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M2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF A VOLUNTEER

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)?

Many people (including young people) are discouraged from typical business by the prospect of rush, pressure on results, unclear communication, and aggressive competition. In volunteering, they see a different world of values that seems to them more friendly, human and sensitive. However, every place of activity where we deal with problems, other people, and depressing stories (as in the case of working with children with a difficult past) generates emotions and the need to wisely and consciously manage them. It has been scientifically proven that emotional intelligence is responsible for the professional success of leaders in 85-90%. And how does this relate to the so-called "ordinary people", volunteers who do not act as leaders, coordinators in non-profit organisations? What can emotional intelligence do for them?

According to the definition¹, it is the **ability to recognize one's own feelings and the feelings of other people and the ability to manage one's own emotions and emotions arising in interpersonal relationships**, i.e. skills that are very helpful in personal life, at school, at work and in the work of a volunteer. Emotions influence how you function, how you evaluate the situation and what decisions you make. A high Emotional Intelligence (EQ) will increase your performance because by understanding others better, you have a better relationship with them, which translates into greater self-confidence and lowers stress levels. By being able to recognize emotions (yours and others'), you can manage them and check what works and what doesn't.

A GLANCE AT THE BRAIN AND EMOTIONS

To understand the role of the brain in controlling emotions, it's important to understand its basic structures. If you are interested and want to learn more about the secrets of the human brain, we recommend you the literature, which after the Decade of the Brain², is full of many fascinating and noteworthy publications³. For those who just need general awareness, the following outline of interesting (from the point of view of emotional management) structures and functions should be helpful.

The obvious task of the brain is to think, analyse and solve problems. The **prefrontal cortex** is responsible for these activities. This structure is evolutionarily quite young and, what is more, very demanding. For the prefrontal cortex to function properly, it needs a lot of resources (glucose, oxygen) and an optimal amount of data. The excess of information limits its effectiveness, which is sometimes reflected in the language – one can get “a headache” from too much information/ too many thoughts". So let's call the prefrontal cortex **the Analyst**.

Another structure is the **basal ganglia**, the role of which is to store routine activities in the brain. They recognize, store, and repeat patterns from our environment relating to movement, light, sound, smell, speech, events, concepts, emotions, and any other kind of stimuli. When you learn something diligently (e.g. driving a car) you involve the Analyst. Once you've learned and drive smoothly, recorded patterns of action are stored in the basal ganglia. This is your **Autopilot**.

Another structure that plays an important role in emotional development is the **amygdala** (part of the limbic system), which stores emotional memories. The more intense the stimulation, the stronger the recording of experiences. Its level of stimulation increases in direct proportion to the

¹ The creators of the emotional intelligence theory are Peter Salovey and John Mayer. The authors of the above definition are Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis, who proved the influence of emotions on the quality and efficiency of human actions.

² The Decade of the Brain were called the 90s of the last century, with dynamic growth of scientific research on the functioning of the brain, cognitive science and neuroscience.

³ A particularly recommendable book is: *Your Brain At Work*, Harper Collins, 2009.

strength of your emotional reaction. When the limbic system is strongly disturbed/moved, the energy resources necessary for the work of the prefrontal cortex decrease. The limbic system, especially the amygdala, is your vigilant **Caveman**. The name is pretty accurate since, just like a primitive caveman, the limbic system does not discuss or deliberate, but acts immediately.

It is he who constantly scans the environment, looking for anything that may be dangerous. Strong emotions such as fear, anger, joy or jealousy activate the amygdala and worsen the working memory of the prefrontal cortex. Therefore, we are unable to think clearly when we are under stress or strong feelings. The impulsive feeling of being "flooded with emotions" disrupts reason, leads to violent reactions that seem beyond any control, and over time are judged as rash and utterly pointless. This phenomenon is called **amygdala hijack** (sometimes also "emotional kidnapping") and unfortunately – very likely that it has also been part of your experience more than once. How many times, after a violent reaction, you felt badly about yourself asking: "How could I do this?", "Why did I say that?", "How could I behave this way, it's terrible, it's not like me!" Yes, these are the reflections (and sometimes even shame) that accompany us when the dust settles after an amygdala hijack. When there is an amygdala hijack happening, it is too late to activate an effective self-regulatory mechanism.

