

**British Association of Social Workers
Student Summit/Conference**

**Emotional Intelligence & Resilience
in Social Work**

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Outline

- **What is emotion?**
- **The Dichotomy of reason/logic vs. emotions**
- **What is emotional intelligence?**
- **Emotional Intelligence in Social Work**
- **What is Stress?**
- **Emotional Resilience**
- **The Role of Organisational Culture**
- **Mitigating and Managing Stress**

What is emotion?

- **Emotions are more than feelings.**
- **Emotions are deep level signals about information** that demand attention. The rapid appraisal of such signals **conveys** the **meaning** of the situation and are often a trigger for action and/or mood.
- **We use emotions to make of life.**
- **Emotions** compliment and complete our cognitive abilities and **are an essential** and integral **part of decision making.**

Dichotomy of Reason vs. Emotions and the Wisdom of Emotions

- Separation between **emotions** and **“reason”** is due to **confusion between using emotions and being emotional.**
- **Emotion, meaning, perception and action cannot be neatly segregated.**
- Damasio argues that when we make any decision, particularly **important decisions**, they **depend on the “wisdom of our emotions”.**
- Basal ganglia is the neurological equivalent of **“GUT”** (the gut feeling). Basal ganglia can't tell us what it knows in words it tells us in feelings.
- Failure to manage feelings and acknowledge and address our emotions and emotional needs compromises **the balance between thoughts, feelings and actions.**

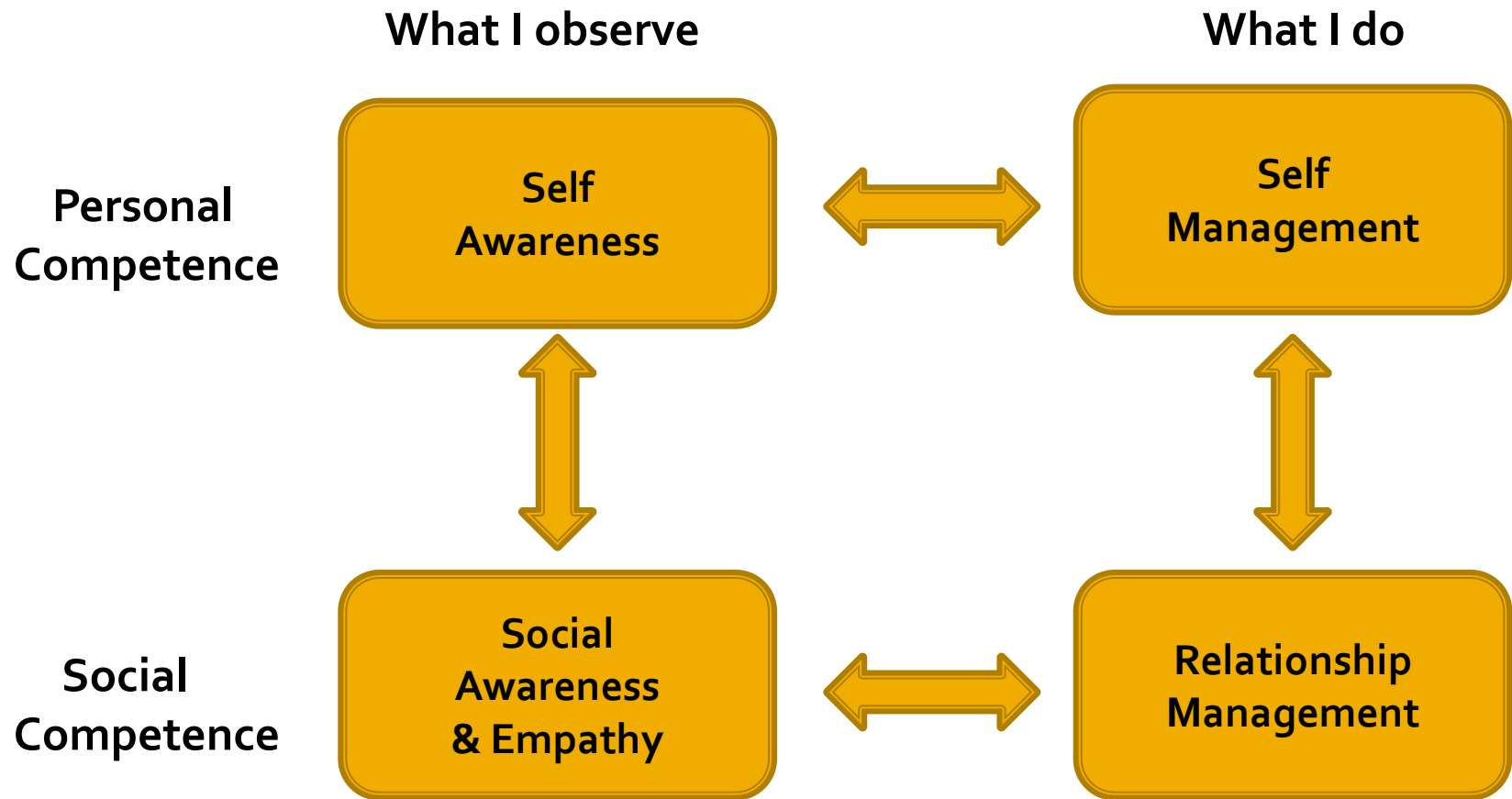
**What is
“Emotional Intelligence “ (EI)
and
Why Does it Matter?**

