



# UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

LEVEL 3 PROJECT





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Introduction
3	Your Assignment
4	Assess Your Skills
5	Competencies
5	The Importance of Emotional Intelligence
6	Understanding and Defining Emotions
7	Self-awareness
8	Self-regulation
9	Empathy
10	Motivation
11	Social Skills
11	Strengthen Your Emotional Intelligence
17	Review and Apply
17	Complete Your Assignment
18	Resources

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# INTRODUCTION



Effective communicators are adept at perceiving the emotions of the people around them. They also tend to have a high level of self-awareness. Both the ability to recognize the emotions of others and a strong understanding of your own emotions are important components of emotional intelligence. One of the most valuable skills you can develop in order to be an effective leader and communicator is your emotional intelligence.

In this project, you will learn the primary elements of emotional intelligence. You will learn how to assess your emotions honestly, appropriately express your emotions, understand the importance of optimism in relation to motivation, and use techniques for increasing empathy.

# YOUR ASSIGNMENT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to cultivate an understanding of how your emotions impact your relationships. It is also designed to help you identify how others' emotions impact your emotional state.

**Overview:** For a minimum of two weeks, keep a journal about your emotions and how they impact you and others. Discuss the impact of tracking your emotions in a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting. *(Note: You are not required to share the intimacies of your experience.)* Finally, submit the signed Project Completion Form on page 23 to your vice president education to indicate you completed your journal.

**For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 18.**

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Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



**Video:** Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



**Interactive Activity:** Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



**Resource:** Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.

# ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.



Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

**5**  
EXEMPLARY

**4**  
EXCEL

**3**  
ACCOMPLISHED

**2**  
EMERGING

**1**  
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I can identify my emotions.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I know how to appropriately express my emotions.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I know what motivates me.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I can recognize and respond to others' emotions.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

# COMPETENCIES

**The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.**

- Learn the primary elements of emotional intelligence.
- Assess your emotions honestly.
- Determine how to appropriately express your emotions.
- Display understanding of the importance of optimism in relation to motivation.
- Discover techniques for increasing empathy.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is your ability to understand and manage your feelings and to self-motivate. It also requires the ability to discern how others feel and respond to their emotions appropriately.

By improving your emotional intelligence, you can communicate more effectively and develop meaningful relationships.

People with high emotional intelligence typically exhibit a particular set of behaviors. These individuals are quicker to recover from unhappy experiences. They are generally less vulnerable to anxiety and are able to channel negative emotions in a positive way.

High emotional intelligence can also result in improved impulse control, abstract reasoning, long-term planning, and working memory.

Emotional intelligence can be broken down into five elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Through evaluation of your emotions, you can begin managing your emotions.

# UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING EMOTIONS



## PRIMARY EMOTIONS

Primary emotions are felt first. The emotions most often considered primary are fear, sadness, surprise, and happiness.

An example of a primary emotional response is the fear an individual feels when confronted with a situation in which he is startled or threatened. The primary response of sadness is most often felt when a person hears news of a death or other tragic event. These initial responses cannot be controlled. They are evolutionary and experienced by everyone regardless of cultural experience.

Often, after a short burst of the primary emotion, feelings change, soften, or evolve into something else.

## SECONDARY EMOTIONS

Secondary emotions are feelings that grow from, or combine with, the initial or primary emotions. There is a vast list of secondary emotions. Some of those are anger, frustration, disappointment, humor, contentment, or excitement. The primary emotions can also be secondary emotions.

For example, when startled by a friend, a person's first response is likely to be the primary emotion of fear, followed closely by another primary emotion—happiness.

Each individual has the ability to control, or mitigate, secondary emotions.



# SELF-AWARENESS

The value of understanding both primary and secondary emotions is knowing how emotional responses affect you as an individual. Recognizing what you can control, or change, and what you are unable to alter is an important step in developing emotional intelligence. This type of recognition is also a primary component of self-awareness.

## RECOGNIZE YOUR EMOTIONS

Leading often involves working in challenging situations and with individuals who respond in a way you do not expect. In order to be an effective leader, you must recognize your emotional responses and understand why you are reacting in a particular way. Understanding your own responses will help you to recognize and understand the emotional responses of the people around you.

## DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is learned. Some individuals learn early in life how they will respond in a given situation. They understand the reasons for their responses and how their emotions will affect their environment. Others have to make a conscious effort to develop the ability later in life. Every leader can benefit from evaluating and developing their self-awareness.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSES

Self-awareness can be developed and bolstered by reviewing your feelings at regular intervals over the course of several days. The first step is to recognize and name the emotion as you experience it. The next step is to identify the reason for your response. It is not uncommon for people to go through a day feeling frustrated or overwhelmed without ever stopping to identify the reason or reasons for the feelings. By being aware of your responses, you can build an understanding of the skills you need to develop.