The principle organizing the functioning of the brain is to minimize danger and maximize reward. Positive emotions: satisfaction, joy, curiosity are reactions towards something. Negative emotions: anxiety, sadness and fear - reactions from something. The limbic system is constantly making "from" and "towards" decisions. However, the intensity of the reaction to the threat is stronger (faster, longer, more intense) than to the reward. The spiral of negative emotions is easier to occur than the spiral of positive emotions. That is why it is so important to learn to recognize emotions and signals of coming amygdala hijack to prevent negative emotions from escalating and to maintain common sense.

FOUR AREAS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The emotional intelligence model is most often presented as a set of several competences grouped in four areas:

- **Personal** competences – (1) self-awareness and (2) self-regulation
- **Social** competences – (3) social awareness and (4) relationship management.

Self-awareness

- Emotional self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence

Self-regulation

- Emotional self-control
- Flexibility
- Motivation (striving) for achievement

Social awareness

- Empathy
- Understanding social connections – situational awareness

Relationship management

- Influencing others, inspiring
- Co-operation
- Mutual agreement
- Conflict mitigation

Which of the competences you want to develop will depend on the context, your current advancement in this area, as well as many other factors. Now you are probably asking yourself "okay, but is the level of emotional intelligence not innate and can it be raised at all?"

IS IT POSSIBLE TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

It is possible and worth it! Contrary to IQ, which undergoes less change throughout life, emotional intelligence is susceptible to changes; it can be improved and significantly increased. High competences in the field of emotional intelligence are also a necessary protection against a decline in intellectual performance in a situation of severe stress or crisis. A hasty decision, an emotional reaction, an uncontrolled outburst of anger, thoughtless words that cannot be undone, and that can shaken a promising relationship, are all too common examples of deficits in self-awareness and self-control.

These "blackout" situations are the result of emotions taking over your mind that you cannot stop and cannot prevent when you don't know how. It is the kidnapper (the amygdala) who is the master of your emotions, and you are a helpless victim. And you will stay a victim until you understand your emotions and learn to take partial control over them.

HOW TO DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Systematically, consistently, by changing habits and attitudes. It is simple but not easy at all. Remember that what has been learned and practiced happens almost automatically, because the Autopilot takes the floor.

You must approach various methods of learning and gaining experience consciously, because it is easy to fall under the illusion that book knowledge will change our lives. Well, it probably won't. When you read about emotional intelligence, you think, "aha! I'm going to react differently now", and then life quickly and painfully verifies your decisions. In the case of developing emotional intelligence, knowledge of the subject is useful and necessary, but knowledge alone is not enough. You can participate in a great training, interesting seminar or take part in workshops, but - unfortunately - they will not change much in your life. Because it is not just knowing that will give you an advantage, but applying it - learning in practice and in action. Therefore, if you want to be successful thanks to high competences in the field of emotional intelligence, you must first of all exercise it, developing your skills in this area. Consider the following elements:

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1. YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

You can use the simplified questionnaire (see appendix) or other questionnaires available on the web (e.g. INTE). This will give you some awareness in which areas your EQ is at a good level and in which it needs development.

2. EMOTIONAL COMPETENCES THAT ARE MOST USEFUL FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITY

The nature of a volunteer's work requires personal competences, and some key social competences such as empathy, understanding the social context, as well as influencing others and the ability to mitigate conflicts. Some of these topics are covered in other chapters:

- Internal motivation in striving for achievements in module *M1.Motivation*;
- Self-confidence and unconditional self-acceptance as aspects of self-connection in module *M3.Communication*;
- Positive influence in module *M4.Power and charisma*;
- Dealing with conflict in module *M5.Difficult situations*;
- Mindfulness and meditation as techniques of achieving internal peace in module *M6.Resilience and well-being*.

3. THE MOST COMMON SITUATIONS WHERE EMOTIONS TAKE CONTROL OVER YOU

This is your emotional audit - it is worth looking at the situations that light the fuse under uncontrolled emotions, break it down into prime factors, and then deal with techniques of coping in such situations and with a training plan.

4. TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS THAT CAN CONVINC YOU AND DEVELOP YOUR COMPETENCES TO THE BEST

From the methods presented, choose the ones that suit you best, because it gives you a greater guarantee that you will not give up prematurely. When you persevere, achieving further success in managing your emotions will become your best motivator.

The module *M2.Emotional Intelligence* consists of three sections:

- M2.S1. Self-awareness and emotional self-regulation
- M2.S2. Empathy and nunchi
- M2.S3. Social intelligence

M2.S1. SELF-AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION

A lady who has poor contact with her emotions describes every discomfort the same. For various events - whether her bus is late, or is she just packing for the desired vacation, her TV remote control doesn't work, she breaks her fingernail, she succeeds to buy a ticket to a show or runs out of flour - she has one description for all her emotions: she is nervous. Not worried, surprised, content, happy, sad, disappointed, angry, just nervous. The inability to define one's own emotions is not a dysfunction resulting from a limited set of words, but a kind of emotional poverty resulting from the systematic and effective repression of emotions - from childhood imprints such as "boys don't cry", "girls are good", to blocking emotions evoked by painful experiences in adulthood. Regardless of what emotions arise - nice, desired or unwanted - developing the ability to manage them must start with the ability to recognize them - when, in what situations and with what intensity they can arise.

What if the aforementioned lady could identify her emotions? If she captured that "nervousness" while packing for a vacation was excitement and joy, maybe she could give herself more permission to such emotions by just enjoying?

LABELLING EMOTIONS REDUCES THEIR STRENGTH

It may seem the opposite, but it has been researched and proven that labelling emotions weakens their intensity.

When you are overcome by emotions, notice what is happening. Are you angry? Call it: I feel angry. Are you feeling disappointed? Call it: I'm disappointed. How do you feel it? Where do you feel it? Heavy feeling in your stomach or maybe tension in your neck? Your body tells you a lot. When you name your emotions, locate their manifestation in your body and become aware of them, you take control over them.

Labelling emotions restores activity in the prefrontal cortex, and when your Analyst gets to work, it's easier for you to take control.

An effective and attractive method of naming and becoming familiar with emotions is the use of a metaphor, a story. Appreciating the importance of developing emotional intelligence early, the authors of children's books use, for example, colours: anger is red, sadness is blue or a metaphor: joy is like a balloon, and peace is like a tree, etc. As you become more self-aware of your emotions, you can teach this to the child you are caring for too - using a metaphor or a story.

Developing new habits takes discipline and time, so start by gaining skill at emotion labelling:

- Try to name the emotions you are feeling several times a day. Thanks to this, you will develop your own dictionary (keep working on its second, supplemented and extended edition).

- Practice listening at the level of content and feeling (see page 12 - reflection, paraphrasing, clarification).
- Track down regularities and connections - what emotions do you feel most often? What are they generally related to?
- Look if there are any emotions or feelings that you do not experience at all or which appear very rarely?

EMOTIONAL MONITORING

Similar as with an industrial camera, regular emotional monitoring allows you to recognize and accurately assess coming threats from intruders. Each audit is designed to assess the current status and recommend improvements. The same goal will apply to the use of the emotional monitoring technique. When you notice that the level of emotions increases dangerously and inevitably paves the way for the kidnapper, focusing attention on what is happening (what I think, what I feel and where the sensations are located in my body) and what I want, what serves me in a given situation and what doesn't, requires the Analyst to work and disarms the Caveman of his club.

The more you use emotional monitoring, the easier it will be for you to notice incoming storm clouds and take countermeasures. You will notice more and more patterns and regularities, and habitual reactions will be increasingly replaced by deliberate reactions.

A set of strategic questions in emotional monitoring will give you a sense of control and choice, and also (or perhaps most importantly) reveal the intentions and needs behind it.

WHEN ARE WE TAKEN OVER BY EMOTIONS?

Emotions usually serve our interests well (without them we would not be who we are), they motivate us to act, but sometimes they get us into trouble. This happens when our emotional responses are inadequate in one of the following three ways:

- We overreact - we feel and show the right emotion, but its intensity is too high;
- We show emotions in a wrong way - we feel emotions adequate to the situation, but the reaction to them is not adequate (e.g. our fear was justified when the child ran out into the street, but we reacted unnecessarily by shouting at the child or, heaven forbid, spanking the child);
- We feel inadequate emotions – e.g. we feel jealous because of an innocent conversation between a close friend and his/her acquaintance.

