **Meditation**
- **To take time for ourselves**
- **Communication**
- **Breathing**

Italy

- **Regulate the relationship between team members, using kindness.**
- **Coaching**
- **To put others at ease:** both employees and customers, in order to bring them into a dimension of serenity and make them share emotions: without emotions sharing there is no growth.

COMMON STRATEGIES MENTIONED IN THE FIVE FOCUS GROUPS

- COMMUNICATION: the strategy most frequently mentioned
- EMPATHY
- COACHING
- RELATIVISING
- MEDITATION
- BREATHING
- PHYSICAL EXERCISE

6. HOW DO YOU THINK BETTER EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT COULD HELP YOU? CAN YOU THINK OF A SPECIFIC SITUATION WHERE YOU HAVE MISSED IT?

When asked **how better emotional management could help them**, participants responded in different ways in each of the focus groups.

In **Romania**, participants agreed that **“it all depends on how we choose to interpret the situation**. If you play the role of the calm person in a conflict, it will be much easier for the person in front of you to respond in the same way because he will continue to play the role imposed by you. However, participants do not believe that there is a right way to be. Of course, by choosing the words, one can give the false impression that he is, but the reality can be completely different. There is power in each of us, and the thing we can take into account is our approach to emotions, an approach that keeps the possibility of emotional responses that alternate, without pretending that we feel something we do not actually feel”.

In **Greece**, some participants have recognised the need for **more training and awareness** of emotional intelligence in the workplace:

“There is a need for training in the use and application of emotional intelligence in the workplace”.

“specific skills are needed to get in touch with emotions and manage the situation each time”.

With regard to the **Spanish** focus group participants, it was mainly mentioned that better emotional management would be good for them:

“Facing certain situations that are sometimes difficult due to the lack of personal confidence”

“It would help in team work and with people with a toxic profile”

On the other hand, in **Italy**, one participant has indicated that better emotional management would be beneficial because “when in a rush we don’t pay enough attention to colleague or our behavior”. In addition, it has also been indicated that “to manage emotions takes a lot of serenity and if this is lacking, the emotions also fail”.

In short, the participants are well aware that proper emotional management could help them to cope with certain situations, as well as to improve relations with the rest of the team. And of course, they are aware that training in this matter is necessary.

With regard to the second question of **whether they have thought of any situation where they have lacked emotional management**, the following comments were made:

Romania

The participants missed the emotional balance especially in situations where they could not refuse a new task even though they already had a lot on their agenda.

Greece

A big challenge that a participant and her team faced, where they feel EI was not used, was at the beginning of the pandemic. They had to change their way of working from live to online which did not work very well, as their services require interaction and they felt this more difficult to have when meetings are done online.

Spain

Two participants stated that they have missed this emotional management when the work well done and the effort made was not appreciated by their superiors. One participant also admitted that she missed it when her personal circumstances were complicated but the level of demand was not reduced.

Italy

A participant mentioned that "I missed it when I took things on the personal level, and this made me snappy and not very serious".

Here we can identify, according to participants' testimonies, **two areas where EI has not been applied**:

- One area is at the **individual level**, which has to do with self-confidence or the ability to adapt to change. Sometimes it is difficult to develop these skills adequately when there is no good management of emotions.
- Another area is at the **level of the company as a whole** and, above all, falls

on superiors and managers. This is when empathy or fluid communication with employees is not applied, causing them to be subjected to conditions or situations that are unfair to them. This indicates that emotional management is absent or inadequate in such companies.

Furthermore, and according to the results of Task 1.1, we will also present the following list of suggested emotional areas as a departure point for the discussion among the experts. Remember that the final result of these first tasks is the definition of 10 essential emotional skills in the workplace as base for Task 1.3 self-evaluation tool.

- Problem solving in complex situations
- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- People management
- Coordination with team members
- Emotional intelligence
- Judgement and decision-making skills
- Service orientation
- Negotiation skills
- Cognitive flexibility

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Romania

The participants in this focus group freely expressed their interest in the suggested emotional areas and appreciated that they were very well chosen. They recommended to have:

- People and time management not only people
- Creativity in the workplace
- Coordination with team members can be replaced by leadership skills within teams (or leadership and teamwork).

