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Developing emotional intelligence for leadership in an Australian state emergency service

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Developing emotional intelligence for leadership in an Australian state emergency service

Abstract
The organizational benefits of emotionally intelligent leaders and leadership are well documented. Likewise, the potential organizational gains from an investment in programmes designed to develop the emotional intelligence of leaders are strongly supported. The critical factor is whether the programmes for developing emotional intelligence will be effective and achieve the desired outcomes. This presentation is based on a study that explored how emotional intelligence can be developed and a subsequent program designed to develop emotional intelligence in a senior management group of a State Emergency Service in New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

Keywords
emotional, developing, emergency, service, state, australian, leadership, intelligence

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THE RELEVANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN A HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

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It is widely accepted that the success of higher education institutions is dependent on effective competent leaders and leadership. There is growing evidence to support the proposition that emotional intelligence is strongly linked to effective leadership in the higher education environment. However, current research has failed to explicate the emotional intelligence skills, strategies or characteristics that can have an impact on effective leadership. This presentation is based on a study which aimed to address this gap by identifying and thereby better understanding the emotional intelligence competencies and abilities that will promote effective leadership in a higher education context. A mixed mode case study approach engaged eleven participants in semi-structured interviews. A leadership competency framework consisting of five effective leadership practices was developed and the relevance of emotional intelligence competencies and abilities for leadership in a higher education context was explored in relation to the framework. The research supported the premise that emotional intelligence is highly relevant for effective leadership in higher education and established that emotional intelligence related to regulating and managing emotions of oneself and others was most significant. Empathy was identified as an important strategy that underpinned all of the leadership competency framework practices. The ability to be able to appreciate an individual's motivations and concerns and appropriately manage these to bring about a desired outcome was found to be critical to effective leadership. This presentation will expand on these findings and provide practical illustrations and strategies, drawn from the case studies, of how emotionally intelligent leadership in a higher education context can be exercised.

Keywords: effective leadership, higher education