

MINIMIZING THE PAIN OF CYBER

BUILDING EMOTIONAL FIREWALLS



RECOVERY



READINESS



RESILIENCE

THE HUMAN FACTOR

EQ GUIDE

Foreword

What is a headline in the news for many was a daily reality for me. I worked for nearly two decades in the world's largest security organization, NATO, dealing with digital transformation and cybersecurity.

Protecting and securing NATO's networks in the age of digital disruption 24/7 was the bread and butter of our Agency. We also understood that cybersecurity transcends far beyond technical security or firewalls. At the heart of a holistic approach lies a seamless fusion of People, Processes, and Technology.

My name is Nadja El Fertasi, and I founded Thrive with EQ (Emotional Intelligence) to tackle the root cause of human vulnerability in the digital age through building emotional firewalls.

Emotional intelligence is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Emotional intelligence is tactical (immediate functioning), while cognitive intelligence is strategic (long-term capacity).

That's why at Thrive with EQ, I focus on helping organizations with our roadmap to readiness in the 21st Century, where cyber threats are dominating the headlines. The invisible cost of business disruption, employee productivity, and recovery to normal weighs heavier than ever before at a time where cybercrime has soared over 600% since COVID made its way into the world.

I hope that when reading through this Human Factor EQ, guide you will gain new perspectives on how to harness the power of emotional intelligence in minimizing the pain of cybercrime and move from recovery to readiness by building resilience based on emotional firewalls.

Kind Regards,

Nadja El Fertasi, CEO/Founder
Thrive with EQ



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What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is a set of emotional and social skills that collectively establish how well we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges, and use dynamic information in an effective and meaningful way. Your EQ is not a measure of cognitive Intelligence (like IQ), professional aptitude, vocational interest, or personality preferences (like psychological type/temperament).

The concept of emotional intelligence has brought new depth to the understanding of human intelligence; it enhanced the ability to evaluate one's general or overall intelligence. Not unlike cognitive intelligence, however, EQ has been difficult to define. Broadly speaking, it addresses the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are often more important for daily functioning than the more traditional cognitive aspects of intelligence.

Your EQ is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings in order to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands. Emotional intelligence is tactical (immediate functioning), while cognitive intelligence is strategic (long-term capacity).

Emotional intelligence helps to predict success, because it reflects how a person applies knowledge to the immediate situation. In a way, to measure emotional intelligence is to measure one's "common sense" and ability to get along in the world. Imagine your IQ is your elevator in life, and your EQ is your trajectory upwards. It would be best if you had both to navigate the interpersonal challenges of the 21st Century.

If emotional intelligence is central to how we cope, we would expect individuals with high EQ to be more likely to use adaptive coping styles than maladaptive styles. Research has shown that the EQ-i is a positive predictor in using adaptive coping styles ("rational" and "detached") and a negative predictor in using maladaptive coping styles ("emotional" and "avoidance") (Petrides et al., 2007). Furthermore, this research suggests that EQ is a predictor of coping style selection above any effects contributed by personality (e.g., the Big Five).

This incremental finding supports the notion that since EQ is amenable to coaching and development, by focusing training efforts here (rather than at personality characteristics), individuals become better equipped to identify emotions and choose effective coping strategies to remain resilient in the face of stress. In a study of school principals, significant positive relationships were found between EQ-i scores and principals' resilience, with General Mood being a significant predictor of resilience (Bumphus, 2009) Bar-On, 1997), where Total EQ was shown to be positively related to acculturation (i.e., adjustment to a new environment) and emotional health.

This type of research, linking the EQ-i to resilience, helps to shed light on the far-reaching effects emotional intelligence can have, not only on retaining top employees, but also on ensuring they are equipped to weather the inherent stressors that come with their roles in the current hybrid workforce dynamics.