If you find that you often feel frustrated before you walk into meetings, it is likely that you will lead your team with less patience and appreciation for their efforts. By recognizing your frustration and taking a few moments to understand why you feel the way you do, you can likely mitigate the feelings before you interact with others, thereby improving your meetings and your leadership.

## SELF-REGULATION

From the development of self-awareness, individuals are prepared to check and change their response patterns by self-regulating. Self-regulation is the process of evaluating your emotions and managing or channeling them in a productive way. In the previous example, by checking emotions before entering a meeting, identifying frustration as the pervasive emotion, and deciphering the root cause of the frustration, you can regulate your response and choose to interact with your team in an effective and positive way.



Self-regulation manifests in the ability to choose responses carefully regardless of the situation. Though it is impossible to stop a primary emotional response, such as fear, individuals are able to check and adjust their secondary responses.

For example, if a person is startled by a team member, the initial response is likely fear. The secondary response might be anger if the act of startling was purposeful. By checking and adjusting the secondary response of anger, the startled person can communicate effectively without creating a time-consuming confrontation with the team member.

The individual might choose to set aside her anger and appreciate the team member's attempt at humor, then communicate her preference not to be startled. This type of communication can be made immediately or at a later time. This response is more direct and effective than reacting with anger.

By avoiding the impulsive response of anger, this leader is able to maintain a positive demeanor, communicate effectively with a team member, and avoid going off task by engaging in a confrontation.

When leaders are competent at regulating their own responses, they are more likely to recognize and understand emotions in others.

# EMPATHY

Empathy is more than the ability to recognize emotion in others; it requires understanding the impact of emotions on the person experiencing them. At the core of empathy is knowing what it would be like to feel the same way, or experience the same emotions as someone else.

In the previous example, the person who attempted humor by startling another would show empathy by listening when the startled individual expresses the desire to never to be startled again. He would then honor the request by refraining from similar behavior in the future. An individual with a lack of empathy would continue to behave in the same way regardless of the impact on others.

The value of empathy is in developing relationships that are based on trust. Leaders with a high level of empathy are often seen as more trustworthy than those whose ability to empathize is not as strong.

Take a moment to recall the leaders you have worked with that induced the highest level of support from the people they led. List the reasons you were willing to follow and support those leaders. Even if you didn't place empathy at the top of your list, you probably included listening, responsiveness, positive feedback, and support, all of which require a leader to be empathetic.

## ANTICIPATE NEEDS

Successful leaders are able to anticipate and recognize other's needs, as well as assist them in getting those needs met. Some needs are practical, like workload and time management. Others are less tangible and could include requirements like a sense of fulfillment, camaraderie with team members, and the desire to learn new skills. All of these needs are important and add value to a team member's experience.

Understanding the needs, desires, and skills of the people you lead will help you build a strong, cohesive team that successfully accomplishes goals.

# MOTIVATION



**There are two types of motivation every leader must consider.**

- Intrinsic motivation is the ability to set clear personal goals and accomplish them without external motivating factors.
- Extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from outside the individual. For a leader, this is the ability to establish goals for and with team members and encourage them to accomplish the goals you have set.
- Both types of motivation require an understanding of what motivates the individuals involved and a positive attitude.

## INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Personal motivation has its own challenges and relies heavily on your knowledge of yourself. Self-knowledge is a part of emotional intelligence, but there are many people who successfully set and fulfill personal goals without a high level of emotional intelligence.

## EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Motivating others requires a broader set of skills. Setting goals and motivating team members to accomplish them calls for the ability to recognize the skills, needs, and ambitions of the people on your team. It also demands an understanding of what motivates the individuals involved, both internally and externally, and the rewards that appeal to them.

The higher a leader's emotional intelligence, the easier it will be for her to identify motivating factors specific to each individual as well as the team as a whole.

## SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skills enhance the possibility of strengthening bonds and nurturing relationships that are critical to success. Developing a high level of emotional intelligence makes building social skills easier. For a person with strong social skills, continuing to improve emotional intelligence deepens his or her understanding of individual responses and group dynamics.

### GROUP DYNAMICS

For most leaders, the dynamics of a group play an important role in their success. A leader's success is assured through her selection of team members based on their skills, their ability to work together, their personalities, and her understanding of the way the individuals are motivated. Excellent social skills allow a leader to facilitate collaboration and cooperation, as well as lead team members toward goals.

Strong social skills are imperative inside and outside a leader's sphere of influence. Though team building is important, effectively communicating with individuals outside of the team environment is also critical. By developing excellent social skills, a leader can appropriately interact with all types of people, even when the situation is less than ideal.

## STRENGTHEN YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

All of the components of emotional intelligence contribute to a leader's ability to address and manage conflict, resolve disagreements through negotiation, exercise influence appropriately, and effectively persuade others.

