

Podcast series

Leadership in Focus

Episode 10 – Self-awareness and your school leadership

Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on self-awareness, its importance to school leadership, why it is a challenge and how we can develop it.

Podcast duration: 26 mins

[SLI Leadership in Focus Podcast Series](#)

Speakers

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Dr Sharon Tindall-Ford: Associate Professor of Educational Psychology in the School of Education at the University of Wollongong

How to use this discussion guide

This discussion guide is designed to be used in conjunction with Episode 10 of the Leadership in Focus podcast series recording, as a tool for individual reflection and for use with leadership teams. It is recommended that the podcast is heard in its entirety prior to reflection and discussion.

Discussion points

For individuals

- What is meant by the term social and emotional intelligence?
- Why is it important to strengthen social and emotional intelligence?
- In what ways is social and emotional intelligence connected to seeking and acting upon feedback?
- As a leader, what behaviours and actions would others see in you when you are demonstrating strong social and emotional intelligence?

- As a leader, what strategies might you use to strengthen your social and emotional intelligence?
- Dr Tindall-Ford recommends that school leaders need to be intentional about reflecting on the way they think, feel and act to develop self-awareness. What specific actions might you adopt to build this practice of self-reflection into your leadership?
- In what ways do you demonstrate a curious and courageous mindset in your leadership?

For teams

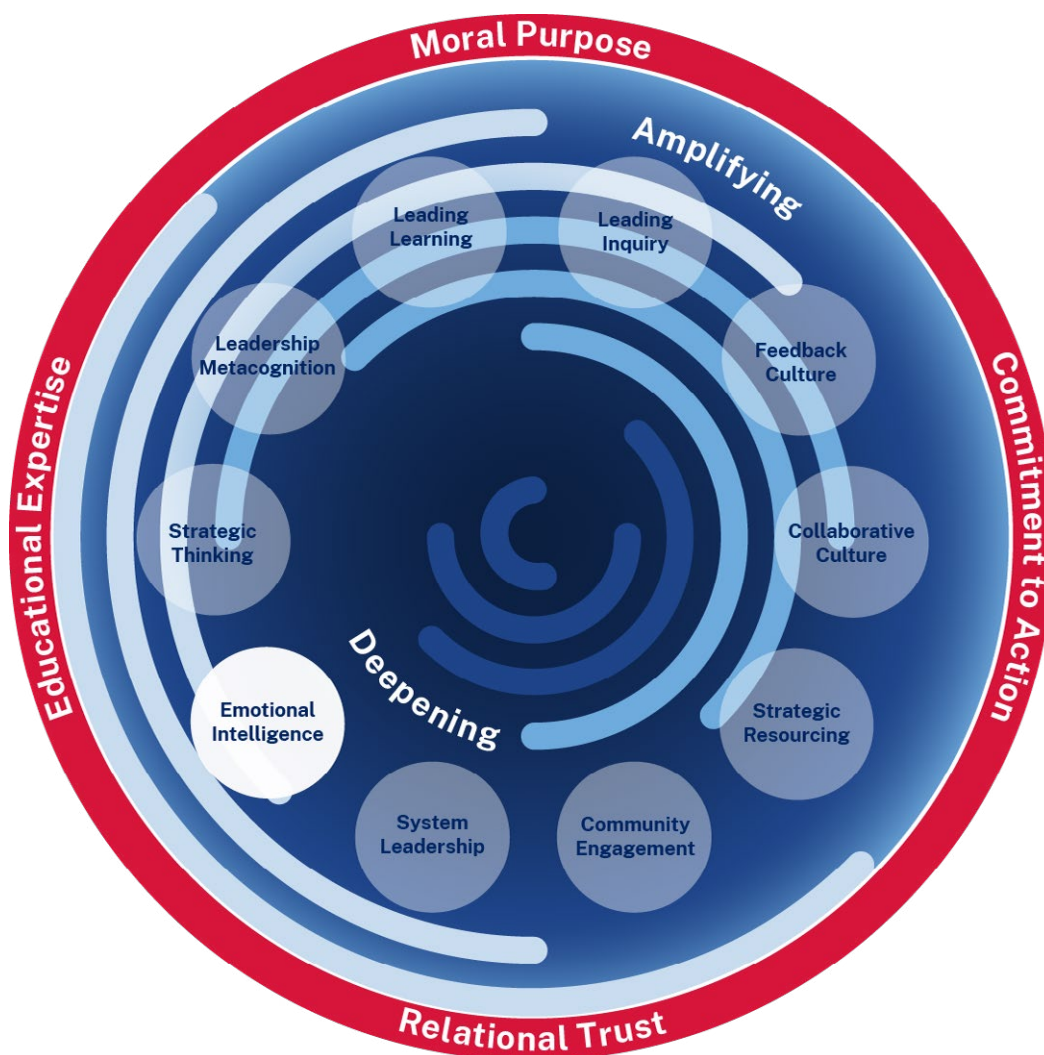
- What is meant by the term social and emotional intelligence?
- Why is it important to strengthen social and emotional intelligence?
- In what ways is social and emotional intelligence connected to seeking and acting upon feedback?
- Dr Tindall-Ford acknowledges the emotional nature of school leadership and the need for school leaders to not only understand and manage their own emotions but also manage the emotions of others. How can individuals in teams contribute to a culture where strong social and emotional intelligence is evident within the practices of the team?
- Dr Tindall-Ford highlights the importance of language and body language and its connection to leading and managing change well. What do you observe about the team within which you work or lead in relation to this concept? How might you be more cognisant of language to enable a stronger positive team environment?
- Define the term 'mood contagion'. What do you observe about your own behaviour and the behaviours of others when you and your colleagues catch the positive and/or negative emotions of others?

- g. What behaviours and practices would your team demonstrate if collectively, they were socially and emotionally aware? What protocols could you put in place to strengthen this aspect of team culture in your setting?
- h. What would others observe about your team culture when you are demonstrating a curious and courageous mindset?
- i. Dr Tindall-Ford highlighted some specific strategies that school leaders can use to strengthen and continually develop their self-awareness, including getting honest feedback from a range of colleagues; unpacking the results of a 360 survey with a critical friend, a mentor, or a coach; and internal strategies such as meditation, journaling, and mindfulness. Consider how you would strengthen this aspect of your leadership.
- j. Dr Tindall-Ford discussed the importance of using 'what' over 'why' questions. She argued that 'what questions' help us to learn from successes, failures and what moves us forward, whereas 'why

questions' move us backwards into rumination about why things happened. She argues by asking 'what questions' rather than 'why questions', we can rewire our brain and focus on the future rather than the past and therefore develop. As a leader, how can you embed a practice of using questions to keep the team moving in a positive direction?

Additional Resources

To learn more about what the research tells us about emotional intelligence, refer the [Principal Leadership Learning Resource](#) for additional professional learning.



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