Seligman's term "learned optimism" may help explain why emotional intelligence is related to resilience in the face of stress. Learned optimists, when confronted with pressure or challenges, tend to make specific, temporary, and external attributions about their situation; pessimists make more enduring, global internal attributions about a stressor (Seligman, 2006). Various studies have shown the impact of optimism (one of the sub-scales of the EQ-i) and the ability to handle stress on performance in education settings (Schulman, 1995) and on job performance, as indicated by variables such as net sales (Lusch and Serpkenci, 1990; Schulman, 1995).

Overall, recognizing and identifying emotions and the way they manifest themselves in physiological symptoms, as well as managing these emotions, can help individuals recognize when they are stressed and, thus, reduce the chance of burnout. In a study examining coping with occupational stress, low to moderate positive correlations were found between EQ-i subscales and purposeful task-orientated efforts aimed at solving problems (as measured by the CISS; Endler & Parker, 1990, 1994); whereas low to moderate negative correlations were found between the subscales and emotional reactions to stressful situations (e.g., becoming angry or preoccupied) (Bar-On, 1997). Task-orientated coping tends to be related to adaptive outcomes in contrast to the non-adaptive outcomes of depression and anxiety associated with emotion coping processes.

What are Emotional Firewalls?

When applied in the context of the current cyber threat landscape many organizations are operating in, emotional intelligence can help people build their emotional firewalls by having several defense lines and reducing the risk of human vulnerabilities. Research has shown that emotions are linked with perceptions and concepts stored in different brain regions, as demonstrated by the world 1% cited neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett.

These are also referred to as "cognitive biases" that make up people's world map. Imagine everyone has filing cabinets with information stored from the past as their blueprint for behaving and responding to their immediate environment. Everyone sees, perceives, and processes information within their world map based on their formative years, past experiences, and cognitive biases. In a nutshell, and without entering the realm of neuroscience, concepts trigger emotions, and emotions drive behavior, e.g., people's response options.

Emotional firewalls can help people exercise their ability to respond instead of reacting to their immediate challenges and cultivate healthy response options, which is the stepping stone for behavioural change. It requires exercising empathy which is easier said than done when faced with high pressure and stressful situations to ensure minimal business disruption and loss of employee productivity and performance during the recovery period.

Resilience

Emotional intelligence has at its core the ability to use emotions to effectively cope with challenges. This includes the capacity to choose among a repertoire of coping strategies (flexibility and stress tolerance), display a positive disposition towards your situation and change in general (optimism), and feel that you can calmly influence a stressful situation without being derailed by your emotions (problem solving).

As alluded to in the history of the EQ-i, coping with and remaining resilient in the face of demands and pressures have always been integral components of this assessment and, as such, much research has been conducted into whether EI supports resilience and coping in the face of stress in various situations and environments (e.g., workplace stress, physiological illness).

Leadership

One of the more current approaches to leadership focuses on transformational leadership. As its name implies, transformational leadership looks at the process of changing and transforming individuals. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and subordinates raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.

Transformational leaders motivate individuals to perform beyond baseline expectations, inspire dormant needs in their employees, and regulate emotions. Emotional intelligence is thought to play a particularly important role in transforming others. Transformational leaders often seek to empower people they work with, which increases their levels of commitment and engagement to organizational purpose.

An effective transformational leader knows how emotions affect others' interactions, whom others will follow, and how to make decisions. Transformational leaders are also able to understand and manage their own emotions, making it possible for them to be flexible and creative in their decision making, consider alternative approaches, and have the self-confidence needed to take action (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Performance

A primary objective of performance psychology is to identify the intra-personal characteristics and situational variables that interact to influence performance. Although much interest has been directed toward the situational factors affecting performance, it is of utmost importance to examine how dispositional variables (e.g., self-regard, optimism) mitigate these situational factors, as well as how the interaction between dispositional variables may in fact permit increases in meaningful and sustainable behavior change.

Given the interactive effects of dispositional factors— of which emotion is of primary interest —and the vast array of situational variables facing the performer, inconsistent performance should not be altogether surprising.