Emotional intelligence can be deepened and strengthened with time and effort. Building the skills that contribute to emotional intelligence can improve relationships in all areas of your life. There are several steps you can take to focus your skills.

### SELF-EVALUATION

Self-awareness requires a deep understanding of your emotions, strengths, challenges, values, and goals. Self-evaluation is the process of strengthening your self-awareness.

This type of evaluation is about understanding, and adjusting when necessary, not criticizing. In order to be self-aware, a leader needs to understand his or her own responses and choices in complex situations.

## UNDERSTAND YOUR RESPONSES

Reviewing and keeping a record of your feelings and responses on a regular basis can help you identify patterns.

Always begin by noting what went well in any situation. Just like a speech evaluation, self-evaluation is about growth, and focusing efforts, not judgment or ridicule.

Once you have noted what went well, how you felt, and how you responded, identify places where you would like to make changes.

Make a note to focus on certain behaviors, like listening, as you move through your day. Note the times when you were able to concentrate on what was being said to you, how you could respond in an active way, and the results of the effort.

Once you improve your ability to listen, you may discover that you need to concentrate on another emotional intelligence skill, such as following through when you make a commitment to act.

In this way you can identify your strengths and reveal the skills you need to develop. You will most likely find that you circle through the process, focusing on skills again and again as you develop and improve them.

## PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO CHALLENGES

Most leaders find it is easier to self-evaluate when interactions went well or were managed well. The real challenge is in understanding how and why circumstances went awry. As with any type of interaction, look at what went well first. Follow up by identifying your strongest reactions and their impact on the situation. In a stressful situation, understanding what you said or did is only the beginning.

### Response

When you feel challenged by a situation, consider your physical responses (tightness in muscles, shallow breathing) and when those responses began during the interaction. Identify what caused the initial response. Look to:

- The physical environment
- People
- Unrelated challenges like arriving late or dealing with a difficult schedule

### Cause

During a stressful interaction, take time to evaluate your responses. Look to find the root of your feelings. Take note of the immediate circumstances when you began to feel:

- Withdrawn or depressed
- A lack of energy or procrastination
- Angry

### Outcome

Regardless of how challenged you feel by a particular interaction, there is always something to learn or understand. There are times when a negative response, such as anger, leads to a positive outcome, such as engaging in a conversation you would have avoided or motivating a needed change. It is important to note this type of response and result as well.

## RECOGNIZE AND CONTROL EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

A trigger is defined as an event or situation that causes something else to happen or exist. For example, anger can lead to a higher level of motivation. In that case, anger is the trigger that leads to higher motivation. You can identify your triggers by evaluating the times you think something like:

*Every time I arrive late, I have a terrible meeting.*

Arriving late is a trigger for not performing as well in meetings.

Often triggers are identified as negative, but they can also be a positive force. In understanding that when you arrive on time or early you have a better experience, you are identifying one trigger with a positive result.



Leaders cannot control every facet of a situation. Even with a powerful effort to avoid events or circumstances that cause a negative response, it can't always be done. The goal is to understand negative triggers and mitigate the response.

When faced with an environment or situation that triggers a negative response, use the following techniques.

### **Relax**

Breathe and release the tension in your body.

### **Detach**

Separate your feelings from the situation as much as possible.

### **Center**

Drop your awareness to the center of your body and feel yourself breathe.

### **Focus**

Choose a keyword that represents how you want to feel or who you want to be in that moment. Repeat it.

If you are in a stressful state, evaluate what you need from the situation. Recognize what you can change. If there is nothing you can change, move on. In the case of arriving late to a meeting, it may help to be accountable and apologize to anyone who was waiting for you. Once that is done, follow the steps to cope, such as breathing and detaching, and participate fully.



There is little value in dwelling on the negative. If you focus on arriving late, it can lead to further harm because your negative emotions cause you to avoid fully engaging in the event. Once the event or situation has ended and you have time to reflect, identify what you did well and what you could improve if the same situation occurs again. Then leave the experience in the past.

## **Reframe Negative Thoughts**

Reframing is a way of altering the way you look at something to change your perception of the experience. Self-evaluation can help you reframe. After you have reviewed a negative experience, look at what went well.

Even in the worst circumstances, there are lessons of value. For example, you arrived late to the meeting. The circumstances of that were challenging and difficult. When you reflect after the event, you may realize that the experience enabled you to focus your attention on releasing stress and stop your initially negative response from affecting the rest of the meeting.

As a leader, when you understand your own triggers and how to reframe your experiences, you can then apply that understanding to leading others. Your self-awareness will make you more cognizant of others on your team and the events or circumstances that cause them to achieve below their best abilities. This understanding can also help you guide team members and recognize when you need to step in to avoid a negative situation for your team.

