

## **The Value of Relational Wisdom/Emotional Intelligence for Teachers**

**PDF with [Live Links](http://www.rw360.org/rw-benefits-for-teachers) Available at [www.rw360.org/rw-benefits-for-teachers](http://www.rw360.org/rw-benefits-for-teachers)**

### **Supporting Studies on Relational Challenges for Teachers**

The following studies describe many of the relational challenges teachers and school administrators face on a daily basis, including compassion fatigue, emotional exhaustion, moral distress, conflict with peers, administrators and parents, burnout and family disruption.

### **Scholarly Articles on EI to Reduce Teacher Stress and Burnout”**

1. [Teachers’ Burnout: The Role of Trait Emotional Intelligence and Social Support](#) : December 2019
  - This study, conducted by a group of professional psychologists, sought to analyze how “trait Emotional Intelligence” can reduce the feelings of teacher exhaustion and professional burnout. They also analyzed the effects of external and internal support systems available to teachers (colleagues and supervisors, family and friends.)
  - Summarized conclusion from the end of the study: “Our findings suggest that personal competence in the emotional domain may significantly contribute teachers’ well-being more effectively than social support itself. EI is susceptible to improvement through training programs ([Vesely et al., 2014](#)), and improved EI can help to prevent teacher burnout ([Brackett and Katulak, 2006](#)). Self-control is the most relevant dimension within teachers’ trait EI, which indicates that their ability to manage emotions in the social interactions could be a guideline for the teachers’ professional development programs.”
  - The findings state that while a good external support system is important for teachers, improving and growing in their own emotional intelligence has an even more significant positive effect on them and can significantly reduce their feelings of being burnt out.
2. [Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Burnout Syndrome on Teachers Well-Being: A Systematic Review: Multiple Authors](#): 2019
  - “Emotional Intelligence (EI) has become a key factor in educational environments, which facilitates and contributes to the mental well-being of teachers, and therefore, favors the teaching and learning process. However, education professionals are under constant stress. This stress is caused by a large number of social interactions, the new skills to be acquired, and the workload, developing in many situations the Burnout Syndrome.”
  - “Many studies show that teachers are increasingly experiencing high feelings of stress, which affect the quality of education, as well as the relevance of developing emotional intelligence, which helps prevent these negative feelings from appearing.”
  - “Conclusions: IE is a capacity that should be developed in teachers, since it gives the individual the ability to regulate his emotions, making him stronger in terms of decision-making in daily situations in teaching environments, as well as being a key factor for the success of education. Through the positive reinforcement of EI, stress and anxiety are reduced, which leads to improved teaching practice, as well as the health and mental well-being of teachers.”

3. [The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Teachers](#) : January 2019

- “Lack of EI in teachers adds to the anxiety of having to face challenges such as students who have problems at home, parents who don’t come to parent-teacher meetings, or parents who are too demanding and always as why their kids have what they consider “low” grades.”
- “The emotional management of a problematic group starts with the management of the teacher’s own emotions. Teachers don’t turn into machines when they enter the classroom, nor do they leave their emotions outside the door. They teach with their own dreams, but also with their own worries.”
- **“Teachers can really influence students, so much so that the students can benefit if their teachers change for the better.** Therefore, emotional intelligence is very important for teachers.”
- Article proceeds to go through some basic skills to improve emotional intelligence in teachers.
- Final section briefly discusses how EI helps protect teachers against stress and burnout

4. [7 Ways Emotional Intelligence Can Help Us Cope with Stress and Prevent Burnout](#) : Harvey Deutschendorf, March 2017