Austria

All the emotional skills sounded important as well as interesting to some participant, as they never considered their importance. It was not clear what exactly was meant by cognitive flexibility for example. Also, one of the interesting feedbacks were that people management and coordination with team member could be considered a same emotional skill. One participant pointed out that creativity, as much as important, is not an emotional skill but a professional.

Can you rank the three most important?

Romania

The participants agreed in the end on the followings top 3:

- Judgement and decision-making skills
- Emotional Intelligence
- Problem solving in complex situations

Austria

- Judgement and decision-making skills
- Negotiation skills
- Service orientation

Spain

The three areas most highly rated by the Spanish focus group participants were as follows:

- People management
- Coordination with team members
- Emotional Intelligence

However, other areas have also been mentioned such as:

- Problem solving
- Creativity
- Critical thinking

Greece

- Critical thinking
- Emotional Intelligence
- People management

Other areas mentioned in the focus group in Greece were:

- Problem solving in complex situations
- Decision making skills
- Coordination with team members

Italy

The following areas were mentioned in the focus group in Italy:

- Negotiation skills
- Problem solving in complex situations
- Creativity
- Emotional Intelligence

Furthermore, one participant pointed out that

“these competences are important according to the role of a person and the priority changes for the kind of role one has”.

Emotional areas were rated in different ways by participants from different countries. In general terms, it could be said that **those considered most important were:**

- Emotional Intelligence
- Problem solving
- Decision making skills
- People management

Do you suggest any other?

Romania

- Managing resistance to change
- Self-control
- Workplace adaptability skills

Spain

- Emotional salary
- Assertiveness

Italy

- Empathy if not part of EI
- Perseverance
- The ability to observe and to listen.





NATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

AUSTRIA

The discussions in the focus group were highly effective, what contributed to it being a very fruitful discussion was the fact that the group of participants was remarkably diverse, and their opinions varied. The overall opinion of the focus group was that the emotional skills are very important in the workspace, however the group did not reach a consensus in which are more important than other and how they should be implemented.

Related to the feedback given for the work conducted within the project DISAWORK, the participants saw the relevance of the project and believed that we had a very good start. The valuable feedback we want to point out was related to the 10 most important emotional skills are:

- **Cognitive Flexibility** is not an emotional skill, but a mental ability, this was pointed out by one participant with a background and degree in psychology.
- **People management and coordination with team members** could be considered a same emotional skill.

All the participants were happy to learn that a project like this is active and expressed their interest to follow its further development.

GREECE

The focus group was extremely interesting for our team at InterMediaKT and the project at large. The main themes which emerged were teamwork, as a benefactor of good collaboration and quality relationships. Inspiring leadership, flexibility, and critical thinking in the workplace, should lead to continuous evolution and understanding. Finally managing emotions and showing empathy, were put as main factors of

emotional balance, and understanding in the workplace.

In the focus group, we tried to have a balanced representation of various fields, levels of hierarchy, years of experience and size of the enterprises/ institutions represented. We managed quite well in this and we are happy to see the diversity but also convergence of opinion, given the differences of people who were united on this call.

ITALY

All the participants to the focus group agreed on the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace and especially on the importance of the balance of this soft skill, due to the profound destructive mechanisms that can emerge from the lack of it.

The interesting addition coming from the sharing of thoughts is that also negative emotions should have an important role in terms of acknowledging them: if considered actively they can be faced by the team member, discussed and resolved, making room for personal and collective growth. If instead they are unspoken, they can become invisible barriers holding each person away from each other. Negative emotions and contrasts can lead to deeper knowledge of the work team and to deeper mutual understanding if the disagreements are confronted prioritizing the good working atmosphere.

Several strategies came up, used by the interviewed to manage emotions:

- meditation
- breathing consciously
- to write all the impulsive thoughts in an email as a draft and review it the day after
- coaching
- nonviolent communication
- to take time for ourselves every once in a while

An interesting part of the debate has been dedicated to the Covid situation of the last year and half. It brought to the table interesting hints on how the work field in general has changed, highlighting some gaps and already existing small cracks that got more and more evident due to the remote working. In terms of emotional balance it has been difficult due to the lack of informal moments to share among colleagues and even more difficult for newly arrived or for people speaking a different mother tongue language: the physical contact allowed the body language to speak and gave the chances of building close relationships, while with remote working this is difficult to achieve. A suggestion is to create new ways of having informal moments to share and ways to get to know each other better. It is necessary to take into account this new work approach when dealing with topics such as Emotional Intelligence in the workplace, because the inner rules of work are changing.

