
Block III - Developing Emotional Competencies

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UNIT 4 EMOTIONS, SELF-CONTROL AND ASSERTIVENESS*

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

A woman was living with her baby in a remote village. She had no one else with her. However, she had a pet mongoose with her which she was very fond of. The mongoose also liked the baby and was always around. The woman used to go to the well at a distance from her house to fetch water everyday. She would often request an elderly woman in her neighborhood to keep a watch over her baby while she was gone. One day, there was no one. So she left the baby alone and went to bring water thinking that she will come back quickly. When she was away, a snake came into the house from the backyard and went near the baby sleeping on the cot in the open area of the house. The mongoose who was nearby got alerted and put up a fierce fight with the snake. The snake also injured the mongoose severely and there was blood around. Though the mongoose killed the snake. After some time the woman returned hurriedly. As soon as she entered the main door, she was shocked to see the mongoose lying with blood-smeared mouth at the entrance. Immediately she feared that it had killed her baby and enraged, she dropped the pot filled with water on the already injured mongoose and it died instantly. Then she rushed inside the house to see her baby where she found him sleeping peacefully and a dead snake near the baby's cot. She realized her mistake immediately but it was too late. She cried a lot on losing her favourite pet who had put up a fight to save her baby.

What comes to your mind with regard to the behaviour of the woman on seeing the mongoose with blood on its mouth? It can be said that the woman dropped the heavy pot on the mongoose in a fit of rage. The emotions overpowered the woman and she could not think in the moment. Intense emotions led the woman to behave the way she did without realizing a grave mistake she was going to commit. Had the woman paused and thought about the baby first and gone to see her, things would have been different.

You must have come across many situations in your life where you got carried away by your emotions, be it positive or negative emotions. For instance, when there is an argument with your friend or sibling, you may say things that you would not otherwise. Similarly, in the excitement of going out first time on a trip with friends, you may do things that may not have good consequence. So it is crucial to get in touch with our emotions in the first place, identify and recognize it. This will enable us to control our emotions so that we can think of proper ways of behaving.

Thus, being emotionally intelligent is important. Emotional intelligence as we have discussed in Unit 2, is an ability to be aware about our emotions and manage them. It is also understanding the emotions of others and learning to deal with them effectively. Mainly, we can describe emotional intelligence as consisting of intra-personal intelligence and inter-personal intelligence (refer Fig. 4.1). Intra personal intelligence consists of Self-awareness and Self-management. Inter personal intelligence includes Social awareness and Relationship management.

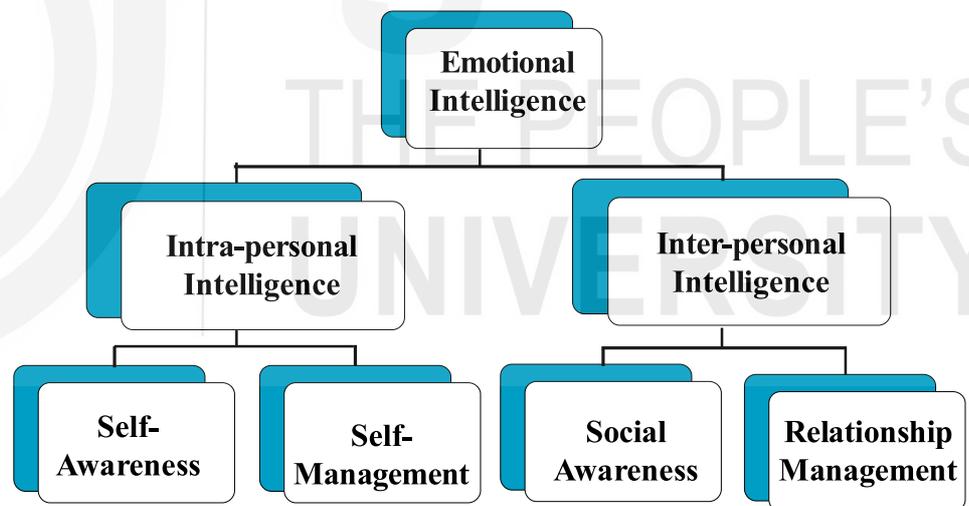


Fig. 4.1: Components of Emotional Intelligence

In the present Unit and the next, we will focus on the *intra-personal intelligence*. This is the first thing that one needs to start with which includes self-awareness and self-management – knowing about oneself and managing one’s emotions. Understanding of others and the world around you starts with understanding your own self. Self-understanding is the first step. As the Mother, the spiritual guru and founder of Auroville and Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry, India remarks, “First learn to know yourself perfectly and then to control yourself perfectly.” (Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2001).

Self-awareness, as the term indicates, refers to knowing about oneself. It is getting connected to one's emotions in the moment. As Stein and Book (2006, p.57) put it, emotional self-awareness is the ability to recognize your feelings, differentiate between them, know why you are feeling these feelings, and recognize the impact your feelings have on others around you.

However, just knowing how you are feeling and how it is affecting others around you are not enough. You also need to learn how to manage it so that you become effective. Thus, self-management is an important component of emotional intelligence.

Intra-personal management or self-management refers to how do you handle your emotions, what strategies you adopt so that you become more effective in your interaction and dealings with other people and in different situations. It consists of different skills such as *emotional self-control, assertiveness, self-regard and self-actualization*. In this Unit we will focus on the first two whereas the latter two will be discussed in Unit 6.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

Thus, after going through this Unit, you would be able to:

- know the meaning of self-control;
- understand the importance of self-control in our life;
- learn the strategies to develop and improve self-control;
- know the meaning of assertiveness;
- understand the importance of assertiveness in our life; and
- learn the strategies to develop assertiveness

4.3 EMOTIONS AND SELF-CONTROL

Emotions are pervasive in all domains of our life. In fact, it can be called as the building blocks of our relationship, actions and success. Emotions make us who we are. Hence, we need to focus on our emotions - how do we recognize them, engage with them, express them and control them – which will make our life effective and happy. We need to first identify the emotions that we are experiencing, recognize how these are affecting our performance, our relationship and behavior. Once we do this, we would be in a position to bring in changes in our communication and behavior so that to create a positive impact. Emotional abilities impact our life in diverse spheres. They not only affect our personal life but also our workplace and other aspects. Recognizing the emotions, understanding them and managing them in an effective way affects our development, satisfaction, performance and relationships. Studies have found that emotional abilities predict life-satisfaction in an indirect way (Salami, 2011; Koydemir & Schutz, 2012).

If we take the analogy of Freud's iceberg, we can say that the upper part of iceberg floating on the water represents our Intelligence Quotient (IQ) – as reflected in our performance, decision-making, behavior and success. The crucial question here is what makes this possible. It is our Emotional Intelligence (EQ) that plays a significant role here. The submerged part of the iceberg under water represents our EQ – which is reflected in being aware about one's emotions,

recognizing others' emotions, having social skills, empathy, controlling one's emotions and managing of emotions in others. Thus, management of emotions is very crucial in order to achieve success and happiness in life. In this regard, self-control is one of the important skills in intra-personal management of emotions.

Now, let us know in detail the meaning of self-control and how it plays an important role in managing emotions.

4.3.1 Meaning and Importance of Self-control

Self-control, as the term indicates, refers to be in control of oneself. This means, mainly to be able to control one's emotions in the moment. It is being aware of one's emotions and putting a check on them so that one does not burst out as a result of one's emotions, but is able to assess the situation and others around, and then decide the course of action. Thus emotional self-control helps in restraining oneself and reducing impulsivity. Stein and Book (2006, p.204) have defined emotional self-control as "a capacity for identifying one's angry and aggressive impulses, being composed and putting the brakes on angry, aggressive, hostile and irresponsible behavior."

Thus, self-control enables us to be composed, understand our emotions and not act on an impulse. Self-control is required not only in situations of anger or aggression, but also in situations exhibiting intense joy, pleasure or excitement also. In the latter case also, we sometimes get so excited that our language and actions may affect others negatively, e.g., blurting out some insensible remarks about somebody. Thus, in both the scenarios whether we are experiencing positive or negative emotions, exercising self-control is very important. In Indian scriptures we have the term 'Sthitapragyan' that means one is calm and composed both in happy and sad times, thus referring to self-control. In ancient Indian Mythology, we have examples of sages also like Maharishi Durbasha who was known for his extreme instant anger because of which he himself also has faced troubles many times.