However, if we can better understand the mechanisms responsible for mediating the intra-personal, interpersonal and situational variables affecting high-pressure behavior, we can better account for the interactive effects of the environment and dispositional characteristics on performance, permitting the development of a meaningful intervention. The construct of emotional intelligence, which has received attention in both applied and academic text, has been demonstrated to offer such mediating effects.

Research has demonstrated that enhanced EQ can augment human performance and the many tertiary factors related to success such as stress management, self-regard, flexibility, and optimism. Given that the ability to understand and manage emotional information is a critical component of performance, the incorporation of the EQ-i (Bar-On, 1997) into applied practice provides an effective framework for skill development and performance enhancement.

How to use this guide?

The EQ guide provides you with a new lens on how to cope with the human factor challenges related to navigating the people's pillar of the cyber security landscape. The invisible cost of business disruption, employee productivity, and recovery to normal weighs heavier than ever before at a time where resources are depleting and attacks are increasing.

Minimizing the risk of conflict, uninformed decision-making, burnout of leaders and staff, reputational damage, loss of shareholders, and skyrocketing insurance costs, leveraging EQ to exercise collaboration and communication amongst your multidisciplinary workforce will help you move from recovery to readiness through building resilience. Your organization may bend, but it will never break.

This EQ guide is meant to assist you in better understanding the correlation between the individual EQ markers and the impact on effective and efficient collaboration and communication strategies during high-pressure environments.

If you are interested in learning how you can leverage personal and group assessments to build cyber readiness amongst your team and organization, please contact us for more information at nadja@thrivewitheq.com.

EQ-i 2.0 Model Markers

Self-Regard

Your ability and the tendency – in full light of both your positive and negative qualities—to both like and have confidence in yourself. It pertains to your levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, pride, dignity, and self-respect.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of self-regard can translate into self-doubt, being self-critical, feeling insecure, or lacking healthy levels of self-esteem.	Average levels of self-regard can translate into reasonable levels of self-confidence, being pleased with some aspect of self and less of others.	Feeling self-assured, respecting yourself, accepting and approving yourself, high levels of self-esteem and confidence. Liking yourself and being proud of who you are.

DID YOU KNOW...

That low levels of self-regard can impact people's self-confidence in new functional areas of responsibility when navigating the complex fast-changing cybersecurity landscape? Self-regard influences how we communicate and convey information to our stakeholders and translate cyber risk into people's world maps. On the other hand, too high levels of self-regard can alienate people and impact one's leadership ability to drive transformational change in the 21st Century.

EQ TIP

Reflect on a situation where either yourself or someone within your team struggled with low levels of self-regard. Pay attention to the words you used as part of your inner-dialogue or with the other person/party. Replace those words with new vocabulary, which will trigger feelings of empowerment and confidence. Practice this until it becomes more natural to catch yourself and others using words that cause disempowerment, and are likely to cause more conflict based on misunderstandings.

Self-Actualization

Your ability and tendency to want to grow, stretch and strive—to see your potential, set meaningful goals and work toward your betterment and fulfilment. It pertains to aspiration, ambition, passion, yearning and longing, and your drive.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of self-actualization can translate into feeling unambitious, underperforming, feeling lazy, bored, uninspired, or closed off to learning and development.	Average levels can translate into being interested in and open to learning, advancement & development, but bored and complacent just as often.	High levels of self-actualization can translate into a healthy drive toward self-improvement and the pursuit of satisfaction through meaningful work and play.

DID YOU KNOW...

That low levels of self-actualization can influence people's perceptions of motivation and engagement in achieving their organizational, team, and individual objectives? They can leave your team feeling depleted, with little to no energy levels when driving the complex cyber culture transformation across your organizational workforce. On the other hand, too high levels of self-actualization can also be perceived as too goal-focused with lack of focus on the interpersonal dimensions, impacting the ability to gain buy-in from stakeholders on specific objectives.