Emotions are reactions to events that we judge - rightly or not - to affect our well-being, leading to its improvement or deterioration. Moreover, they start so quickly that we are not aware of the process taking place in our minds. The events that stimulate the emergence of emotions are a product of our individual experiences as well as the past of our species. When we are in the power of inadequate emotions, we interpret everything that is happening around us in a way that correlates

with how we feel, ignoring information that creates dissonance. The desire to experience or avoid emotions is the motivation behind most of our behaviour.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

Usually, we tend to believe that a particular situation has elicited a specific (and justified) emotional response.

You are working on organizing a sports event, engaging other volunteers, planning the order of the competition, arranging the sponsors of the cups and suddenly you receive information that the sports club that was supposed to provide the sports hall is withdrawing its promise because it needs to repair the floor. You feel anger, disappointment, and maybe even shame that the event you are organising will not work out (at least not on the planned date). You give vent to your emotions for several days without being able to shake them. You conduct an internal monologue, you talk about the harm you have suffered. It seems quite logical to you that the club's withdrawal from renting the hall is an event that directly activates the reaction in the form of anger and disappointment.

However, looking at the situation with cool mind, damage to the floor in the club is only a fact and as such does not arouse any emotions. Neither your neighbour, nor the lady from the local shop, will be troubled by the news of the repair of the floor in the sports club. So, what activated your emotions? There is a very important element between the event and the effect that clearly influences the type of reaction you have and its intensity - these are your beliefs and opinions. "So much work in preparation was wasted! It's not fair; they couldn't check the condition of the floor beforehand? I can already hear these voices of criticism and complaints that it was necessary to think about an alternative hall, to set a different date. How do I look like now? It was supposed to be fun; instead, it's a classic example of „fine words butter no parsnips“. Why is this happening to me?! I will not undertake such a task again. I have bad luck." And so on. It is now clearer that it was not the club's decision that activated anger and disappointment, but your belief that you do not deserve that your commitment and hard work are wasted, nor the disrespectful lack of information about the condition of the hall and necessary repairs in collision with the scheduled date of the event. Your needs for recognition and achievement have not been met, your image of yourself as a creative, forward-thinking and well-organized person has been shattered...

Thus, the process of emotional reaction has three components:

- A.** Action activating the event - the club withdraws from renting the hall
- B.** Beliefs - it's not fair, I don't deserve it
- C.** Consequence – reaction: anger, disappointment

What can you do? When reaction C to event A appears, analyse the real reason for your emotions B, which actually connected A to C, and then:

- reflect (internal dialogue or discussion with a friend) on your belief. Consider whether all your beliefs are rational or irrational. Do you really believe you always have bad luck?! Is it

true and does it allow you to pursue your goals? Does it make you feel the way you want to feel? This will give you a more realistic view of both the situation and your own expectations. A common-sense approach will lead you to the conclusion that not everything is perfect, that you do not always have influence on everything, failures happen, you've learned a valuable lesson for the future or what questions are worth asking, which have not been asked this time (e.g. about the condition of the hall; the assumption that is definitely okay turned out to be wrong). If you rationally provide an explanation of the reason for rescheduling the sports event, most of your colleagues will consider it a rational reason.

- end the exploration of the emotional process with effective, rational belief that produces a more positive, energizing result. "Okay, I have a right to anger, but I will talk to everyone, we will think about what to do next, also about how to protect ourselves from such surprises in the future."

Here's a complete pattern for changing the way you think about events that can trigger negative emotions ⁴:

- A. Action (activating the event)
- B. Beliefs
- C. Consequence (reaction)
- D. Dialogue/discussion
- E. Effect

It's good to know what the real trigger is and understand it, because what we think about ourselves, what beliefs we have, what we believe in and what we don't believe in, will determine our emotional responses. Nevertheless, you always have the right to feel the way you do. Others also have the right to feel the way they feel. Accept your emotionality and the fact that you may experience negative emotions like anger, sadness or disappointment. This does not mean consenting to an uncontrolled venting of emotions or surrendering to the spiral of negativity. Accept, acknowledge, understand, don't judge (including yourself). Accepting and giving yourself the right to feel different emotions and acknowledging others' right for the same, increases the level of empathy.