Mersino (2007, p.52) defines self-control as "the ability to control our emotions so that they do not control us. It includes techniques that help us to regulate our emotions, to identify and prevent emotional triggers, and to identify and prevent thinking that can lead to emotional breakdowns." Thus, emotional self-control is the ability to control or regulate our emotions to achieve desirable outcomes. It is an ability which uses understanding about one's emotions to deal with situations in a better way. When we are in the grip of emotions, we cannot think clearly. Using technique of self-control, we can pause, understand our emotions and its impact; and then accordingly think clearly and take actions. Learning to control oneself helps us to face any kind of situation without getting disturbed or distressed. Like water on the lotus petal does not stay, similarly, one stays composed and does not get affected by emotions.

Another definition by Mangal and Mangal (2015) states, "emotional self-control is an ability or skill belonging to the intra-personal management of one's EI that helps him to exercise desirable control over his emotions and provide a shield against the evil consequences of impulsive actions, emotional storms and breakdowns for enabling him to get along well with his self and others and attain desired success in his life."

Thus, analyzing all the above definitions, we can arrive at the following main points about emotional self-control.

- Emotional self-control is an ability and skill of emotional intelligence (EI)
- It relates to intrapersonal management component of EI
- It involves controlling or regulating or managing one's emotions
- Pre-requisite for self-control is awareness about one's own emotions
- Together with self awareness, managing oneself through self- control are said to be the gateway to EI
- Self awareness and self management are two crucial first things in developing EI
- Self-control involves learning to manage distressing and disruptive emotions
- It puts a check on such emotions, thus avoiding impulsive behavior and actions
- It allows for thinking about the situation, thereby enabling to take wise decisions and appropriate steps
- Self-control thus aids in self growth, managing ourselves well and brings success and achievement
- It also helps facilitate proper interpersonal relationship and communication

Thus an effective management of one's emotions, both positive and negative, can lead one onto growth, adjustment, good relations, achievement and success. As Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2002) point out, management of emotions refers to the ability to successfully regulate one's emotions such as stress, impulses and motivation, thoughts and behaviours in different situations. Controlling of one's emotions or self-control activates one's thinking, reasoning, analysis aspect that help one to put things in proper context and perspective. As the saying goes, 'look before you leap'. It always helps if instead of acting on an impulse, we pause, look, plan and then take a move.

4.3.2 Strategies to Develop Self-control

As we discussed above, self-control is a very fundamental and crucial skill to learn to achieve a balanced state of mind. It also helps one to take an informed decision. That is, equipped with the awareness of one's emotions, one can take stock of the situation and take desirable steps as per the requirements of the situation. Self-control as a part of self-regulation involves the ability to deliberately regulate one's emotions, thoughts and actions. It encompasses skills such as emotion regulation, control, and perseverance.

One of the strategies for self-regulation is self-distancing. It can help in controlling one's emotions. Self-distancing refers to the mental distance or psychological distance deliberately created by an individual between the self and a stimulus by having the individual think about their thoughts, feelings or actions from an outsider's perspective (Kross & Ayduk, 2011). Taking a distanced perspective helps adults focus on 'why' they are feeling what they are feeling instead of focusing on the negative emotions themselves and results in better coping when recalling these past negative emotions (Nigg, 2017). Three types of distancing conditions can be

created by using visual imagery or language or media characters: (i) visualizing the event/past negative emotions through their own eyes or using first person speech (non-distanced); (ii) visualizing or telling from an outsider's perspective using third-person speech (self-distanced); and (iii) using a media character like superman, batman, barbie etc. (exemplar). The first two conditions, non-distanced and self-distanced conditions are used in case of adults whereas all the three can be used in case of children, thus allowing them a greater degree of distance evidenced through the imagined character. Various studies (Kross & Ayduk, 2017; Kross & Ayduk, 2011; Nook, Schleider, & Somerville, 2017; and Dolcos & Albarracín, 2014) have reported higher task performance, better executive function, perseverance and improved ability to delay in gratification when taking a self-distanced perspective through either a third-person or exemplar condition than in the no distance condition, i.e., self-immersed condition.

Mangal and Mangal (2015) have indicated three stages in the development of self-control.

1. *Awareness about the present emotional state*

The first step required in the development of self-control is to be aware about one's emotional state. One needs to focus attention on the emotions one is experiencing at the moment, for instance, what are these emotions, nature of these emotions, positive or negative emotions, intensity of the emotions, duration and pattern of the emotions. Many a times by the time we become aware of our emotions, the action has already been done. This may lead to ineffective actions and decisions. Thus, to be connected with one's emotions, one needs to be mindful about the present moment experiences and emotions.

This emotional self awareness can be developed through different ways: (a) knowing about emotions, their nature, types and how they impact; (b) paying attention to the physical manifestations of the emotions; physiological changes like rapid heart beat, fast breathing, sweating, increased blood pressure, facial changes, laughing, smiling, feeling relaxed etc.; (c) meditation practices will help focus your attention inward on your inner self and understand yourself; (d) scanning the body for physical changes and the thought process to find out what thoughts are going on; (e) scanning others also with regard to changes in their body language and behavior due to our own emotional state.

2. *Determining underlying causes responsible for the present emotional state*

When we focus on the emotional state we are experiencing, the next step is to find out why we are experiencing these. It is like going backward or retracing the steps back to find out what caused the emotions.

3. *Adopting measures for getting control of the emotional state*

Once we know the reasons for our emotions, we are in a better position to control these. There are several ways that help us in emotional self-control: (a) take an immediate pause within yourself and outside yourself also, e.g., deep breathing, relaxation techniques, doing yoga and exercise, listening to music, talking to friends/family; (b) adopting an internal locus of control and not blaming the external factors as responsible for the emotional state of the

individual; (c) having a positive attitude, hope and optimism; (d) planning beforehand that helps you to anticipate the likely impact of your emotions and modify your behavior accordingly.

The above strategies can thus be followed in order to develop effective self-control.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. is pre-requisite for emotional self-control.
2. Being able to control one's emotions prevents us from acting on
3. locus of control will help us in getting control of our emotional state.
4. We can find the underlying causes responsible for our present emotional state by going to find the causes.
5. Scanning the body for physical manifestations of the emotions will help us in developing

4.4 EMOTIONS AND ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness is another skill which has a very important role in connection with our emotions. In many situations, we hesitate to express our emotions for the fear of being understood wrong or apprehension that others will get angry or hurt, or it may not be taken in a positive light. We also do not express our emotions to avoid our weaknesses or limitations, for the fear and shame of looking inferior before others, or appearing incapable before others. All these results in suppressing of our emotions and if we engage in suppression most of the time, it may result in depression. For example, Nita is a class 8th girl who is always teased by her classmates as she is fat. She feels very upset and sad and this has affected her self esteem. All this affects negatively her studies as well as her participating in different school activities. The requirement here is being assertive in expressing one's emotions. This will help Nita to be firm and stand up for herself and at the same time make others realize the situation.

So, let us now discuss what do we mean by assertiveness and how it can be developed as it has a significant impact on the way we manage our emotions.

4.4.1 Meaning and Importance of Assertiveness

Assertiveness means to assert one's rights, to speak up for oneself what one thinks and feels. Thus it refers to exercising one's right to be respected. However, this is done in such a manner that it does not disregard the right of other person to be respected. As Stein and Book (2006) state, assertiveness refers to the skill of "being able to disagree with others without resorting to emotional sabotage or subterfuge, and being able to walk a fine line, defending their wishes while, at the same time, respecting another person's point of view and being sensitive to their needs."

Further, assertiveness is also described as standing up for yourself without violating the rights of others, getting what you want using fair and reasonable means (Dutt, 2012).

Thus, assertiveness is an ability or interpersonal skill where you can as the saying goes, 'have the cake and eat it too'. That is, you can state your thoughts and desires and position firmly and clearly without offending anyone or making others feel bad or hurt in anyway.

This ability to consider and understand the emotions of oneself as well as others so as to take care of both while communicating leads to effective interpersonal interaction. Thus it can be said to include the following main points:

- Assertiveness is an important interpersonal skill related to emotional intelligence.
- It consists of five C's – Clear, Concise, Confidence, Courage and Controlled. The message is conveyed in a concise manner and clearly with courage, confidence and in a calm controlled manner.
- It respects the need of oneself as well as the need of others. It exemplifies the principle of 'Live and Let Live'. Thus, both are happy and without stress.
- Assertive people can fight for their rights and at the same time able to care for others also so as not to hurt their feelings or beliefs.
- They are able to express themselves without any anxiety, nervousness or boasting.
- They exhibit appropriate control over their impulses and emotions.