SPAIN

- **Emotional balance in the workplace is essential for all participants.** They have stated that this balance generates well-being at work, as well as greater productivity and efficiency at work, which, as a result, translates into higher performance for the company.
- Participants **make most of their decisions under emotions such as stress or calmness.** Sometimes, decisions made under stress end up being positive, but there can be drawbacks for both the company and the employee, such as constant pressure, the inability to switch off or the possibility of making mistakes due to the pressure and the need to act quickly. On the other hand, the participants who have acknowledged that they make decisions with calm and serenity, affirm that there are other facets such as autonomy or analytical capacity that allow this calmness to be generated when making decisions.
- **Good relationships between team members are important for the participants as this is what generates well-being at work** and as a result, effectiveness and productivity.
- Most participants would define their company with **positive emotions** such as passion, joy or security, which indicates that these workers experience

well-being and happiness within their companies. However, **some participants mentioned emotions such as stress or indifference**, which are the result of a work environment where emotions are not taken into account or managed in an appropriate way.

- Some of the strategies mentioned to improve their emotional management were **relaxation, disconnection, fluid communication and empathy**. In addition, when faced with negative situations, it has been mentioned that it is very useful to relativise these problems and think about the positive aspects.
- According to the participants, **better emotional management can help to establish better relationships with the rest of the team and to deal with certain situations more effectively**. Some of them responded that they **lacked this emotional management from their superiors**, because they often do not feel that the work well done and the effort made is properly valued.

The emotional areas that the participants consider most important are:

- Creativity
- Emotional intelligence
- Coordination with members
- People management
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- 1. Emotional balance is fundamental in the workplace**, both for the good performance of work activities and to ensure good relations between team members. This was stated by the participants of the focus groups in the five partner countries, who highlighted how important this emotional balance is for teamwork, one of the fundamental factors for the good functioning of companies. Emotions play a very important role in work performance, so the result or consequence of each decision will depend very much on the emotion behind the decision. These emotions will depend on the role each person plays in the company, as well as many other factors. Experts have mentioned that behind their decisions lie emotions such as stress, enthusiasm or serenity
- 2. Balanced relationships between team members are fundamental** to the development of a company and are what generate well-being and trust in the workplace. In fact, in many cases, companies depend on good interpersonal relationships in order to survive.
- 3.** Given this importance, companies have a responsibility to ensure such balanced relationships between their members, for which proper emotional management is essential. However, in many cases this management does not take place, as some of the participants in our focus groups indicated by describing their companies with emotions such as: stress, pressure, indifference or fear.
- 4. Stress, anxiety or feeling overwhelmed are very common emotions in the workplace.** Therefore, communication, empathy, relativisation of problems, coaching or meditation are strategies that, according to the participants, can be implemented to improve the emotional management of each person.
- 5. Negative emotions also have an important value.** If they are actively considered, they can be confronted by team members, discussed and resolved,

leaving room for personal and collective growth. If, on the other hand, they are not talked about, they can become invisible barriers that alienate each person from the others.

6. According to the testimonies of the focus group participants, it could be said that there are **two areas where adequate emotional management may not be applied in the workplace**: on the one hand, one area is at the individual level, which has to do with self-confidence or the ability to adapt to change. Sometimes it is difficult to develop these skills properly when there is no good management of emotions. Another area is at the level of the company as a whole and, above all, falls on superiors and managers. This is when empathy or fluid co-communication with employees is not applied, causing them to be subjected to conditions or situations that are unfair to them. This indicates that emotional management is absent or inadequate in such companies.

7. As a result of the list of emotional skills proposed and the corresponding evaluations of the participants in the different focus groups, as well as other emotional skills proposed by the experts themselves or observed during the focus group interventions, **these 10 essential emotional areas for the workplace can be established**:

10 ESSENTIAL EMOTIONAL AREAS IN THE WORKPLACE

1. Emotional intelligence
2. Problem solving in complex situations
3. Judgment and decision making skills
4. People management
5. Critical Thinking
6. Assertiveness
7. Empathy
8. Managing resistance to change
9. Self-control
10. Communication and negotiation skills





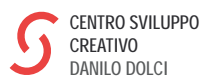
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