



BEHAVIORAL EQ® Explorations

Emotion Perception

TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model™ is based on the latest research in both brain function and performance. It focuses on the most important elements of Emotional Intelligence and those that can be successfully developed. The Model consists of four dimensions which house the fifteen various core competencies. The Behavioral EQ Explorations series takes a closer look each of these core competencies. This whitepaper focuses on Emotion Perception.

Emotion Perception is an essential component of TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model. It refers to the ability to perceive and understand the emotions others are expressing, through both verbal and non-verbal messages. Those who demonstrate high emotion perception pay close attention to the signals that others are giving and anticipate how others will feel about different situations.

“All our knowledge has its origins in our perceptions”
— Leonardo da Vinci



The Importance of Emotion Perception

Have you ever worked with someone who you couldn't seem to connect with or understand, no matter how hard you tried? The inability to fully understand someone else's motivations and feelings can lead to misunderstandings and even harmed relationships. In business, it can result in chronic conflict, lost deals, and relationships that can't be mended. Most of us have had similar experiences, and they're usually the result of not accurately assessing the other person's emotions. Emotion Perception is the ability to perceive and understand the emotions that others are expressing, through both their verbal and nonverbal messages, and it is fundamental to working effectively with others.

Research supports the importance of accurately recognizing others' emotions at work. A study of people in high stress jobs, like nurses and police officers, showed that those who were better at perceiving others' emotions were happier and more engaged with their work.ⁱ This is because the ability to understand others' emotions in tense situations helps nurses and police officers to diffuse strong emotions and find solutions to problems quickly, whereas those without this ability end up more often in highly emotional situations that spiral out of control. In fact, the ability to understand emotions is so important that it has a biological basis in survival. Babies as young as four months old are able to recognize emotions.ⁱⁱ Not only does this help infants to recognize danger, but also it helps them to better socialize with other children and adults.



Strategies to Enhance Emotion Perception

If you feel like you could use improvement in this skill, fear not. There are well-researched strategies for helping people improve their ability to read others' emotions. Try out these two tips.

- **Practice**

Outside of work, practice paying attention to others. Public places such as airports and shopping malls are especially good for people watching. Without being intrusive or creepy, watch people in conversation with one another. Can you guess what they are feeling or the messages they are trying to convey? Pay special attention to facial expressions and physical gestures. As a way to gain practice, assign one channel of communication — tone of voice or body language — and focus on this for a full day. Try to objectively observe others and focus on your assigned channel. Describe to yourself what people's tones are communicating, or pay attention to how people orient themselves when talking with one another and what this conveys.

- **Seek understanding by asking**

If unsure of how others are feeling or responding to you, and if it is appropriate, simply ask how they are feeling. This can be especially helpful for people who are hesitant to express themselves. For example, if making a change in policy, ask "What concerns do you have about the change in policies?"



About TRACOM Group's Behavioral EQ Model™:

TRACOM Group's Behavioral EQ Model is the third generation of Emotional Intelligence, focusing on skills that are most related to performance and that can be practiced and developed. This model encompasses emotional intelligence (this refers to how well we perceive and understand our own emotions and the emotions of others) and behavioral intelligence (this refers to how well we manage personal behavior and relationships). Behavioral elements of our Behavioral EQ model are the most important because these skills are visible to others and most strongly predictive of job performance and career success.

Learn more about TRACOM's Behavioral EQ Model and the other elements that comprise the model [here](#).

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- ⁱ Bechtoldt, M. N., Rohrmann, S., De Pater, I. E., & Beersma, B. (2011). *The primacy of perceiving: Emotion recognition buffers negative effects of emotional labor*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(5), 1087-1094.
- ⁱⁱ Downloaded October 15, 2014 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/3350364/Babies-can-recognise-emotion-in-faces.html>.

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