Thus, we can see that assertive behavior can help us communicate well with others and achieve success in life. In this context, you may note that assertiveness can be described as being on a continuum with passiveness on one end and aggressiveness on the other end. Many a times, assertiveness is confused as being aggressive though it is not. Passive behavior is a non-assertive way of communication that is characterized by shyness, anxiousness, fear and submissiveness. Such people lack confidence and feel inferior, and put others' needs and requirements at the forefront while neglecting or relegating their own needs, desires, thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, aggressive behavior puts one's own needs on the top and does not consider the rights of others. Such people do not consider the feelings and thoughts of other people. The middle path, being assertive, is an effective way of communication that takes care of the need to fulfill one's own wishes, consider one's emotions, and also recognize the needs and rights of other people. One is able to show assertiveness when one understands own emotions and other's emotions too and accordingly takes care of both with an aim to achieve the main objective. Such people will have self regard and build harmonious relationship with others. Since they exhibit a cool and calm stance, without getting agitated, it has positive impact on their physical and mental health also.

4.4.2 Strategies to Develop Assertiveness

Assertiveness is an emotional competency that can be developed so as to successfully manage one's emotions and have a positive impact on others for success in life. Here one is able to express one's own thoughts, opinions, feelings and wishes honestly without any fear, hesitation or aggression because one is considerate of the rights of the other person also. This crucial ability can be developed through different ways:

1. *Being aware of one's emotions* is the first thing in the process of developing assertiveness. In the example of Nita given earlier, she needed to be aware about what emotions and feelings she was feeling and what she wanted for her. If I don't know what are my feelings and wishes, then what would I stand up for?
2. *Being aware of other's emotions* is the next step that is required on the way to be assertive. One cannot grow or achieve happiness by ignoring, humiliating or putting down others. One needs to give equal respect to the needs and desires of others also. This will help people to accept your stand without getting antagonized or showing resentment. Thus assertiveness involves striking a balance between the needs of self and others.
3. *Taking care/focusing on the C's of assertiveness*. Be clear about what do you want, say it confidently and maintain a controlled manner throughout. Thus one needs to know what one aims at in a given situation. Further, one needs to observe one's verbal as well as non-verbal language to be aware of what one is communicating to others. In order to be acceptable to others, one also needs to practice saying things in a confident and calm manner without getting emotional or agitated. Exercising control over one's emotions will also help one to think clearly leading to constructive steps.
4. *Practice your assertive dialogue*. Assertiveness is a way of communication that may not develop overnight. So one needs to practice how to say assertively without hurting others.
5. *Being mindful*. One needs to be mindful of one's emotions, feelings and behaviours. This will help in knowing what exactly one wants and how to express the things before others.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. The three C's of assertiveness are
..... and
2. Assertive people tend to think only of their rights and wishes. (True/False)
3. Assertive people always disagree with others. (True/False)
4. If assertiveness is described on a continuum, what will be there on both the ends?

4.5 LET US SUM UP

In the present Unit, we focused on two important aspects or skills related to intrapersonal management of emotions, self-control and assertiveness. Meaning and importance of these in the context of managing one's emotions effectively were discussed. Thus, emotional self control is the first step or can be described as the gateway to achieving emotional competence. Assertiveness which ensures the rights of the self as well as the other person, thereby facilitating healthy interpersonal communication and success was differentiated from passiveness and aggressiveness. Various strategies to develop and improve self-control and assertive behavior were described.

4.6 KEY WORDS

- Self-control** : It refers to exercising control over one's emotions by paying attention to one's emotions and its' impact on self and others.
- Assertiveness** : It refers to expressing one's needs, views, thoughts and feelings clearly, confidently and calmly while taking care of the feelings and rights of others.

4.7 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. awareness of emotions
2. impulse
3. internal
4. backward
5. emotional self-awareness.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. clear, confident and controlled
2. False
3. False
4. passiveness and aggressiveness

4.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of emotional self-control in the success and achievement of people covering personal, social and professional life.
2. Describe the different ways to develop assertive communication.
3. Explain the role of assertiveness in managing one's emotions.
4. Differentiate between assertiveness, passiveness and aggressiveness with suitable examples.
5. What are the strategies to develop and improve emotional self control?

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UNIT 5 EMOTIONS, SELF-REGARD AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION*

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Meaning and Importance of Self-regard
- 5.4 Strategies to Develop Self-regard
- 5.5 Meaning and Importance of Self-actualization
- 5.6 Strategies to Develop Self-actualization
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Key Words
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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Rishabh is 28 years old. He is bright and has a good educational background having secured high ranks throughout his academic career. However, he could not get into a good career and had to join a low paying and not that attractive job. He often compares himself with others of his class and age and feels depressed. He has been a very good basket ball player, singer as well as interested in robotics. But now he does not engage in any of these. He feels that life has been unfair to him and feels very low of himself. He finds it difficult to look forward with hope and aspirations.

One thing that Rishabh is clearly lacking is a sense of appreciation and respect for oneself. Unless one feels good about oneself, one will not have the basic ingredient to look forward to in life. This respect or regard for oneself – known as self-regard – is an important concept when we discuss about emotions and their management. One needs to have self-regard or respect for one's skills, abilities and strengths, for who one is with whatever capacities or limitations. This self-regard is important in managing the emotions felt by one. In the previous Unit (Unit 4), we discussed about emotional self-control and assertiveness as two important skills in managing one's emotions. In this Unit, we will discuss two more abilities such as self-regard and self-actualization that play a role in intra personal management of emotions.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through the Unit, you would be able to:

- know the meaning of self-regard;
- discuss the importance of self-regard in our life;

*Prof. Swati Patra, Faculty of Psychology, SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

- learn the strategies to develop self-regard;
- know the meaning of self-actualization;
- explain the importance of self-actualization in our life; and
- learn ways to develop self-actualization.

5.3 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SELF-REGARD

Self-regard, in simple words, refers to the respect or regard that you have for yourself as a whole. When we say as a whole, it not only includes the positive qualities, strengths, abilities and skills that you have, but also the negative aspects, limitations and weaknesses or shortcomings that you have. So, it is viewing yourself in totality and respecting yourself for what you are. You not only celebrate your good aspects or positive things that you have, but also acknowledge the negative aspects and rather than criticize yourself, blame self or others, or be disheartened about it, you accept these and make conscious efforts to improve on those.

Now, to be able to respect yourself, you first need to understand yourself. Thus, the *pre-requisites* for self-regard are self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, and self-control. One needs to know and understand one’s positive and negative qualities, and assess these accurately without any boasting or blaming/complaint. Further, one needs to accept oneself and be confident of the way they are. However, it is not being arrogant or aggressive, but showing assertiveness. Thus, a person with self-regard will exhibit self-awareness, emotional self-control, self-confidence, self-assurance and self-worth. There is a feeling of adequacy, security and well-being. They feel satisfied with their self, are optimistic, well-adjusted and see themselves as being worthwhile.

Two main aspects of self-regard can be said to be (a) **positive attitude** (that includes accepting the limitations or negative points and working to improve them, and simultaneously being aware of the positive points without feeling superior or being arrogant about these), and (b) **sense of worthiness** (includes feeling adequate, capable, assured, and of value and significance).

Refer to the Figure 5.1 below.

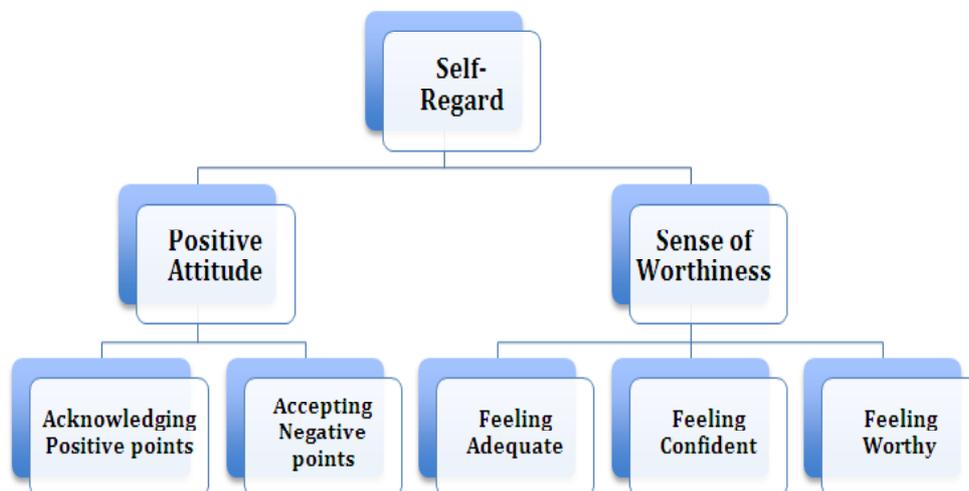


Fig. 5.1: Aspects of Self-regard

Let us now see a few definitions of self-regard below.