⁴ Based on Rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) by Albert Ellis.

Empathy (Greek. *empathia*, suffering) – the ability to empathize, compassion.

Having the ability to empathize with other people's emotional states may not be enough to act effectively. When you cry, a friend crying with you will bring you little relief. It would be better if understanding your condition, she/he would help you shake off, find positives, change your perspective. Understanding others and accurately reading unspoken thoughts or feelings determine good communication. Empathy - as one of the key competences that make up emotional intelligence - requires special approach. It is empathy that breeds altruism. Probably one of the motives behind helping other people is your compassion for those who have been less fortunate in life. It is possible that you are part of the group of people whose levels of empathy are above average. So, it would seem that in your case there is no need to spend extra time developing this competence. But ... let's look at two types of empathy:

- Emotional (affective) empathy - this is the ability to feel other people's mental states,
- Cognitive empathy - is the ability to accept their way of thinking, to look at reality from their perspective and is the opposite of egocentrism (focusing on me - my opinion, my feelings, my point of view).

Maybe you even have the impression at times that you "feel" others' emotions too much, which does not make it easier for you to act effectively (there is more primary emotional empathy than in cognitive empathy in it).⁵ Empathy is full openness to what is present in the other person; therefore by paying attention to an accurate understanding of other people's states, feelings and emotions, you develop cognitive empathy. It's cognitive empathy that makes it possible to see the world through the eyes of another person, communicate more effectively, better understand the context of the situation, and finally, it is one of the strongest inhibitors of aggression. People capable of understanding mental states are sensitive to signals from other people – to what they want and what their needs are. Empathy emerges from self-awareness - the more you are open to your own emotions, the more skilfully you can read other people's feelings. So, you have to start with yourself.

⁵ The stages of empathy development, starting from childhood, are described, among others, by Daniel Goleman in the book *Emotional Intelligence*. Already an infant recognizes the emotions of another infant crying and, feeling sad as well, begins to cry, looking for consolation in mother's arms. Older children try to console their suffering friend by bringing him, for example, their teddy bear. A one-year-old already knows that someone has been hurt, but has no idea what to do with it. At around 2 years of age, a child begins to distinguish between his own feelings and the feelings of others and becomes more sensitive to signals revealing what others are feeling. As a child grows, their empathy develops, unless, as a result of suppressing emotions (due to the environment or upbringing), progress is stopped.

NUNCHI⁶ – THE KOREAN SKILL TO READ SOCIAL EMOTIONS

Nunchi: „eye measure” or the subtle art of assessing other people's thoughts and feelings in order to build harmony, trust and connection. Practicing nunchi is nothing more than the correct reading of other people's moods and social emotions that are present in the group. It helps to achieve goals while maintaining harmony, social sensitivity, protects against the dangers of being blind and deaf to the mental states of other people (the range of threats is wide - from blundering to being excluded from the circle of friends or being exposed to the effects of emotional manipulation). The Korean school of empathy⁷ recommends inner peace (emptying the mind), the ability to listen at a deep level, as well as reading moods carefully by observing the behaviour and body language of the group.

DEVELOPING COGNITIVE EMPATHY

In general, people judge others by their behaviour, while their own actions by their own intentions. Can you see the incoherence and the trap? You never know exactly what the other person is feeling, her/his intentions are not always clear to you, but you can try to understand it by being open-minded and not imposing your own narrative. True empathy requires several skills:

Listening

The ability to listen at a deep level is described in the module Motivation. In the context of developing this competence, it is worth adding that empathic listening takes place at the level of intuition, non-verbal signals, sometimes your own body may signal the appearance of an emotion. For example, a friend tells you about a passed, very difficult exam, and from her voice (as if quieter) and body language (limited, with almost no gestures), you conclude that she is not happy, and you notice a burden somewhere around your neck, similar to the one, which occurs when you feel depressed. After that, it turns out that my friend's joy from the exam was killed when she heard about her beloved grandmother's illness. Does it sound familiar?

