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## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CAF LEADERS

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**JCSP 46**

### Service Paper

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 46 – PCEMI 46  
2019 – 2020

SERVICE PAPER - ÉTUDE MILITAIRE

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CAF LEADERS**

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Word Count: 2,212

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# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR CAF LEADERS

## AIM

1. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) does not have an official Emotional Intelligence (EI) awareness or training program for its leaders. The aim of this service paper is to demonstrate the importance of EI for CAF leaders and makes recommendations to include: EI focused testing implementation for all Officer candidates at the recruiting center and that further analysis needs to be conducted on how EI awareness and training can be incorporated in Officer and Non-Commissioned Member (NCM) developmental periods (DP). It will also provide an example of when such training could be incorporated during respective DPs.

## INTRODUCTION

2. For a very long time employers believed, and some still do, that Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was a great predictor of leadership abilities.<sup>1</sup> However, researchers such as Daniel Goleman and Steven J. Stein, have argued that leaders who are aware of their own emotions and their impact on those around them can determine one's abilities and effectiveness as a leader. For them, emotional intelligence is about emotions, and how these can be applied to life's tasks.<sup>2</sup> EI can be defined as the ability to understand emotions, be able to express them, use emotions to facilitate thinking and effectively manage emotions within oneself and when dealing with others.<sup>3</sup>

3. There are four dimensions to EI: self-awareness, emotional management, self-motivation and self-management skills.<sup>4</sup> Each of these dimensions, or domains, play a role in whether an individual is aware of his/her own emotions, what impact do these emotions have on others, how they can be managed all in an effort to become more effective. There is a significant benefit to having CAF leaders being aware of their emotions in order to become more effective leaders. This service paper will explore the subject of EI, benefits of it for CAF leaders, and examine the risks and the impact to the CAF when its leaders do not have high EI.

## DISCUSSION

4. Currently, the CAF does not provide EI awareness or training to its NCMs and Officers during any DP. Any exposure to it varies from individual to individual, as well as from one Chain of Command (CoC) to another. If members do receive exposure to EI, it would be at a unit or individual level, and only if the CoC believes in it, has knowledge of it, and knows how to effectively practice it. Considering that EI is still not widely recognized as a predictor of leadership abilities, even though it has been researched for

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<sup>1</sup> Stein, Steven J., *The EQ Leader: Instilling Passion, Creating Shared Goals, and Building Meaningful Organizations through Emotional Intelligence* (2017), 95.

<sup>2</sup> Northouse, Peter G., *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (SAGE Publications, 2019), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Emma K. Daffey-Moore, "Is Emotional Intelligence relevant to a Fighting Force?" *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, Suppl 1 (2015): i14.

over 20 years, CAF leaders are left to navigate themselves through this field on their own often through trial and error. Being left alone to navigate through the stressful and demanding military environment, sometimes with little to no coaching and mentoring from their supervisors, creates a risk of having a poor team cohesion and, in some cases, poisonous working environments.

5. CAF leadership doctrine defines leadership as an indirect or direct influence of others by means of formal authority or personal attributes to act in accordance with one's intent and common purpose.<sup>5</sup> It further speaks to the leader's characteristics, and the importance of leaders being able to have solid interpersonal skills which include communication, persuasion, and conflict management skills. Leaders in the CAF need to have openness to experiences, flexibility of thought and behaviour as well as self assurance. By virtue of their position and the environment they work in and with whom, leaders in a strategic role also require to have the ability to communicate not only in the military context but also being able to manage multi-level relationships outside the CAF.<sup>6</sup> All of the leader characteristics identified in the doctrine are part of EI, however there is no reference made to EI and how it can help leaders to achieve superior leader characteristics. Considering that the doctrine does not recognize EI nor does it define it or identify the benefits for the CAF leaders to be aware of their emotions, it is not surprising then that the CAF training of Officers and NCM does not address it either.