- Hewitt (2009) states self-esteem (or self-regard) is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgement of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (e.g., 'I am competent' or 'I am worthy') and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame.
- Branden (1969) considers self-regard or self-esteem as the sum of self-confidence (a feeling of personal capacity) and self-respect (a feeling of personal worth).
- Olsen, Breckler & Wiggins (2008) describe self-esteem (or self-regard) as a disposition that a person has which represents his own judgement of his own worthiness.
- Mangal & Mangal (2015) define self-regard as a unique ability, disposition or component of one's EI that may help him in (i) getting necessary awareness and making proper evaluative judgement about the strengths and weaknesses of the self, (ii) having necessary confidence in the functioning of the self, and (iii) respecting and valuing the self by accepting it in its existing form with all of its limitations and strengths.

Thus, self-regard refers to paying regard or respect to oneself. It does not depend upon the approval or assurance from others. It does not depend on any external factors such as age, gender, class, caste or race. For instance, it may not be that a person from high caste or high social class or living in metro city or bungalows will have more or less self-regard as compared to the person from low caste, class, or living in rural area. Self-regard depends entirely on how do we evaluate ourselves, what worth we assign to ourselves with full cognizance of all our strengths and limitations.

Self-regard is similar to self-esteem but it differs from self-concept. *Self-concept* refers to what do we think about ourselves, what our self comprises of or includes. In other words, we can describe self-concept in terms of its aspects or components. *Self-esteem*, on the other hand, refers to the evaluative component, how do we evaluate ourselves, positively and negatively. Thus, it is the value that we assign to our self. *Self-regard* refers to paying respect or regard to our self with full awareness of all our positive and negative qualities. It can also be termed as self-worth denoting the feeling of worthiness about one self. Thus, in comparison to the term self-concept, other terms such as self-esteem, self-regard, self-respect and self-worth are used synonymously.

Regard or respect for one self contributes a lot in our personal and professional success. For instance, Rey, Extremera & Pena (2011) have pointed out that self-esteem acts as a mediator between emotional abilities people have and their life satisfaction. Another study (Ruvalcaba-Romero, Fernandez-Berrocal, Salazar-Estrada, & Gallegos-Guajardo, 2017) has tried to identify the mediation function of the variables of self-esteem, positive emotions, interpersonal relationships, and social support between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. It was found that self-esteem, positive emotions, and interpersonal relationships together are those that contribute with 50% of the variance for life satisfaction.

Self-esteem or self-regard also helps in effective interpersonal communication as such people understand their own thoughts, emotions in a proper way. Since they evaluate themselves with regard to their positive and negative aspects, they are in a better position to reflect on themselves which guides them how to function and conduct themselves in different spheres. They believe in their capacity and consider themselves as able to deal with situations. However, they do not have feelings of superiority; nor do they feel inferior with regard to their negative aspects. Self-regard is about self-acceptance and self-respect. This foundational ground makes it possible for the person to grow and branch out and have a positive impact on one self as well as others. In the process, it contributes to psychological health and well-being.

5.4 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-REGARD

Self-regard is a crucial skill that has implications for emotional intelligence as it helps manage our emotions successfully. Two approaches can be discussed below related to the development of self-regard (Mangal & Mangal, 2015).

1. *Appropriate learning experiences in the developmental period*

Self-regard is an acquired phenomenon. As the child is born, she/he starts to develop the concept of 'I', 'me', 'myself', and form opinions, thoughts and feelings about oneself. In this process, the experiences arising out from parental practices, home environment, school environment and neighbourhood affect the child in a significant way. It results in forming a positive and negative attitude towards oneself.

Learning experiences during the developmental stage affect the child's all round development in physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects. Parents need to follow a parenting style that nurtures the child. The child needs to feel accepted, listened to, and cared for at home as well as at school since they spent a lot of time in these two places. The kind of behavior, feedback and expectations received from significant others impact the social and emotional development of the child to a great extent. Hence, parents, teachers, family members, peer play a crucial role in generating appropriate learning experiences that shapes the development of respect for the self in the child.

2. *Development of different attributes of self-regard*

As we have seen earlier, self-regard includes different pre-requisites such as self-awareness, self-concept, self-acceptance, self-control, self-confidence and self-respect. These can be called the different attributes of self-regard which are necessary to achieve self-regard.

The first thing required is *self-awareness* or knowing about oneself. One needs to know one's thoughts, feelings, strengths and weaknesses. It includes accurate assessment of oneself on different aspects and evaluating on different criteria. All these leads to development of understanding about the self.

Self-concept is the sum total of the self-awareness and self-assessment by the individual. It includes what all the individual thinks she/he is having – the abilities, skills, thinking, emotional and behavioural patterns etc. It is the totality of the individual including both positive and negative aspects, and contributes to who the individual is in a total sense.

Self-acceptance is also an important attribute of self-regard. Unless one accepts oneself with an open mind, one cannot have respect and regard for oneself. So accepting one self for whatever positive and negative qualities one has paves the way for respecting oneself.

Self-control ensures that one is able to control one's emotions, generating feelings of adequacy and control. This creates a positive impact on the person and creates respect for oneself.

Self-confidence emerges out of accepting oneself for what one is, in totality. When one is at ease with oneself, feels comfortable in one's skin, one has regard for oneself.

Development of all the above ultimately leads to respect or regard for oneself. One becomes optimistic, hopeful, and achieves success and well-being because of all these attributes in self-regard. Hence efforts can be made on creating learning experiences around these in early developmental years to facilitate the development of self-regard.

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. What are the pre-requisites of self-regard?

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2. Differentiate between self-concept and self-esteem.

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3. Explain self-acceptance.

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5.5 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION

We all know the story of Thomas Alva Edison, the famous scientist, whose zeal for experimentation made him the great scientist that he is. It reflected his incessant desire to fulfill his innermost desire and potentialities that he had within him. Similar was the case with Lata Mangeshkar, the famous playback singer whose passion for singing along with her determination and eagerness for it despite the initial odds took her to the pinnacle of glory who had become a legend in her own lifetime. She had sung thousands of songs in 36 languages and dialects including Russian, Swahili and Latin in a career spanning over seven decades.

Developing Emotional Competencies

All these examples point out the ability or attribute of self-actualization. Here we will discuss about the meaning of self-actualization, its role in emotional intelligence, how it is important for success in life, and strategies for development of self-actualization.

Each individual has their own potential, strengths, talents and inner desires. The success and happiness of the individual are influenced by an understanding of these and taking steps to realize this inner self with its full potential. Maslow (1954) has used the term self-actualization as a higher order psychological need that people strive towards once the lower order needs are satisfied for them. He has proposed a need hierarchy model (see Fig. 5.2) to explain the hierarchical structure of human needs. The model in the form of a pyramid structure presents the lower order needs at the bottom proceeding to higher order needs towards the top.