EQ TIP

In a team dynamic, practice setting and exercising realistic and attainable goals and break them down in a step-by-step process with clear roles and responsibilities. Then have everyone visualize the outcome of the specific goals in their map of the world. How does that feel like? What does it look like? What specific actions are they undertaking to attain those goals? The more details captured by people's sensory systems, the higher the probability of retaining the information necessary for achieving their goals.

Emotional Self-Awareness

The degree to which you are in touch with your feelings and emotions, you are able to distinguish one emotion from another, and understand what that emotion results from practicing self-awareness. It pertains to mindfulness, discerning & perspective, approach to self, self-consciousness, reflection, and self-awareness.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of emotional self-awareness can translate into feeling emotionally unaware, immature, misunderstanding other's behaviors and choices, or oblivious to your moving needs and motivation.	Average levels of emotional self-awareness are when you pay attention; you generally know what you are feeling and why, but you don't often take the time to consider your inner life.	High levels of emotional self-awareness translate into understanding your feelings, why you feel them, and how to differentiate one emotion from another.

DID YOU KNOW...

That low levels of emotional self-awareness can cause you to raise your voice tone during a meeting with critical stakeholders and come across as angry? While in your map of the world, this is how you express yourself in your natural voice tone when you are feeling stressed or anxious. On the other hand, high levels of emotional self-awareness can create unrealistic expectations from others to be as obviously aware of people's emotional state as you are, leading to a breeding ground for misunderstanding and judgment.

EQ TIP

Reflect upon and explore (get to know) your emotional triggers. In your next meeting, debate, or conversation, note the different feelings caused or triggered by each person or topic. Knowing what triggers your emotions is at the heart of developing a more profound sense of emotional self-awareness. Invite your team members to do the same and create the psychologically safe space to do so, at their discretion and pace.

Emotional Expression

The degree to which you share, communicate and remain transparent with your feelings and emotions. It pertains to transparency, authenticity, openness, disclosure, and sharing.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of emotional expression can translate into being emotionally immature, easily distrust others or feeling isolated, uncommunicative, detached and or feeling disconnected, or being in denial of your own feelings.	Average levels of emotional expression are reasonable open & transparent, more in some circumstances and with some people than with others.	High levels of emotional expression translate into a personal openness and a willingness and ability to share your emotions, making you authentic, transparent, and easier to read.

DID YOU KNOW...

That your levels of emotional expression influence the way you build strategic partnerships with others? Low levels of emotional expression can create an impression of secrecy and lack of transparency which can easily lead to mistrust. On the other hand, high levels of emotional expression can aggravate others and make them lose interest when sharing too much information instead of the critical highlights relevant to their world map.

EQ TIP

Become curious about your mood and emotions. Make a mental note with yourself regularly (put it on your calendar too periodically throughout a meeting or the day) to objectively survey your emotional state. You are less likely to ignore what you task yourself to pay attention to. Discuss these insights and findings with a friend or colleague. Then, invite your team to do the same.

Assertiveness

Your ability to put your needs, thoughts and opinions out into the world—even when doing so invites opposition or conflict or causes you to take a stand. It pertains to force, firmness, strength, argumentation & debate, and self-defense.

Low	Average	High
Low levels can translate into feeling bashful, shy, or soft-spoken; withholding or feeling uncommitted to the cause or issues; easy to convince, sway, or often taken advantage of.	Average levels of assertiveness are when you voice your needs and beliefs clearly and boldly some of the time or consistently stand up for yourself, but do so only mildly.	High levels of assertiveness translate into being straightforward, self-confident speech and behavior, speaking your mind, and setting and maintaining clear boundaries.

DID YOU KNOW...

That assertiveness influences people's credibility and impression when they communicate with others? Low levels of assertiveness can make people appear not adequate for the role or question their expertise in specific areas. In some cases, it may even lead to ringing the alarm bell too late, causing deep frustration levels with senior leadership that they were not made aware of the issues beforehand. On the other hand, too high levels of assertiveness can alienate others as it portrays an incapacity of actively listening to other people's challenges and can be seen as dominating the conversation.

