



## **Well-Being: Emotional intelligence...the antidote to stress and the key to well-being?**

Stress. We all experience it and it seems to be getting worse. In fact, the results of the 2017 “Stress in America” survey done by the American Psychological Association showed “a statistically significant increase in stress for the first time since the survey was first conducted in 2007” (American Psychological Association, 2017). We’re stressed about our safety, money, our jobs, the economy and our future, and this is wreaking havoc on our health and well-being.

High levels of stress causes problems ranging from headache and fatigue to obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes (Aronson, 2009). Many of us turn to television, social media, alcohol and food in an effort to manage our stress, but these behaviors may only compound the problem. While these techniques do numb us out and distract us temporarily they really do not serve us in the long run. So what will help? According to Daniel Goleman, Harvard-trained psychologist and science writer, strengthening and using emotional intelligence (EI) may be just what we need to effectively manage stress and maintain higher levels of well-being (Goleman, 2011).

Emotional intelligence consists of four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Research shows that people with higher levels of EI are better able to cope with and manage stress (Mahmood & Yadav, 2017) and in the academic setting, teaching professionals with higher levels of EI report higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction (Mérida-López, Extremera & Rey, 2017). High levels of EI will help us develop and maintain stronger relationships, receive more positive ratings from supervisors and coworkers, increase our likelihood of being promoted, protect us against depression, anxiety and stress and promote our physical well-being (Grewal & Salovey, 2006). It’s a win-win.

If you’re curious about your level of EI, you can take a free assessment [here](#).

Once you have completed an assessment, you can begin the work of increasing your EI. The first step is to get really good at assessing your own emotions. Mark Brackett, PhD, Director of the Yale Center of Emotional Intelligence, developed a app for that. Yes, there is an app for that. It’s call the “mood meter” and it’s free. Check it out [here](#). You can learn more about EI from Mark Brackett [here](#).

If you’re interested in working with a professional to help you improve your EI you can contact your schools’ Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This free, confidential service can provide



you with support and guidance to optimize your EI and enjoy all the benefits that high levels of EI will afford you. Find out more about your EAP by going to your school's human resources webpage. You've got nothing to lose and everything to gain.

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