Showing that you are listening

Nodding and saying "oh" every now and then isn't proof of listening carefully. At least not the only proof one and not in every situation. Haven't you ever had someone nodding his/her head, saying

⁶ Euny Hong, *The Power of Nunchi. The Korean Secret to Happiness and Success*. Penguin Books, Limited, 2021.

⁷ Although in the above book the author, comparing empathy with nunchi, argues about the superiority of the Korean approach, it is worth noting that the examples of the so-called "Good nunchi" is in fact about a high level of cognitive empathy.

"right", "really?" or "I see" but you had the feeling that this person's thoughts were in a completely different place. That happens often.

Evidence that you are listening carefully is skills such as reflection, paraphrasing, and clarification. Using them will make your interlocutor feel that you are interested in the other person and it will also allow you to make sure that you understand this person well (do you remember one of the principles of effective action? First try to understand and then be understood). Remember: one of the greatest human needs - when a person is no longer hungry and has a roof over his/her head - is to be heard. In particular, it may concern your pupils, who generally don't feel safe in their lives.

THREE SKILLS OF CAREFUL LISTENING

Reflecting - it's verbalizing with your own words what you think the interlocutor feels. It allows for empathic understanding of her/his emotions and mental states.

Examples of reflecting:

- I understand that you are upset about changing your duty schedule as it forces you to reschedule other activities ...
- I can see your sadness and I think I understand your condition ...
- You are glad that your sister will visit you for a few days, but at the same time you are worried that you may not be able to finish the project by her arrival. Do I understand your dilemma correctly?

Paraphrase - by repeating key phrases at the same time you can make sure that you understand the message well. Make sure this is a paraphrase and not a far-reaching interpretation.

Examples of paraphrases:

- You feel overwhelmed by the excess of responsibilities ...
- As far as I understand, you care about ...
- It seems that you are worried whether you will manage this difficult task ...
- However, you will not say "you think you can't do it" or "I see you should let it go" etc. This is (unwanted) advice, an interpretation, not a paraphrase.

Clarification - focuses attention on the most important aspects, getting to the heart of the matter. A very useful skill when the interlocutor talks about various topics and you feel that there is a need to bring out what is most important.

Examples of clarification:

- You were talking about A, B and C - which one is the most important?
- In other words, the point is that ...
- When you say X, what exactly do you mean?

Feelings and emotional states can be revealed on different levels. They can be:

- verbalised and recognized by both sides of the conversation. A person speaks/communicates her/his feelings verbally and at the same time confirms the feelings with a non-verbal message, and the other person fully understands them. In such an interaction, the signal words that carry the emotional charge should not escape attention: frustrated, stressed,

angry, etc. This is a good opportunity to name emotions, look at them, at the same time disarming an emotional bomb;

- not verbalised but readable for the interlocutor. Here, communication takes place on a non-verbal level: body posture, voice strength and timbre, voice trembling, or characteristic gestures - over-expressive or not present at all. Such a situation is an opportunity to apply reflection or showing understanding: "You seem off balance. What happened?"
- not understood, seen or expressed by the interlocutor him-/herself, but the listener seems to feel what is going on. In this situation, however, you need to be gentle and sensitive, reflecting more what you see than what you feel, because you may not understand what you are asking. So instead of saying, "I can see that you are feeling down," say; "When you talk about it, I've noticed that you were slouching and you talked much more quietly, what's going on?"

M2.S3. SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

From the previous chapters, you can already see a cardinal principle that also works for social intelligence - to influence others and manage social relationships; you need empathy and an understanding of social connections. The awareness of situations and the invisible “emotional threads” tightened and loosened between people in a given space allows us to understand the dynamics of the relationships that are formed here and now. Someone who bursts into the room with a joke without noticing the gloomy mood of those present (which must have been the obvious consequence of discussing a difficult situation or spreading bad news just before) is not only deaf to obvious social signals, but also risks being considered rude or insensitive. Every human interaction takes place in some social context.

A well-calibrated social radar protects against similar "clumsy entrances" and allows you to quickly adapt to the current situation. Social intelligence is the art of coexistence with others, expressed in being well informed about "what is going on".

When a volunteer enters an organisation, he/she finds the social context, which is the product of relationships between people, both current and those resulting from previous interactions. Therefore, she/he should remember the following: firstly, she/he affects this system, secondly, at the beginning, he/she always disturbs it, and thirdly, she/he will depend on her/his social intelligence what impact he/she will ultimately have: creative, inspiring or destructive.