EQ TIP

Task yourself or your team members to express a position or idea in a conversation or meeting, regardless of whether you/they are asked, whether the concept has already been said by someone else or whether the idea is likely to be harmoniously received. Practice using words that reflect your opinion from a place of curiosity instead of using words that can be perceived as judgemental. These include for example "*should*" or "*must*".

Independence

Your ability and tendency to be self-directed in your thinking, feeling, and actions—to do it alone when needed. It pertains to autonomy, self-determination, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and standing alone.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of independence can translate into feeling emotionally dependent, clingy, weak-minded, indecisive, or uninformed.	Average levels of independence translate into moderate or sporadic autonomy, suggesting someone who stands alone emotionally and intellectually as much as not.	High levels of independence can translate into emotional and intellectual self-sufficiency and autonomy.

DID YOU KNOW...

That independence is often confused with being an introvert? Introversion is related to your personality trait, while independence is related to your preferred behavior. Low levels of independence can translate into a constant need for validation and input from others which hampers a person's ability to make sound decisions and effectively solve problems when faced with pressure and fast-paced changes in their environment. On the other hand, high levels of independence can translate into being too self-directed and independent when leading a team and can impact one's ability to effectively lead and guide people through the necessary cyber transformational and cultural changes

EQ TIP

Identify decisions you tend to make with others and activities you usually do with a group and task yourself to do these things more by yourself or in a group depending on the outcomes. These can be low-risk decisions and activities at first, so that you can make these new behaviors familiar in your mind.

Interpersonal Relations

Your ability and tendency to give and receive trust and compassion and to establish and maintain mutually satisfying personal relationships. It pertains to compassion, trust & vulnerability; personal connections & networks and rapport building.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of interpersonal relationships can translate into isolation, cold or unfriendly, difficulty with showing affection, trust and displaying human interaction.	Average levels of interpersonal relations yields at least a small circle of friends and family within which you are reasonable approachable, warm and trusted.	High levels of interpersonal relationships yields an emphasis on connecting to others and being connected to by others - both giving and receiving trust, compassion and warmth.

DID YOU KNOW...

That interpersonal relations are at the heart of building rapport, trust, and getting buy-in from critical stakeholders for your cyber strategies? Low levels of interpersonal relations can create barriers between multidisciplinary teams, between you and senior leadership, and customers who all have a different map of the world. On the other hand, high levels of interpersonal relationships can be too intimate and inappropriately familiar, increasing the risk for social engineering attacks because of freely disclosing personal data. It can also come across as too demanding of disclosure from others, which triggers people's defense mechanisms as an impediment to building relations.

EQ TIP

Take one or two elements that contribute to a close personal relationship you already have, and experiment with applying this behavior to another relationship that has not yet developed real closeness but could. For example, a confidential disclosure, listening with compassion, and a warm smile are all relationship-building behaviors that you will likely use with a small inner circle. Consider growing your process or exporting a couple of the behaviors to others outside your current ring of intimate acquaintances.

Empathy

Your ability and willingness to take notice and be sensitive to other people's needs and feelings. It pertains to caring & sensitivity, personal attention, sympathy, relational curiosity, and seeking to understand.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of empathy can translate into being inattentive, un-compassionate, unfeeling, emotionally detached or distant, selfish or self-centered.	Average levels of empathy translate into moderate or sporadic attention to others, and/or you tend toward careful, focused attention, but only on certain people.	High levels of empathy translate into being aware of, concerned for, and sensitive to other people and their needs, resulting in compassion and active listening.

DID YOU KNOW...

Practicing empathy requires us to get out of our headspace and into our heart-space, which takes up a lot of mental energy. Low levels of empathy can display an inability or unwillingness to read other people and their emotional states and needs, which may result in more conflict, miscommunications based on assumptions. It can lead to less buy-in from teams, colleagues, and key stakeholders. Too much empathy can also be perceived as unfavorable and lead to the feedback of being too emotionally dependent, conflict-avoidant, and portray unhealthy attachment to others. In times of pressure and high-stress environments, sound decision-making and judgment can be questioned and seen as emotionally instable in this case.

