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HOW DOES AN AWARENESS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IMPACT ON PRACTICE: DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN AN EDUCATION SETTING

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Research has strongly supported the link between an individual’s emotional intelligence and the positive effect this can have on the work environment and culture. An individual’s appropriate management of their emotions underpins characteristics such as trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement and initiative. The presence of these individual characteristics can impact on team dynamics and the organisational culture. Emotional intelligence can evoke a deeper understanding of one’s self, which can be the catalyst for enhancing professional practice and interpersonal relationships. The important question however, is what level of emotional intelligence understanding and skill proficiency is needed to bring about these positive outcomes. This presentation, which is based on a study that explored how emotional intelligence can be developed, proposes that even a basic awareness of emotional intelligence can have a significant impact on an individual's professional practice. A mixed mode case study approach engaged eleven participants in semi-structured interviews, pre and post engagement in a leadership capacity development program (LCDP). The LCDP included sessions focused on raising participants’ awareness of emotional intelligence and engaged them in activities designed to explore how emotional intelligence could be practiced in their work context. The research found that the majority of the case study participants had little if any knowledge of emotional intelligence prior to engagement in the LCDP. However, a basic awareness of emotional intelligence, which resulted from engagement in the LCDP, had a significant impact on participants' work practice. An awareness of emotional intelligence inspired participants to consider how their emotions might be impacting on a situation and accordingly modify their behaviour. This presentation will explain these findings and present an overview of the knowledge and strategies for developing emotional intelligence that the case study participants believed was critical in bringing about a positive change in their professional practice.

Keywords: practice, developing emotional intelligence, impact