The measure of social intelligence is having a positive impact on others, inspiring and caring for their development. A socially intelligent person is able to initiate and coordinate the efforts of the group, shows mediator's talent and the ability to prevent conflicts, easily establishes contacts (thanks to empathy and nunchi), can build an atmosphere of mutual understanding. This looks like a recipe for social and public success, so again the question arises - can it be learned? And if so - where to start? The answer is: from the basics, that is, from self-awareness. You won't take a step further until you understand and manage your own emotions.

Know thyself and you shall know the universe (Socrates)

DEVELOPING SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

You have an interview in the organisation where you are to work. You enter the room and notice that two people are talking to each other. They are a woman and a man. They stand facing each other, talking friendly. The man has his hands lowered; the woman is placing hers on her hips. Who is the boss? You will probably answer this question correctly (it is a woman, as indicated by her body language), but interpreting the relations is not always so easy and obvious. To develop your abilities in this field, perform the following exercises regularly.

1. When entering a room, try to guess the moods and emotions of the people there before you speak. Are they in groups or each separately? Are they gathered around a certain person? Do they keep their distance, touch each other, are they smiling, sad, worried? What's the atmosphere like?

2. Turn off the voice on the TV and try to guess what the story is about, what emotions accompany the characters and what the relations are between them (you can also watch TV from a country the language of which you don't know at all).
3. Learn to use silence. Refrain from telling your own story. Just listen.
4. When you pass people on the street, on the subway, public transport or, for example, in a shopping centre, take your eyes off your smartphone and watch people. Try to guess what they have in common. What does their body language, facial expressions say? What is the relationship between people standing together in a larger group?
5. When you attend a meeting, observe where each person is sitting. Who is talking loudly? Who stands aside and speaks little? What are the relationships between people? Who likes whom and who probably doesn't like whom? How do individuals react to each other - what do their behaviour, gestures, body language, words say? What words do they use most often? Positive, negative, provocative? Who is forcing his/her opinion on others, and who do you think is charismatic? How do you know it?
6. Observe people who are pleasant and attract attention. What are they doing? What words do they use? What gestures do they make, what does their body language say? What reactions of others dominate in contact with such persons?
7. Observe people who, on the contrary, push others away. What do they do? What words do they use? What gestures do they make, what does their body language say? What reactions of others dominate in contact with such a person? After doing these two exercises, make a list of behaviours and words that will attract and repel other people.
8. When you happen to witness an argument or conflict, try to understand what values are behind the needs and behaviour of these people. What words or behaviours made it difficult to resolve the conflict?
9. When do you feel inspired? Write down a list of the signals that constructed this feeling. Which of these inspiring factors do you find universal?
10. Imagine a very closed person whose emotions are inscrutable. What can you say, do, what to ask to make this person feel confident and want to interact with you?

HOW CAN THE PUPILS OF A VOLUNTEER BENEFIT FROM HIS/HER EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

Reaching a certain level of emotional intelligence will make you start to see opportunities for your pupils to develop these competences. When you feel confident in naming emotions, practice this skill with your pupil by proposing stories, metaphors, reading books. Also teach him/her to recognize that his/her emotional response to the stimulus is a secondary response to important needs. In the course of emotional development, all children experience problems with peers, but those who have had difficult experiences in the past are particularly affected. Teaching pupils to deal with emotions, to develop friendly contacts with peers, to be empathetic and to control impulses is a particular challenge and generally requires close cooperation with a psychotherapist. When helping your pupil developing emotional competences, consult a specialist. You can try the six-step method⁸ on yourself, and if your pupil is 9-10 years old, teach him/her how to use it:

Red light

Stop, calm down, and think before you do anything

Say what the problem is and how you feel

Yellow light

Set a positive goal for yourself

Think about various solutions

Think about consequences in advance

Green light

Get down to act according to the best plan

⁸ The method of working with primary school children in the programme New Haven, described by Daniel Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence*.

RECOMMENDED METHODS AND TOOLS

1. Emotional monitoring – exercise for individual work
2. Self test of emotional intelligence

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