What is Emotional Intelligence (EI)?

“Being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one’s moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to empathize and to hope”

(Goleman, 1996)

The EI Paradigm / Dimensions of EI



How does EI relate to Social Work?

- Social work is a relationship based profession:
 - Engaging the users of service
 - Engaging with other professionals
 - Interagency and interdisciplinary working
 - Relationship with colleagues
 - Relationship with service providers
- Assessment of needs require cultural and emotional understanding of the meaning and value of those needs for users of service
- Our thinking and decision making are influenced by our emotions and the emotional context of the situation

What is Stress?

- **Stress** is a reaction to pressure, it is not part of the pressure itself.
- We experience **stress** as a result of a comparison in our brain between our perceived abilities and capacities and the perceived demand on our abilities plus the consequence/price of failure.
- The above definition has significant implications for our **stress management** capacity and ability.
- **Stress**, emotions and mood are contagious.

Stress, Emotions and Mood are Contagious

- The way people feel about you is based on the way you make them feel about themselves.
- “Some cause happiness wherever they go . . . others, whenever they go.”

Oscar Wilde

- There is an abundance of literature documenting the emotional toil in social work (Lloyd et al., 2002; Coffey et al., 2004; Evans et al., 2005)

What is Emotional Resilience?

- **Emotional Resilience** may be described as 'the general capacity for flexible and resourceful adaptation to external and internal stressors' (Klohen, 1996, p. 1067).
- **Emotional Resilience** refers to effective coping and adaptation when faced with hardship and adversity (Collins, 2008).
- **Emotional Resilience** has been characterized by an ability to experience and 'bounce back' from negative emotional experiences by adaptation, to check the changing demands of stressful experiences (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004).

Factors Influencing Resilience

Correlation with Resilience	r =	p <
Emotional Intelligence & Resilience	0.61	0.001
Social Competence & Resilience	0.46	0.001
Reflective Ability & Resilience	0.41	0.001
Empathetic Concern & Resilience	0.37	0.001
Perspective Taking & Resilience	0.41	0.001
Empathetic Personal Distress & Resilience	- 0.27	0.001
Psychological Distress & Resilience	- 0.54	0.001
Emotional Intelligence & Psychological Distress	- 0.29	0.001
Reflective Ability & Psychological Distress	- 0.38	0.001

(Kinman & Grant, 2010)

Managing and Mitigating Stress & Emotional Toil

- **Organisational Factors:**
 - Good Supervision
 - Supportive Management
 - Peer Support
 - Clear definition of tasks and responsibilities
 - Adequate and appropriate working tools and support
 - Appropriate and supportive environment and a healthy organisational and management culture

Managing and Mitigating Stress & Emotional Toil

- **Individual Factors:**
 - Improve Your Emotional Literacy & Acknowledge/Understand Your Emotions
 - Enhance Your Emotional Capacity and Various Abilities
 - Learn to Leverage Your Strengths
 - Adopt and Maintain a Reflective Attitude & Practice Critical Reflection
 - Develop Positive Regard Through Self-affirmation
 - Allocate Time & Space for Your “Self” and Healing
 - Aspire to Higher Values and Excellent at times in all things.

- **“Success is not final. Failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that makes the difference.”**

Winston Churchill

- **“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You *must do the thing* you think you cannot do.”**

Eleanor Roosevelt

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