EQ TIP

Ask yourself:

"What have I done today, this week, this year, that has contributed to the betterment of the group (my team, my organization, my family, my community)?"

"What could you do to maintain or even expand this?" Invite your team to do the same exercise.

Social Responsibility

Your ability and tendency to cooperate and contribute to the welfare of a larger social system, to have and act in accordance with a social consciousness and to show concern for the group or the greater community. It pertains to caregiving & support, sacrifice, cooperation, volunteerism, and contribution.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of social responsibility can translate into being insensitive to other's feelings or group needs, socially or environmentally irresponsible, selfish, paying little attention to the community.	Average levels of social responsibility can translate into a moderate degree of thinking of and acting for the benefit of others or being motivated by the needs of only selected people.	High levels of social responsibility can yield selflessness, care, and concern for people, the community, and the environment.

DID YOU KNOW...

That social responsibility has a significant impact on team dynamics, engagement, and motivation to navigate a crisis and disruption successfully? Too little social responsibility can translate into being unencumbered by rules, or group expectations, or the needs of others, making teamwork in general, not only during crisis, a pain for you as a leader and for your team members. Too much social responsibility can also be a problem as being too concerned with others at someone's own expense can result in depletion, fatigue, and even burnout when it is no longer sustainable.

EQ TIP

Consider developing a rule or new habit for a group you belong to - family, company, club - that engages that group to contribute to the larger community. Think about the logical consequence of everyone taking the same action against or not supporting the group's agreed objectives and outcomes. Invite your team to do the same or engage in this exercise as a team-building experience.

Problem Solving

Your ability and tendency both to solve problems that involve emotions and to use emotions as an effective problem-solving tool. It pertains to collaboration & compromise, engagement, discussion & negotiation, difficult conversations, and conflict management.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of problem-solving can translate into being conflict and problem avoidant, emotionally ineffective or unpredictable in problem-solving, seen as a weak or ineffective leader.	Average levels translate in an often adequate, but not outstanding, tendency to engage the human and emotional side of conflict and problem-solving.	High levels translate into solving problems readily and well, even when upset or engaged in upsetting situations.

DID YOU KNOW

Levels of problem-solving abilities are critical in navigating a cyber crisis and leading people towards recovery and readiness objectives. With too little engagement in problem-solving, someone may get overwhelmed by emotions and getting stuck in solving problems poorly or not at all, which can translate to being seen as a weak or ineffective leader and manager. Too much emphasis on problem-solving can also work against someone and lead to feedback that they tend to engage in problems too quickly without the necessary time and pause for reflection and perspective. This can lead to unhealthy response options and problem-solving when navigating crises during high pressure and stressful environments.

EQ TIP

In solving a problem, generate at least three possible solutions - even if the first one initially stands out as the best - playing out the logical outcome and the pros and cons of each will help you draft the bigger picture. Having more data and options will give you more power in making practical decisions. Invite your team to do the same or exercise this as part of a team-building experience.

Reality Testing

Your ability and tendency to assess the here-and-now-reality of any given moment or situation—what is actually going on—and compare that objectively to your fantasy of what is going on, thus avoiding being overcome by phantasies, daydreams, and biases. It pertains to objectivity, lack of drama and volatility, rationality, and an emotional filter of verifiable facts, emotional precision.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of reality testing can be unrealistic and overly dramatic, being impractical and un-trustworthy, seen as dishonest, and prone to exaggeration.	Average levels of reality testing are your ability to access objective, actual facts to verify your emotional state. Still, it also suggests that this reality is not always consulted or considered.	High levels use the world as it actually exists as the basis for how one feels, making one routinely look/sound practical & grounded.

DID YOU KNOW...

That reality testing impacts your overall well-being and the well-being of your team? Low levels of reality testing leads to the tendency to construct narratives and subjectively collect data that reinforces an emotional state detrimental to teamwork while navigating crises and during stakeholder engagement meetings. However, high levels of reality testing can also lead to being perceived as being too objective, unwilling, or unable to connect with subjective, emotional elements of a situation, leading to potentially limited outcomes when navigating a crisis as a united team.

