**Professionalism and Emotional Intelligence – The keys to positive communication**

 Emotional intelligence (also known as EQ) refers to an ability to recognise, understand and manage emotions. EQ is an incredibly useful skill to possess at work, as our workplaces are not emotion-free zones and an ability to regulate emotions and understand the emotions of others can lead to a culture of professionalism. While it supports the development of a more productive workplace.  
  
Emotional intelligence centres on five key areas: self-awareness, emotional control, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. The meaning of the five key areas is conceptualised below:  
  
**1. Self-awareness**  
The first step in developing emotional intelligence is self-reflection. This involves taking stock of personal feelings and how we react to certain situations on an ongoing basis, and highlighting/emphasizing where strengths and weaknesses. Improved in-depth understanding of our emotions and gut feeling reactions, support effective management of these feelings and emotions.  
  
**2. Emotional control**  
Managing emotions is all about intervention. For example, if you are losing your patience with a team member or student, refrain from blindly acting on that emotion but; 1) consider why you are feeling that way, 2) think of an appropriate reaction, and 3) taking into account how you come across to them. Emotional control is key to building and maintaining healthy, productive relationships with our colleagues in our workplace.  
  
**3. Self-motivation**  
Part of being emotionally intelligent means having a solid understanding of your values, goals and motivations. People who are motivated in their career are usually more committed, enthusiastic and, in turn, more successful.  
  
**4. Empathy**  
Emotional intelligence isn't just about acknowledging our own feelings, but also those of others. It's that ability to see things from another person's perspective that helps create strong relationships that are founded on inclusivity, trust and fairness.  
  
**5. Social skills**  
Key workplace skills such as teamwork, leadership and communication all depend on our ability to acknowledge and react to our own emotions and those of the people around us. These social skills create healthy and emotionally safe working environments and are highly valued by employers as they can increase professionalism, productivity and are crucial to creating a positive overall working culture.  
  
Developing an emotional intelligence is an ongoing process of reflecting and evaluating the way we think, feel and react and spotting those areas we need to work on.

Please engage in additional reading of resources to support you to develop your EQ and professionalism in preparation of your placement.

Whatever your strength or weakness is, make sure you invest the time to critically reflect on it: your career and work relationships will benefit from your improved professionalism.