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## Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

Your desk is more than cluttered; your in box has reached skyscraper height and the lights on your phone lines are blinking in some sort of bizarre code! Arriving late for work the last two days has put you way behind in your work. Your boss just came over and dropped a pile of documents on top of the mess and growled "Have this done by three!" Your mind goes blank and you feel yourself spinning out of control, you have an overwhelming urge to say something, do something, anything! What happens next is as predictable as it is preventable.



Your meltdown is of biblical proportions and as security escorts you out the door you think to yourself, "Not again!" Yes again. How many times has this happened to you? How many times have you been let go from a job due to inappropriate behaviour? How many jobs have you quit because you just couldn't hack it? Have you been unemployed or underemployed for long periods of time? What is going on and why is it happening to you? Do any of the following traits sound familiar to you?

You are busy doing one thing, get interrupted and completely forget what you were doing? Have difficulty in prioritizing and scheduling your tasks. Always arriving late or even forgetting to go somewhere? You find yourself losing track of conversations or interrupting the conversations of those around you. And not being able to stop talking when it is obvious (to others), that you have said something inappropriate. Can't find something that you were working on because it was lost in your work space chaos? You are quick to anger and socially inactive with your coworkers? These are all characteristics of Emotional Intelligence.

What is Emotional Intelligence (EI) and how does it affect persons with ADHD/LD? In 1990 John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, two leading researchers, defined the phrase – emotional intelligence – as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."

Essentially, EI provides us with the ability to not only identify our emotions but to think constructively about, evaluate and then deal with those emotions. EI also furnishes us with the capacity to regulate how, we not only respond to emotions, but how we can utilize emotions to stimulate our intellectual growth. By employing emotional intelligence we can use it to assist us in carrying out problem solving and also how we interact with others.

Executive functioning skills are impacted by emotional intelligence. EI can influence the effectiveness of your responses or behaviour as you perceive and react to positive or negative

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emotions. Many important functioning skills such as task and time management, how you get along with others, even how you think and talk to yourself are also affected.

So what do you do? Do you just keep on keeping on or do you work at finding a solution to your woes? Seeking professional counselling and treatment is a great first step (two informative websites are: <http://www.ldao.ca/>, <http://www.adhd.ca/>). Many adults who participated in counselling and treatment sessions as children tend to stop receiving support as they grow older. Additionally, a large number of disruptive employees have never been diagnosed with a learning disability or disorder. ADHD/LD can be treated and many of its symptoms, if not alleviated, can often be diminished to a more manageable level.

For persons with ADHD/LD emotional intelligence has a major impact on how they live their lives. In many instances people with ADHD/LD report strained relationships with family, friends, employers and co-workers. As human beings we are often judged solely on how we interact with others; any small variance of the norm, can greatly influence how others respond to us.

By taking positive and constructive steps to identify your strengths and address your challenges you will achieve more stability in your work environment. Managing your workplace will also help you gain more control of your life.