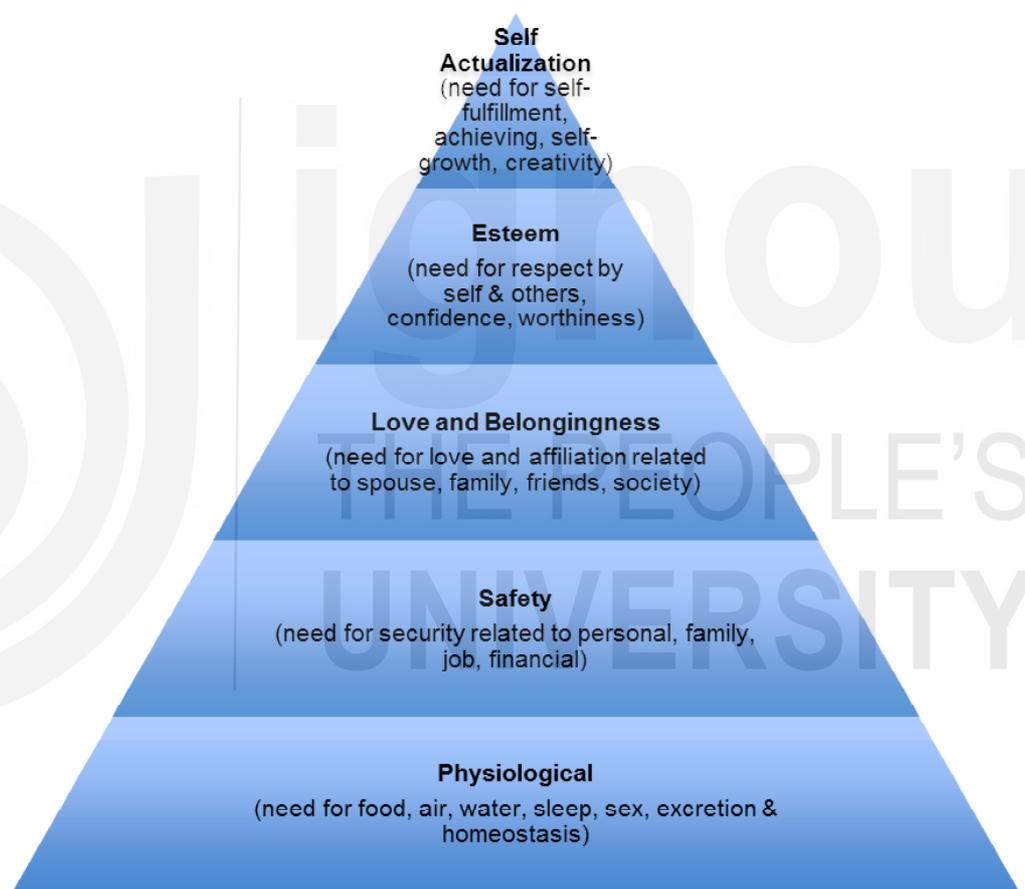


Fig. 5.2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The physiological needs at the bottom are the most basic needs that are required to be satisfied first before one thinks of other needs. Similarly, one can think of self-esteem needs only when all the other lower level needs are satisfied. Self-actualization is the highest need that depends on the satisfaction of all other needs below it and going beyond it. It represents fulfilling all one's desires, capacities, potentials etc. For this, one needs first to gain a complete understanding of oneself, assessing oneself accurately, controlling one's emotions, putting confidence on oneself, having respect and regard for oneself, and an intense desire or drive to work towards achieving one's goals and realizing one's potentials.

However, it may be pointed out here that Maslow's theory has also been criticized on the ground that we do have evidence for the fact that people may strive towards higher needs even in the absence of satisfaction of lower level needs. Thus, we can see examples of famous painters/artists or writers who excelled despite their poverty and deficiency in basic resources. So, it may not always be a hierarchical order of satisfaction of needs.

As Maslow (1954) puts it, "*what a man **can** be, he **must** be. He must be true to his own nature. This need we may call self-actualization.....it is the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming.*" Thus, self-actualization can be described as self-fulfillment, to fulfill the potentials what the individual is capable of achieving.

Carl Rogers (1961) also talks about self-actualization in the context of a fully functioning person. Such a person continuously works towards self-actualization, i.e., towards achieving their full potential.

This sense/meaning is reflected in the definition of self-actualization as given by Collins English Dictionary (2009) which describes self-actualization as "the process of establishing oneself as a whole person, able to develop one's abilities and to understand oneself." Thus it is seeing and understanding oneself in a comprehensive manner rather than a fragmented understanding.

Stein and Book (2006) refer to self-actualization as an ongoing, dynamic process of striving toward the maximum development of your abilities and talents, of persistently trying to do your best and to improve yourself in general.

Mangal & Mangal (2015) define self-actualization 'as a component of one's EI representing his need, urge and desire for developing and becoming what he is able or capable of becoming in tune of his own potential, talent and creativity lying with him directed towards his self-satisfaction, real happiness and success in life.'

The Mother, the spiritual guru and founder of Auroville and Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry, India (Sri Aurobindo Ashram 2001) says that one must become aware of what is the highest in oneself, what is most true, most universal and eternal in one's consciousness. Here, the Mother is not limited to self-actualization, but goes beyond it to a higher level of transcendence, i.e., going beyond oneself, becoming selfless, and engaged in the service of mankind.

Analyzing all these definitions we may note the following:

- Self-actualization reflects one's drive to fulfill one's potential
- It reflects one's persistence to continue on the path of one's goal or desires.
- It underlies one's basic desire to understand oneself fully.
- It views oneself as a whole person, a fully functioning person, achieving what one is capable of achieving or realizing.
- It emphasizes the individual's innate tendency to be the best possible version of oneself that one can be.
- It indicates the highest level of self-growth by reaching one's actual self with the realization of the potentials within the individual.

Developing Emotional Competencies

- It involves awareness, acceptance, appreciation, regard, empathy, flexibility, and creativity that help the individual in the process of connecting with one's inner self and actualizing their potential.
- It gives rise to real success and happiness by being honest and authentic to one's true self.
- It aims at realizing the highest in one's consciousness, thus it goes beyond oneself and beyond self-actualization and characterized by selflessness.

Thus, we can see that self-actualization can contribute towards being emotionally intelligent that will make the individual self-aware and self-sufficient and also foster healthy relationships with self and others. It will thus lead to effective intrapersonal and interpersonal management skills.

5.6 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Self-actualization is a process and it is dynamic in the sense that a lot of factors influence it in addition to the satisfaction of lower level needs as proposed in Maslow's theory of needs. However, once the basic needs are satisfied, and the individual progresses to achieving the higher level psychological needs, self-actualization comes across as a highest goal for the individual. Although, in the revised theory, Maslow talked about a sixth need, i.e., the need for transcendence, many people may not fulfill this need for self-actualization also. Various steps and strategies can help the individual progress in the path of actualization of oneself. These are described below.

1. *Awareness about oneself*

The first step on the path of self-actualization starts with a detailed and complete awareness about oneself. One needs to understand one's strengths as well as weaknesses, aspirations and apprehensions, goals and hurdles/obstacles, desires and dis-likings etc. so that one can evaluate oneself properly.

2. *Complete acceptance of oneself*

The next step after knowing about oneself is to develop a complete acceptance for what one is. While highlighting the positive aspects, one need not avoid or feel ashamed about one's negative aspects. One should be equally accepting of both positive and negative side.

3. *Controlling of one's emotions*

This plays a crucial role as unless the person learns to have emotional self-control, one will not be able to develop acceptance of oneself in totality including the negative aspects of oneself. Controlling here does not mean suppression, but management of emotions so that you understand the nature and reason of your emotions and can take steps to manage these triggers of your emotional output. One needs to overcome many hurdles/obstacles when trying to actualize oneself, i.e., fulfill the inner potentials, giving rise to the need for managing one's emotions. Hence it is imperative that we learn to

manage our emotions so that it facilitates our progress on the path of self-actualization.

4. *Decide your goals and show perseverance*

Once you know about yourself and accept all the aspects of yourself, and has learned to manage your emotions, you need to set your goals towards actualization of your potentials. This will help one to live a complete and authentic life in touch with one's true self. The inner potential needs to be reflected in the formulation of the meaning and purpose of one's life. Goal setting should be accompanied by perseverance to achieve it despite whatever obstacles may come. Thus, it requires that determination, persistence, resilience, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, self-confidence be developed in the person.

5. *Looking for opportunities*

A positive mindset always attracts opportunities and opens up ways towards realizing one's goals. Hence, one needs to cultivate a positive attitude, optimism and looking with hope towards future however adverse the situation may be. Here, the person can also look upto others such as family, teachers, peers and other significant people around, or sources of knowledge to take inspiration and see things in perspective.

6. *Cultivating a proper mindset*

The ultimate truth of life is that we do not compete against each other, but we compete with ourselves. In the absence of this, the world is marred by conflicts, disturbances and unhappiness. If we aim at realizing the full potential that is there within each one of us, and get support from others around, then there will not be any scope for competition and challenges. Since each one of us is unique in our development, context and experiences, it can never be a comparison and competition with others, but it should always be a competition with the self. You are testing yourself that you are growing, improving, making yourself better and transforming yourself

Self-actualization is the highest need that human being strives to fulfill. We may note here that once the person is able to live the purpose of his/her life, it does not mean that self-actualization stops. Rather, the process of self-actualization is dynamic and it is never ending. Once the person reaches the set goals, there is always a scope to develop further and go still higher level in life. Thus, it is not static.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. According to Maslow, 'what a man *can* be, he _____ be.
2. Self-actualization refers to fulfillment of the higher level material needs. (True/False)
3. How does Rogers describe self-actualization?

.....
.....
.....

5.7 LET US SUM UP

In the present Unit, we discussed two more components, namely, self-regard and self-actualization that help in the process of intrapersonal management of emotions, and thus contribute towards the development of emotional intelligence. In the earlier Unit, you have learned about self-control and assertiveness as factors crucial for emotional intelligence. Here, we discussed the meaning of self-regard and self-actualization and the various attributes involved in these. Finally, different strategies and ways were described that help in the process of development of self-regard and self-actualization in human beings.

5.8 KEY WORDS

Self-regard : Self-regard refers to paying respect or regard to our self with full awareness of all our positive and negative qualities.

Self-actualization : Self-actualization can be described as self-fulfillment, to fulfill the potentials that the individual is capable of achieving.