6. Leadership training for both NCMs and Officers does not formally introduce or cover EI during any of the respective DPs. However, the CAF does conduct 360-degree leadership assessment for its Officers during the Joint Command and Staff Programme. During the Programme, all students are required to conduct a self survey and have the opportunity to receive the feedback from the survey taken by their supervisors, subordinate and peers. The results of the survey would be shared with the student along with the recommendations as to how they could better themselves. It is then on the individual student to provide their own action plan as to how they would achieve the goals set out in their action plan. Unfortunately, the survey falls short as the feedback is limited as it is provided only for the first part of the program with no further follow up on the Officer progress or opportunities for further mentoring. This initiative is not complete as, again, it is left to the individual leaders to seek ways to figure out how to better themselves.

7. The Canada School of Public Service, however, offers an online course for Public Servants and CAF members on EI consisting of theory and limited scenario-based exercises. Since it is an online, self-paced and self-directed course, this training too falls short as there is no formal coaching or mentoring conducted between the student and a qualified professional during the online training. In addition, there is no known follow up or mentoring occurring once the training is completed. Again, individuals are left to figure out on their own what they should do to better their EI so they can become better leaders.

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<sup>5</sup> Government of Canada, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine* (Canadian Defence Academy, 2005), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 19.

8. Recent CAF initiatives have included a form of EQ testing to measure leader's self-perceived emotional intelligence. It is currently a 'pilot' project and involves several CAF Officers as test subjects. This project is not widely known to the greater CAF at this time and is limited to selected few.<sup>7</sup> Until this project becomes widely known, or more people are involved, EI awareness and training will remain unknown to the rest of the CAF.

#### **Risks of not having EI awareness.**

9. Lack of EI awareness or training can lead to misinterpretation of orders, poor discipline and morale. Some research suggests that lack of EI in military leaders results in poor development of constructive relationship with their subordinates.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, lack of EI affects all members of the organisation as some leaders may not be able to effectively express themselves to their subordinates, which can lead to unclear direction as well as lack of interest in their subordinates or the organization. At times leaders are not always provided a feedback on how they communicate, leaving them often unaware of the impact they have on their organization. Furthermore, due to the rank structure in the military, subordinates do not always express their concerns to the Chain of Command, which can result in poor morale and poisonous working environment.<sup>9</sup> This can lead to increased instances of misunderstanding, lack of clear direction, frustration on both the leader and those being lead and in some cases, greater risk for harassment complaints.

#### **Benefits of having EI awareness and training.**

10. EI training and awareness programs provide many benefits for CAF leaders. For instance, professor of psychology at the Rice University, Jennifer George, argues that there are five key elements that emotionally intelligent leaders do:

- a. They *develop collective goals and objectives* – they are able to determine where each person on their team is in terms of their strengths and weaknesses and helps them to develop and work toward achieving the common goal;
- b. These leaders *instill in their team members the importance of work activities by giving meaning to the tasks and relating all the tasks to the bigger picture*. They provide their subordinates the reasons why they do what they do, they take time to explain the tasks and listen to concerns;
- c. They *generate and maintain enthusiasm, confidence, optimism, cooperation and trust* through not only their own emotions to affect passion by also believing in their subordinates' abilities and by being optimistic;

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Hare, email conversation with the author, 25 October 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Emma K. Daffey-Moore, "Is Emotional Intelligence relevant to a Fighting Force?" *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, Suppl 1 (2015): i15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, i15.

d. They *encourage flexibility in decision making* by letting their subordinates know what outcomes are sought and let the subordinates figure out the path to achieve this. This will also permit for creativity when developing solutions and allow the subordinates to be within the solutions and decision-making cycles; and

e. EI leaders are able to *establish and maintain a meaningful identity* that is clear not only to those within the team or the organization but also to those outside it. This further instills pride and sense of belonging which further deepens trust.<sup>10</sup>

11. A leader's level of EI directly impacts their subordinates' commitment to the organisation – the higher levels of EI the leader has the greater the commitment by the subordinates.<sup>11</sup> Considering that leaders with high EI are able to generate enthusiasm, confidence, flexibility of in decision making and trust, for the CAF this could mean that a greater number of its members are retained longer. Furthermore, leaders with greater EI are also able to control their own emotions during stressful times, crisis, difficult problems or dilemmas. They are able to communicate effectively and resolve conflict effectively when it arises.