Helping your team members to reframe a negative experience or situation can motivate and build understanding of how to improve future events or circumstances. It can also stop a group from blaming each other when challenges are faced. By identifying even the smallest successes, it is possible to look at places where improvement is needed in a more hopeful way and make the changes necessary to build greater success in the future.

## INCREASE YOUR EMPATHY

Identifying triggers and reframing experiences can help you build a higher level of empathy. Once you understand your personal triggers, begin to watch others for theirs. Some may be the same as yours and others may be markedly different.

As you lead, pay attention to language that communicates stress in team members. Listen to their words, but also be aware of their body language. Stress responses are the same for everyone. Look for physical tension, short, shallow breaths, and other signs specific to individuals to indicate they are struggling to cope.

Consider your leadership behavior and how it will affect those around you. This type of awareness will allow you to make the best decisions for yourself and your team.

It is not possible to avoid all negativity. In other words, you cannot avoid addressing a negative experience or the ramifications of a negative event. You can choose to make that experience a point of learning for everyone on your team. It's important to be empathetic to each member's feelings and reactions to the same event.



Some basic steps to develop your empathy are:

- Practice active listening. Approach conversations with a genuine desire to understand the other person's outlook.
- Ask for clarification if you are unsure how others are feeling.
- Validate the other person's perspective. You may not agree, but you can accept their viewpoint as valid.
- Respond encouragingly to good news. Share the happiness of others.

## REVIEW AND APPLY

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- How can your own emotional intelligence impact the lives of others?
- What effect does empathy have on interpersonal communication?
- What are some tactics you can use to successfully reframe negative thoughts?
- How can you use active listening techniques to better understand the emotions of others?
- How can the skills you learned in this project influence the way you approach future Toastmasters projects?

## COMPLETE YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report.

**Review:** Return to page 3 to review your assignment.

**Organize:** Use the Project Checklist on page 18 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.



**Schedule:** Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.

**Prepare:** Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 20–22 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.



# PROJECT CHECKLIST

## Understanding Emotional Intelligence

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to cultivate an understanding of how your emotions impact your relationships. It is also designed to help you identify how others' emotions impact your emotional state.

**Overview:** For a minimum of two weeks, keep a journal about your emotions and how they impact you and others. Discuss the impact of tracking your emotions in a 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting. (*Note: You are not required to share the intimacies of your experience.*) Finally, submit the signed Project Completion Form on page 23 to your vice president education to indicate you completed your journal.

### This project includes:

- A journal you maintain for a minimum of two weeks
- The Project Completion Form
- A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

Record in a journal your emotions and emotional reactions to others for two weeks. You do not need to share your journal, but you will need to submit the Project Completion Form to the vice president education to receive credit for the project.

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Schedule your speech with the vice president education.

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Review the information you recorded. Identify the areas where your focus will bring the highest level of personal growth.

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Write a speech based on your analysis of your responses. (Remember, your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or any style that appeals to you and supports your speech.)

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Rehearse your speech.

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Submit your Project Completion Form to the vice president education on the day of your speech.

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After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

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**Additional Notes**

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# EVALUATION FORM

## Understanding Emotional Intelligence

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

**Speech Title** \_\_\_\_\_

### Purpose Statements

- The purpose of this project is for the member to cultivate an understanding of how his or her emotions impact relationships. It is also designed to help the member identify how others' emotions impact his or her emotional state.
- The purpose of this speech is for the member to share some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others.

### Notes for the Evaluator

During the completion of this project, the member spent a minimum of two weeks keeping a journal about his or her emotional responses to situations and people.

About this speech:

- The member will deliver a well-organized speech about his or her experience keeping a journal and/or will share the impact of having better awareness of his or her emotions and the emotions of others.
- The speech may be humorous, informational, or any style the member chooses. The style should be appropriate for content of the speech.
- The speech should not be a report on the content of the "Understanding Emotional Intelligence" project.

### General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

## EVALUATION FORM – Understanding Emotional Intelligence

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING	
<b>Clarity:</b> Spoken language is clear and is easily understood					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Vocal Variety:</b> Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Eye Contact:</b> Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Gestures:</b> Uses physical gestures effectively					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Audience Awareness:</b> Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Comfort Level:</b> Appears comfortable with the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Interest:</b> Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
<b>Topic:</b> Shares some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	

# EVALUATION CRITERIA

## Understanding Emotional Intelligence

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

### Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

### Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

### Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

### Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

### Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs

- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

### Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

### Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

### Topic

- 5 – Delivers an exemplary speech about some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others
- 4 – Delivers a compelling speech about some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others
- 3 – Shares some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others
- 2 – Mentions some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others
- 1 – Speaks on a topic other than some aspect of his or her experience journaling emotions or being aware of emotions when interacting with others



# PROJECT COMPLETION FORM

I completed all components of my "Understanding Emotional Intelligence" project, including the journaling assignment. This includes recording my emotions and how they impact me and others for a minimum of two weeks.

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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