5.9 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions 1

1. The pre-requisites for self-regard are self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, and self-control.
2. Self-concept refers to what do we think about ourselves, what our self comprises of or includes. In other words, we can describe self-concept in terms of its aspects or components. Self-esteem, on the other hand, refers to the evaluative component, how do we evaluate ourselves, positively and negatively.
3. Self-acceptance is an important attribute of self-regard. It refers to accepting oneself with an open mind, When one accepts one self for whatever positive and negative qualities one has, it paves the way for having respect and regard for oneself.

Self Assessment Questions 2

1. *must*
2. False
3. Rogers (1961) describes self-actualization in the context of a fully functioning person. Such a person continuously works towards self-actualization, i.e., towards achieving their full potential.

5.10 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the meaning of self-regard and how it is important for emotional intelligence?
2. Discuss various factors that will facilitate the development of self-regard in oneself.
3. Explain the meaning of self-actualization as proposed by Maslow.
4. Describe the various factors that one needs to take into account to facilitate the process of actualizing oneself.

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UNIT 6 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE*

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Meaning and Importance of Emotional Competence (EC)
 - 6.3.1 Can Emotional Intelligence (EI) be Learned
- 6.4 Strategies to Develop Emotional Competence
 - 6.4.1 Strategies Related to Intrapersonal Aspect
 - 6.4.2 Strategies Related to Interpersonal Aspect
- 6.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.6 Key Words
- 6.7 Answers to Self Assessment Questions
- 6.8 Unit End Questions
- 6.9 References
- 6.10 Suggested Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Our emotions hold the key to our life's success and happiness. The emotions that we experience affect our own health, relationship with others, work performance, achievement and life satisfaction. But are we really aware of the nature and degree of the impact of our emotions? Emotions can make or mar a situation. They are in reality a powerhouse whose effective use will lead us on the path to success and happiness. As we have learned in the previous Units, emotions when combined with the rational thinking part of our brain can work wonders. Instead of being guided only by thoughts or only by emotions, there is a need to put the head and the heart together to be effective in different aspects of our life. Head represents our intelligence and heart represents our emotions. Thus, emotional intelligence as the term suggests is being intelligent about our emotions and how these impact us and others.

As Goleman has said, *"Our emotions have a mind of their own, one which can hold views quite independently of our rational mind."* Hence it is necessary that the two are integrated so that one can manage the emotions in an effective way and be able to take proper decisions, solve problems, reduce conflicts, handle stress, cope properly and enhance one's well-being.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through the Unit, you would be able to:

- Know the importance of emotional intelligence;

- Explain the meaning and importance of emotional competence; and
- Learn the strategies to develop emotional competence.

6.3 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE (EC)

Society has always emphasized academic intelligence. Children learn various subjects and this facilitates the development of their cognitive abilities. However, the overemphasis on securing high marks/scores in examination has led to the neglect of the development of affective aspects. As we know, for a wholesome growth of children and their effective functioning, there needs to be an all round development covering the cognitive, physical as well as affective and social aspects. You may have seen instances where despite having great academic performance, people have not been successful and happy in life. Or people have earned material success, but they have relationship failures and stressful life.

Nisha has been a bright girl and was very good in studies, always securing the highest in the class. She was also a great karate player and had won competitions at school level. She finished her school and joined a reputed college away from her city. So she had to stay in the hostel there sharing the room with another girl Kirti. Being good in studies, Nisha could impress her classmates and they wanted to be friends with her. However, over a few months, Nisha started having problems with her roommate Kirti in the hostel over small things. Kirti had complaints of Nisha not being sensitive to her needs and doing things her way. Gradually, it proceeded from small arguments to bitter fights that were noticed by the college authorities.

What do we see here in the above example? It reflects that though Nisha was very good in studies - academic intelligence, she was not able to pay attention to the emotional aspects in her relationship with her roommate Kirti that resulted in arguments. We need to be able to know our own emotions and also understand the emotions of others around us. Further, we need to learn to manage our emotions also in an effective manner.

Thus one needs to have emotional competence in addressing own emotions, discern emotions of others and handle emotional situations and relationships.

Emotional competence (EC) has been defined as “the competencies that constitute self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills that a person demonstrates at appropriate times and ways in sufficient frequency to be effective in the situation” (Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 1999, p.3). It differs from emotional intelligence in the sense that emotional competence refers more to the mastery and demonstration of the skills related to emotional awareness and management. It is one thing to have knowledge about emotional intelligence, ability to show empathy and other emotional related skills, but another to actually use these skills whenever the situation requires. Thus the trait level of emotional intelligence reflects the tendency or disposition to act or behave in a particular way in emotion situations. Emotional competence involves not only the knowledge of people related to emotions, but also their ability to do, that is, apply this emotion knowledge to handle emotional situations and actually doing it. It can be said that emotional competence refers to individual differences in identifying, expressing, understanding, regulating and using emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Petrides & Furnham, 2003).

Saarni (2011) views EC as a set of developed skills used by emotionally competent individuals in emotion-eliciting environments whereas emotionally intelligent individuals respond with traits residing within those individuals. She (Saarni, 1999) has proposed eight skills as the components of emotional competence to handle emotion-eliciting social transactions. These are (1) being aware of one's own emotions, (2) discerning and understanding others' emotions, (3) using the vocabulary of emotion and expressions, (4) having the capacity for empathic involvement, (5) differentiating internal, subjective emotional experience from external, emotional expression, (6) coping adaptively with aversive emotions and distressing circumstances, (7) being aware of emotional communication within relationships, and (8) possessing the capacity for emotional self efficacy.

Thus, the four main aspects of emotional intelligence are *Self-awareness*, *Self-regulation*, *Empathy* and *Relationship management*. You have learned about these components in detail in Unit 3.

Emotional intelligence can make our personal as well as professional life more effective. Being good in the language of emotions alongwith cognitive abilities will make us successful as well as happy in life. Hence the importance of emotional skills cannot be overemphasized. Whatever we do, be it study, pursue a goal, interact with someone, carry out an activity, play with friends, perform in a team or lead a group, our emotions play an important role to make us effective in the situation. An emotionally intelligent person displays the following characteristics:

- Understands one's own emotions in the situation
- Knows how does one feel in mind and body
- Know the triggers leading to a particular emotion
- Able to manage one's emotions properly and express them effectively
- Sensitive to the emotions of other person
- Understands the requirement of the situation
- Thinks from alternative perspectives
- Takes a solution-oriented approach instead of focusing on the problem only.
- Is flexible and open to new ideas
- Listens attentively and understands the body language of others
- Engages in effective communication and interpersonal interaction
- Able to think through the situation, are not impulsive
- Engage in mindful practices

Thus, emotional intelligence helps in understanding oneself as well as others– it involves knowing, controlling and expressing one's emotions effectively in life. The ability to motivate oneself and understand others' emotions also facilitate one's functioning and makes one effective. It contributes to our success and happiness in a positive way. Various research studies have pointed out the importance of emotional competence. Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham (2004) have found higher trait emotional competence (EC) to be associated with greater academic achievement. Other studies have related higher trait EC with greater well-being and higher self-esteem (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley & Hollander, 2002), better social and marital relationships (Lopes, Brackett, Nezlek,

Schutz, Sellin & Salovey, 2004), and higher job performance (Van Rooy & Viswesvaran, 2004).

6.3.1 Can Emotional Intelligence (EI) be Learned

Given the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) in our success and well-being, it is pertinent to ask ‘can we increase our emotional intelligence and consequently develop our emotional competence?’ It may be noted that unlike intelligence quotient (IQ), EI can be gained and improved at any point in life (Goleman, 2014). This gives us a great scope to make our life successful and happy. One can follow a three-fold approach in the direction of learning of one’s emotional intelligence. *First* is assessment of one’s EI level. Unless one knows the level of EI, how will one improve? In Unit 4, you have learned about different assessment to find out one’s emotional quotient, the measure of emotional intelligence. *Second* is finding out which aspects of EI needs more attention out of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation or social skills. The assessment will provide you information on specific components. And *Third* is receiving proper feedback and training in the area that needs to be addressed.

As we know, intelligence is assessed through intelligence quotient (IQ) whereas emotional intelligence is expressed in terms of Emotional Quotient (EQ). Let us remember that IQ is not equal to EQ. They are different. While IQ includes the cognitive abilities – thinking, reasoning, language, logical, analytical, decision, judgement, problem solving; EQ combines these skills with the emotional skills and the emotional language – empathy, self-control, accurate self-assessment, interpersonal skills, sensitive to the needs and requirements of the situation, thoughtfulness, assertiveness and optimism. These skills can be learned at any stage of life.