### **How can EI be assessed?**

12. There are a few tests that can be conducted to assess one's level of EI. Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) examines the degree to which EI predicts leadership performance over and above the IQ measures.<sup>12</sup> Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) is another test that measures emotional strengths which help predict performance and resilience. It includes modules such as Self-Perception, Self-Expression, Interpersonal, Decision making, and Stress Management.<sup>13</sup> Although each test takes a different approach to assessing EI in leaders, they are nonetheless, great tests to start to assess CAF leaders both at the initial (recruit) stage, as well as during later stages of the member's career.

### **Can EI be learned?**

13. According to Daniel Goleman and Steven J. Stein, EI can be learned. Providing EI awareness and training during the DP for both NCMs and Officers would set the CAF leaders for success. They would be best prepared to deal with demanding and stressful military environment both at home and abroad.

14. Through the taking of the tests identified above to establish a baseline, subsequent coaching and mentoring by trained professionals, one can learn to be a better CAF EI leader. Considering that these tests are often administered by private companies outside of the CAF, it needs to be noted that the initial cost for the conduct of these tests and

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<sup>10</sup> Stein, Steven J., *The EQ Leader: Instilling Passion, Creating Shared Goals, and Building Meaningful Organizations through Emotional Intelligence* (2017),174.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.,118.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.,115.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.,123.

subsequent mentoring may be high. However, it is possible that the cost could be reduced in the long run, as more CAF leaders trained in EI would be able to effectively mentor the next generation of leaders in this domain.

## **CONCLUSION**

15. CAF Leadership Doctrine states that CAF leaders need to have certain characteristics to be successful. CAF leaders can sometimes be left alone to navigate through the military environment which can often be stressful and demanding on themselves and the teams they are leading. Without appropriate training and mentoring in how to deal with these leadership challenges, leaders are left to learn through trial-and-error. This can pose a risk to the morale and commitment of those in the organizations. Leadership success hinges on an individual's ability to control their emotions and be able to see these in others. As seen throughout this paper, there are many benefits of introducing EI awareness and training at various DPs including: developing greater self-awareness, clearer direction, more effective decision making; strengthening of command relationships, greater unit cohesion and morale, and even reduce instances of harassment. By raising the awareness and training of EI to CAF leaders, both NCM and Officers will be better positioned to deal with variety of challenges that the CAF continues to face and may be facing in the future.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

16. Considering the aforementioned benefits and importance of the emotional intelligence, it is recommended that CAF considers incorporating EI testing at the recruiting centers for all Officer-candidates. This will allow the CAF to determine in advance those recruits with high EI and who could potentially be invested in throughout their career for greater institutional positions.

17. It is also recommended that further analysis is required on how EI can be incorporated in both NCM and Officer DP in order to prepare them for their leadership roles. Recommendations below are but a few examples of how this can be done both at the unit level as well as during member's developmental periods. For instance:

a. Non-Commissioned Members (NCM). During the Primary Leadership Qualification for all NCMs, EI awareness could be introduced in a lecture format followed by real life scenarios. The lessons taught could be re-emphasised by member's unit CoC during regular unit Professional Development (PD) events. In each subsequent DP, training would include progressively rank-tailored instruction.

b. Officers. As Officers are expected to lead from day one of their career, Officer EI training would take place as early as DP 1. During the initial Officer training, candidates would be introduced to EI and what it means for Officers. Lessons would be re-enforced throughout their developmental period as a Lieutenant/Sub-Lieutenant in their home unit. Each subsequent DP could include a more complex level of EI training within the curriculum appropriate to that DP.



18. As CAF continues to prepare its leaders for leadership challenges of tomorrow, incorporating emotional intelligence in leader development will only benefit its leaders to effectively overcome these challenges.

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