EQ TIP

Practice verifying your perceptions. Ask at least two other people to describe an event that you all shared or experienced together, noting the details common to all accounts. Invite your team to do the same or include this as part of your team-building exercise.

Impulse Control

The ability to resist or delay a drive or temptation to do or say something or to decide too quickly or rashly. It pertains to restrain, containment, regulation, caution, and filtration.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of impulse control can translate into lacking self-control, being impulsive, perceived as overly talkative and monopolizing conversations, short-fused and quick to anger.	Average levels translate into an ability - not always engaged or exercised - to hold back, filter responses, and decide against an initial impulse to act or speak.	High levels translate into effectively delay your impulses, which allows for more carefully made and better decisions.

DID YOU KNOW...

That impulse control is a learned behavior but also depends on your mood and body-energy deficit? With too little impulse control, you have an inability or unwillingness to filter your reactions or delay your behavioral impulses, which can quickly burn bridges with your team and stakeholders, cause heated discussions and make someone come across as inadequate to lead others through a crisis. Too much impulse control, however, can be perceived as emotionally detached, withdrawn, or withholding information in conversations. As a result, building trust and rapport with stakeholders can be challenging and will negatively influence achieving desired outcomes and getting stakeholder's buy-in.

EQ TIP

Think about your actions' long-term implications - what would expressing your thoughts and feelings contribute to the situation and the relationships at hand? Commit to yourself to waiting a designated amount of time (an hour or perhaps overnight) in meetings, discussions, or project efforts to delay action or closure. This allows time for reflection and further data gathering. Invite your team to do the same exercise of delaying their reactions to situations in which they feel easily triggered.

Flexibility

Your ability and tendency to adjust your emotions, thoughts, and behavior to changing situations and conditions, to adapt—to take in new data and change your mind or approach. It pertains to openness, curiosity, elasticity & pliability, change, and adaptability.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of feeling rigid in your thinking, being set in your ways and opinions, lacking curiosity, resistance to change, and slowing new projects.	Average levels can translate into being curious and open-minded, adaptable, able to take in new data and change your mind but often neglect to do so.	High levels can translate in being flexible to new conditions and are open to change, bringing an open-minded curiosity and adaptability to most interactions.

DID YOU KNOW...

That flexibility levels influence behavioral change in a critical way for reducing human vulnerability in falling for social engineering attacks? Too little flexibility has an inability or unwillingness to take in new data, reassess, or change your mind or direction. Developing cyber hygiene habits that stick in people's minds and are sustainable will be challenging to implement when low levels of flexibility prevail. Too much flexibility can also work against someone and translate into being more prone to starts than finishes and becoming quickly bored with routine and predictability. Achieving sustainable behavioral change in doing things differently on the job and increasing cyber hygiene is critical to minimizing the pain of cybercrime.

EQ TIP

On an issue where your opinion is fixed, consider at least two other positions or points of view to the extent that you could argue that side of the argument in a debate. Practice pushing yourself to generate and offer options to the conversation, task, or meeting by playing a role you have not played before or push yourself to engage in a behavior you tend not to engage in normally. Invite your team to do the same or include it as a team-building exercise.

Stress Tolerance

The ability to function well in the midst of challenging and stressful situations—to shoulder stress without getting overwhelmed. It pertains to work/life balance, endurance, health, resilience, and sustainment.

Low	Average	High
Low levels can translate into feeling stressed, anxious or agitated; procrastination, delaying decisions due to fear or trepidation; hopeless, giving up top quickly or easily.	Average levels can translate into adequately managing life's stressors much of the time, sometimes letting fear or anxiety get the better of your efforts.	High levels can translate into a compelling array of tools and approaches to alleviate and shoulder stress and the self-confidence to solve problems.

DID YOU KNOW...