6.4 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

Unlike our intelligence, emotional intelligence can be improved and thereby we can develop our emotional competence to deal with a variety of emotion-laden situations.

As the training provided in the school and education context helps us to develop the cognitive aspects, similarly training can also be provided to develop and improve the affective /emotional aspect of our development. Besides professional/ structured training, different strategies can also be used by the individuals themselves to improve emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves both intrapersonal aspects – self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation; and interpersonal aspects – empathy and social skills. Hence we can discuss the strategies under these two categories:

- i) strategies related to intrapersonal aspect
- ii) strategies related to interpersonal aspect

The first one relates to the factors within the individual whereas the second one relates to the factors operating in the relationship of the individual to the social context. Let us now explain the strategies under each aspect which can help us develop our emotional competence.

6.4.1 Strategies related to Intrapersonal Aspect

i) Focusing on the aspects of emotions

One of the first thing one needs to do to develop emotional competence is to focus on one's emotions. One needs to understand the nature of emotions, their meaning and relevance in the particular context. What does the emotion tell us, how does it impact others, what does it lead to, how it is helping us or hindering? One needs to understand all these so that one can control the emotions and manage these for a better outcome. Any emotion has three components - *cognitive*, *affective* and *conative*. Cognitive refers to what are my thoughts; affective is what do I feel, what are the physiological and bodily changes related to this feeling; and conative refers to what do I do, my actions and behaviours in the particular moment or situation.

Activity: Your boss gives harsh and negative comments on your project work in a meeting; Or you get the news that there is riot in the city where your parents live. In both these situations, reflect and write down what thinking comes to you? What are the feelings experienced by you? How does your body react to this? What actions will you take?

ii) Being aware of yourself

Knowing about the nature and aspects of emotions as described in the previous point will help you to be aware about your own self. Being aware of yourself consists of two parts – *awareness of one's emotions* and *accurate self-assessment*.

Emotional self-awareness will help you to get in touch with your emotions with regard to its three aspects. How do you think, feel and behave when you are sad or in a joyous mood or irritated and so on. This will also help you to know how the emotions affect others also. Getting to know the origin of our emotions will also help us be aware of our emotions and take control of these. Mersino (2007) talks about *retracing* our steps to determine why we are feeling in a certain way. This process of back tracking will help us arrive at the point/situation responsible for our current mood. One can also use the scanning techniques (Mangal & Mangal, 2015) to develop emotional self-awareness which involves scanning of the self and scanning of the others. In *scanning of the self*, you can pay attention to how do I behave?, am I feeling sad, irritated, worried, scared, challenged etc.; what is happening inside my body?, rapid heart beat, irregular or fast breathing, feeling choked, feeling tense in the stomach, feeling weak; what thoughts are coming to my mind?, what are my beliefs, values etc?.. *Scanning of the others* includes active listening, attending to what others are saying, noticing their body language, observing their facial expressions, eye contact, mannerisms, their feelings, their actions etc.

Accurate self-assessment will also help you in truly knowing yourself. Being aware of one's emotions help one to assess oneself. Besides this focus on finding out your strengths, weaknesses, desires, aspirations, interests, fears, anxieties, value system, goals that will give a comprehensive picture about yourself. Reflect on yourself in different situations and experiences, take feedback from others – all these will help in proper self-assessment and enhance our awareness and understanding about ourselves.

Activity: Think of a situation/occasion where you have felt very happy or had positive good feelings or an event where you had negative feelings, felt sad or angry or worried and anxious. Use the back tracking and scanning techniques and write down your observations.

iii) Being assertive

Assertiveness helps in being confident and clearly communicating to the other person what you want to communicate. This is possible when you are clear about your objectives and the future relationship with the other person or the situation. This takes place in an atmosphere of ensuring the rights of both the parties where no one feels disrespected or devalued. You have learned about assertiveness in Unit 5 which you can refer to for a quick reference.

Being assertive includes the what, how and why of communicating. You are clear about what to say or convey, how to convey and why to convey. The mode of expression throughout the communication is calm, confident and respect.

Activity: Think of a situation you have been avoiding or feel anxious about, eg., in the earlier example of Nisha and Kirti having problems being roommates in the hostel, how can Kirti be assertive in the situation? Similarly you can think of a situation in your context and write down the what, how and why of communicating. Practice by role playing how will you convey this with respect, sensitivity, calm and confidence, and then actually convey it. Remember that assertive communication requires practice and it depends on the context as well as preparation and an accurate self-assessment.

iv) Cognitive restructuring

Cognitive restructuring refers to becoming aware of one's thoughts and changing the way you think about a situation. Changing the perspective can open up new possibilities and get you through the problem. One needs to avoid various cognitive distortions, i.e., irrational or maladaptive thoughts. These include among others overthinking or ruminating about the problem; negative predictions about a situation; negativity bias – seeing only the negative things; all or none thinking – if I don't get into a particular college, I am not worthy; should and musts – I should get all A's in my exam; catastrophizing – thinking of any unpleasant or negative event as a catastrophe.

Activity: Think of any situation in your current life that is a cause of worry and stress for you. Catch hold of your thoughts regarding the situation. Are the thoughts being helpful and positive or they lead to more worries and stress? Are they continuing the problem instead of arriving at a solution? What are the unhelpful automatic thoughts going on in your mind? Write down and reflect on this.

v) Being mindful

Being aware about our state of mind helps us to develop self-control and regulate our emotional expression. Stress occurs when we are not mindful of our thoughts and feelings, and jump to conclusions and react in a haste.

Hence, it is important to check our thoughts and feelings and respond mindfully. When we are under stressful situations and experiencing intense emotions, it activates amygdala, the part of our brain responsible for our feelings and emotions, also called our emotional brain. This together with hippocampus which is the seat of our memories and past experiences influence our decision and action in the situation. Goleman calls this emotional hijacking as amygdala hijacks or bypasses the higher cortical functioning which results in emotionally reactive behaviours. Mindfulness practice through focus on breathing trains our attentional capacity in the present moment. Hence we are able to be aware of the emotions in the moment and engage our higher cognitive functioning to decide appropriate response in the situation.

Activity: Engage in mindfulness by practicing it regularly. Choose a time of the day you can sit for sometime undisturbed. Sit comfortably, relax your body and focus on your breathing as you are inhaling and exhaling. Do not try to change it, just notice, be aware the way you are inhaling and exhaling - be it fast, slow, irregular, with sound of breathing or no sound. If other thoughts and events are coming to mind, just notice it and then gently bring your attention back to the breath.

vi) **Being resilient**

Resilience is the ability to face an adversity or a difficult situation, overcome it and bounce back to life again. It represents a strengths approach to life having a positive outlook and never say die attitude. Being resilient involves facing the adversity and coming out of it with renewed vigour. When you are resilient, you are in control of your emotions, self-confident and have a positive attitude. This helps in dealing with stress and facilitates mental well-being. It also reflects an internal locus of control, that is attributing the personal outcome not to the chance or external factors like fate, family, situations etc. but relating it to one's own effort, attitude and motivation.

Activity: Think of a current adverse situation or suffering in your life. What is your approach and mindset towards this? Write about it and reflect on how you can show more resilient traits in the situation?

vii) **Coping strategies**

Coping strategies used by the individuals can be *emotion-focused* or *problem-focused coping* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping aims at addressing the emotional responses of the individual especially when the situation is not under one's control. It employs methods such as distracting oneself from the problem situation, emotional disclosure (Pennebaker, 1995), journaling (Cheng, Tsui & Lam, 2015), cognitive reappraisal (Lazarus & Alfert, 1964), meditation and prayer, and use of substances and alcohol. Such coping aims at managing the expressed emotions only and does not address the root cause of the problem or stressful situation. Whereas, problem focused coping involves addressing the problem itself and usually occurs in people having internal locus of control. It addresses the cause of the problem and uses problem solving and time management strategies. Although emotion-focused strategies are often less effective than using problem-focused methods in relation to health outcomes (Penley, Tomaka & Weibe, 2012), use of the strategies depend on the control

over the situations and the stressors, nature of the problem and the situational context. When individuals have control over the sources of stress, problem-focused coping is more effective.

Activity: Notice and recall the different situations and events in your life earlier and at present. Reflect what kind of coping strategy you have used or are using now. Were/Are these strategies effective?

viii) Developing positive attitude

What is the framework of our mind? Is it oriented towards positive or negative thinking? Do we see opportunities in every situation or we complain about the negative situations/happenings in our life? A positive attitude comprises of having positive thoughts, positive feelings and taking positive actions. Being aware of your emotions, having a proper perspective and being flexible will help one to develop a positive attitude and inculcate an optimistic outlook. Being optimistic is not just having positive thoughts only, but it involves a proper self-assessment, self-acceptance, acceptance of the situation, being flexible, being realistic, creativity, problem solving ability, motivating oneself, perseverance and a constructive approach. Developing a proper perspective towards the problem/difficulty is a crucial thing. It helps you in consciously finding out or looking for the good in any situation. As the saying goes, “learn to surf in the waves”. Two things that matter here is using a language of affirmation and developing an internal locus of control. One needs to take responsibility and use self talks that are not constraining, rather affirming in nature.

Activity: Think of a situation/event where you have faced problem or suffered. How did you deal with this difficulty? Were you optimistic or had negative thoughts and anxieties related to the situation? Write down your thoughts, emotions and behavior during that situation. How different could you have behaved that time? Or if you are facing a difficult scenario at present in your life, practice having a positive attitude; observe yourself what you are saying to yourself, how are you motivating and how are you looking at the situation.

Self Assessment Questions 1

- 1) Mention the three components of emotions.

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- 2) What is retracing or back tracking?

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3) What is emotion focused coping?

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4) What is negativity bias?

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6.4.2 Strategies related to Interpersonal Aspect

i) Developing empathy

Empathy as we know refers to putting ourselves in the shoes of others and to understand the things from their point of view. It basically refers to the cognitive ability of thinking from the other person’s perspective and recognize their feelings and emotions. Thus, it involves being sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of other persons and not imposing our beliefs and assumptions on them. Empathy differs from sympathy which predominantly relates to the expression of one’s emotional feelings congruent to the other person. For example, crying when the other person is in pain and crying also; using first person language, ‘I am really sorry to hear about your loss’. On the other hand, empathy focuses on the other person and uses statements like, ‘you must be feeling very angry about it’. While the importance of sympathy cannot be denied, empathy is required to develop emotional intelligence and establish an effective interpersonal relationship, leading to mutual trust and closeness. Empathy is also not about being nice and saying nice things only, or doing as others want you to do. Rather it involves visualizing the situation from the other person’s perspective, showing genuine interest in the other person, using empathetic statements and actions.

Activity: Think of any past situation or a present situation where you needed to interact with someone in a difficult or stressful situation. Write down what statements you had used in the past or would be using in the present. Does it show sympathy or empathy?

ii) Developing effective communication skills

When we talk about improving our emotional intelligence skill, an important skill related to the interpersonal arena is listening skill. The basic block of any effective communication is active listening skills. It means you are paying attention to not only what the other person is saying (verbal language), but also their non-verbal language or body language – their eye-

contact, facial expression, gestures, body postures etc. One needs to listen first and then respond rather than reacting on an impulsive manner. Further, one is also required to be self aware of one's own emotions, thoughts, intentions and goals in any communication.

As pointed by Friedemann Schulz von Thun (1981) in his Four-Sides model of communication, every message has four facets to it. It is like we use different ears while communicating with others.

- **Fact:** What I inform about (data, facts, statements).
- **Self-revealing:** What I reveal about myself (information about the sender).
- **Relationship:** What I think about you (information about how we get along).
- **Appeal:** What I want to make you do (an attempt to influence the receiver).

(Source: Birgit Ohlin, 7 ways to improve communication in relationships, 2019, www.positivepsychology.com)

In any communication there is a sender and a receiver, and the underlying emphasis given by each of them to the four facets can create a barrier to effective communication. Hence it is important to understand that what we hear may not be what the other person was trying to get across.

***Activity:** Observe yourself consciously when you are in any interaction, be it with family members, friends, colleagues or your boss. Are you really listening or you are thinking of what to say when they are talking?; what is their body language?; how is the tone, pitch of voice; hand movements etc.?; what are they trying to convey? Further, analyze the communication using the four facets of communication given above. As a receiver, which ear are you using –factual ear, self-revealing ear, relationship ear or appeal ear?*

iii) Enhancing decision making and problem solving ability

Problem solving as a component of one's emotional intelligence can be defined as "the ability to identify and define problems as well as generate and implement potentially effective solutions" (Steven and Book, 2006: 163). An emotionally intelligent person has the capacity to take understand the problem in the context, take appropriate decisions and come up with adequate solutions. The following measures can help one to enhance decision making and problem solving ability: (a) knowing about the problem in detail such as the nature (identifying, labeling and describing it), aspects, duration, frequency of the problem, and it's impact on individual's life, (b) knowing about oneself in terms of interests, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, emotions, goals, beliefs, values etc., (c) knowing about the reality or the context in which the problem has occurred, (d) developing the ability for self-regulation, (e) cultivating optimistic thinking, (f) enhancing one's creative thinking, and (g) learning various problem-solving strategies such as algorithms and heuristic techniques.

Activity: Think about a problem that you are facing now that you need to solve. Apply the measures described above for effective decision making and problem solving.

iv) Developing conflict management skill

Conflict arises when one party feels that her/his interests are not being met or are ignored, threatened, suppressed and are not valued. As a result, one may become aggressive in ensuring one's interests or become submissive to the other person out of fear or feeling of inferiority and withdraw and avoid. The outcome becomes unproductive and gives rise to hostility. One way of conflict management is to communicate things in an assertive manner, expressing what one wants and at the same time considering the rights of other person. Thus, there needs to be respect and acceptance both for oneself and the other person. It is a win-win situation for both the parties involved in a conflict. Here as well, self awareness, understanding the conflict in detail, and focusing on the context are important steps in conflict management.

Activity: Take a situation of conflict that you are facing at present related to any aspect of your life. Analyze the matter of conflict, develop self-awareness, understand the style of communication – avoidance, aggressive, passive, submissive, fearful, or assertive. Think how can you make it a win-win situation for both the parties involved in the conflict.

Answers to Self Assessment Questions 2

1) What is empathy?

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2) What is active listening?

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3) Which kind of communication will help in a conflicting situation?

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6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, you learned about different strategies for improving emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) is a skill that can be developed and enhanced at any stage of life by anyone. It plays a significant role in the success and happiness in one's life as it combines the intellect with the emotional skills. The strategies for improving emotional intelligence can be described under (a) strategies related to intrapersonal aspect (knowing aspects of emotions, self-awareness, assertiveness, mindfulness, coping strategies, positive attitude and resilience) and; (b) strategies related to interpersonal aspect (developing empathy, communication skills, decision making and problem solving skill, conflict management skill). Earlier (in Units 4 and 5), you learned about self-control, assertiveness, self-regard and self-actualization. Alongwith an understanding of these concepts, the strategies described in this Unit will help you to develop and enhance your emotional intelligence which will usher in more success and happiness in your life.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Emotional Competence: Emotional competence refers to the mastery and demonstration of the skills related to emotional awareness and management.

Empathy: refers to the cognitive ability of thinking from the other person's perspective and recognize their feelings and emotions.

Cognitive restructuring: Cognitive restructuring refers to becoming aware of one's thoughts and changing the way you think about a situation.

Emotion focused coping: Emotion-focused coping aims at addressing the emotional responses of the individual especially when the situation is not under one's control.

Problem focused coping: Problem focused coping involves addressing the problem itself and usually occurs in people having internal locus of control.

Resilience: Resilience is the ability to face an adversity or a difficult situation, overcome it and bounce back to life again.

Assertiveness: Assertiveness includes the what, how and why of communicating. One is clear about what to say or convey, how to convey and why to convey. The mode of expression throughout the communication is calm, confident and respect.

6.7 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Self Assessment Questions 1

- 1) Emotion has three components - cognitive, affective and conative.
- 2) Retracing, also known as back tracking refers to retracing our steps or going back to determine why we are feeling in a certain way. This process will help us arrive at the point/situation responsible for our current mood.

- 3) Emotion-focused coping aims at addressing the emotional responses of the individual especially when the situation is not under one's control. It employs methods such as distracting oneself from the problem situation, emotional disclosure, journaling, cognitive reappraisal, meditation and prayer, and use of substances and alcohol.
- 4) Negativity bias refers to seeing only the negative things in a particular situation/event/happening.

Self Assessment Questions 2

- 1) Empathy refers to the cognitive ability of thinking from the other person's perspective and recognize their feelings and emotions.
- 2) Active listening refers to paying attention to not only what the other person is saying (verbal language), but also their non-verbal language or body language – their eye-contact, facial expression, gestures, body postures etc.
- 3) Assertive communication

6.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the role of emotional self-awareness and accurate self-assessment in the development of emotional intelligence.
- 2) Explain the four sides model of communication.
- 3) Discuss empathy as a tool to improve emotional intelligence.
- 4) Elaborate on the importance of optimism in enhancing one's EI.
- 5) How mindfulness can improve our EI?

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