That your perception of stress significantly impacts the way you experience stress? Too little stress tolerance means you can have an inadequate set of tools or approaches to stressful situations, or you lack confidence that you will be able to deal with the problems life throws at you. Too much stress tolerance, however, can also work against you as you may become unaware of stressors and dangers that face you, or not invest in the outcome or are of the consequences or coming across as over-confident. Making decisions during crises without being fully aware of the effects can negatively impact someone's credibility, and they are likely to lose face in front of their stakeholders.

EQ TIP

Connect with your team or another team from a different department who struggles with the same issues or pressures as you are. To get support and share best practices and lessons learned - informal, intermittent contact builds a personal network while more structured; scheduled meetings make this a support group. In times of crisis and disruption, this network becomes gold in achieving your desired outcomes to the benefit of your organization.

Optimism

Your ability and tendency to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity. Optimism gives you hope and enables you to see the future as positive, inviting place. It pertains to having a positive outlook, faith, hopefulness, enthusiasm, and expectations.

Low	Average	High
Low levels of optimism can translate into feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, prone to give up or give in too quickly, self-defeating or unmotivated, feeling negative and worried.	Average levels can translate into being able to see positive possibilities in the future. However, while you can, you don't, or the positive thoughts you have don't last.	High levels of optimism can translate into maintaining a consistently positive or forward-looking attitude, even in adversity.

DID YOU KNOW...

Your optimism levels are the foundational building block for resilience and recovery from adversity, crisis, and challenges? Too little optimism can come across as pessimism, fatalism, or depression, which does not inspire much hope or motivation to increase a team's engagement. Too much optimism can have the opposite effect as it can lead to being blind to reality, prone to viewing bright sides and opportunities that do not actually exist or be known to let an unrealistic belief in a positive outcome take the place of effort and hard work which might otherwise have secured a positive effect.

EQ TIP

Practice reviewing and considering what has happened in the past, and realize the worst-case scenario (the outcome you fear) has rarely, if ever, come to be. Think about the future and what you want from it. What is the effect that would best serve you and your goals? It would help if you first pictured it in your mind (and preferably even say it out loud to others) before it can ever come about in the world.

EQ Guide Cyber Resources

If you enjoy reading and learning more about the human factor of cyber and how you can leverage emotional intelligence to minimize the pain of cyber crime, sign up to receive regular updates with the latest videos, articles, interviews and blogs!

Every week we publish a new piece of educational content related to minimizing your pain in cyber crime. Videos, blogs, podcasts, and more are all on the menu.

No spam, now newsletter or email collection - free resources to help you move from recovery to readiness through resilience.

[**Take me there now**](#)

Our Roadmap to your Readiness

STEP ONE

Our first step is to offer a complimentary discovery call for 15 or 30 min. This call is meant to understand if Thrive with EQ is the right fit for your organization. You will be provided with access to our DEMO portal before proceeding with step two.

STEP TWO

If you feel that we can help you, the second step is to discuss and map your organizational performance challenges against your desired outcomes. This step consists of hourly EQ consultancy sessions and uses creative brainstorming techniques and mapping tools to establish the baseline of your requirements.

STEP THREE

At Thrive with EQ, we believe in customized and tailored solutions that help change behaviours in doing things differently in the job. This requires a customized strategy that helps you implement solutions in a sustainable way. How do you get there from here?

We offer three types of solutions based on your challenges and requirements:

- 1) 1-1 Leadership Coaching
- 2) EQ Consultancy
- 3) EQ Collaboration & Communication

Book your Discovery Call

References

References used are directly taken from the EQ-i 2.0 Technical Manual. Specific references listed below:

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The EQ Toolbox markers are based on the scientifically validated EQ-i 2.0 Model issued by the Multi-Health Assessment Centre in Canada.

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MINIMIZING THE PAIN OF CYBER

BUILDING EMOTIONAL FIREWALLS



RECOVERY



READINESS



RESILIENCE

THE HUMAN FACTOR

EQ GUIDE