- “According to the American Institute for Stress, “Numerous studies show that job stress is far and away the major source of stress for American adults and that it has escalated progressively over the past few decades.” According to their statistics 80% of workers feel stress on the job and 40% of those reported that their jobs were very or extremely stressful. Half of those that reported stress indicated that they needed help in managing the stress. Three quarters of those surveyed believed that they had more stress at work than previous generations. A study carried out at the Athens University of Economics and Business at the University of Greece found that higher levels of emotional intelligence were associated with lower levels of stress in the workplace.”
- “The University of Maryland Business Administration Program has also done a great deal of work around the area of emotional intelligence and work performance. One of their conclusions is that employees with higher EI can handle pressure better and perform better even when conditions are less than ideal.”
- Here are the 7 skills the article proceeds to talk about:
  - Self-awareness: People with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more aware of their feelings, what causes them and why. This awareness allows them to recognize stressors earlier and come up with techniques for coping with them.
  - Awareness of others: The higher our emotional intelligence the more we are aware of others emotional states. This makes it less likely that we will take the stress of others and their actions personally.
  - Ability to respond rather than react: When we feel threatened, verbally attacked or any kind of threat at work our initial response is to lash out at the source of whatever it is that is causing us stress. If we don’t give in to our initial impulses we often can diffuse the situation and get to the real source of the problem.
  - Deep listening ability: Most people are too busy thinking of a response instead of listening to understand. Everyone has a need to be heard and understood. A lot of conflict and stress

at work can result from people feeling that they are not being heard. While we may disagree it is essential that everyone at work be listened to, even though we may disagree.

- Having an extensive emotional vocabulary: The ability to accurately identify and express what we are feeling helps us to cope better. For example, just by saying we are frustrated helps settle feelings and move ahead.
- Ability to see different viewpoints: Emotional intelligence increases our ability to be able to see situations from a broader perspective rather than strictly black and white. Even though they may not agree with someone, the ability to see things from their perspective allows them to step back from judgment and becoming emotionally involved in arguments and conflicts.
- Ability to be aware of our limitations and ask for help: When experiencing a large amount of stress it is crucial that we recognize it and ask for help when necessary. Emotionally intelligent people are aware of their limitations; know when they can manage and when they need to ask for help. They have no problem reaching out to others and have built a strong support network that they can rely upon.

### General Articles on the Importance and Benefits of EI for Teachers and Students

1. [Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters and how to teach it : November 2017 Bradley Busch and Ben Oakley](#)
  - Teaching young people skills such as active listening, self-awareness and empathy can equip them to succeed both academically and socially
  - It is, of course, important for good communication with others – and is therefore a gateway to better learning, friendships, academic success and employment. Skills such as these developed in our formative years at school often provide the foundation for future habits later on in life.
  - An [iconic study](#) tracked high-IQ students from childhood to late adulthood and found that those who achieved notable adult career success showed greater “will power, perseverance and desire to excel”. Meanwhile, evidence from [the seminal marshmallow test](#) – which gave children the option to have more treats if they could wait before eating them – suggested delayed gratification and self-control are important, with these characteristics being linked to better school grades, earnings and job satisfaction.
  - Active listening: The skill of [active listening](#) is a key part of helping create genuine two-way communication – and it is about far more than just paying attention. It involves [genuinely following dialogue](#) and responding to others using your own body language, then being able to demonstrate that you have understood by verbally summarizing back key messages that have been received.
  - A vocabulary for feelings: Researcher [Lisa Barrett](#) states that interpersonal skills can be enhanced by helping students increase their emotion vocabulary. Encouraging students to understand the difference between “sad”, “disappointed” and “upset” acts as springboard to develop appropriate strategies for each. In short, every emotion word you learn is a new tool for future emotional intelligence.
  - Developing Self-awareness: When we have low self-awareness, we’re at risk of not realizing how we come across to others, and letting an over inflated self-image skew our behavior and social

interactions. . . . They also found that strategies to help students improve their self-awareness include teaching them [metacognitive strategies](#). One way of doing this is to encourage them to ask self-reflective questions such as “What could I have done differently?” Or use a [communication self-evaluation questionnaire](#), which can help students begin to understand their interpersonal skills.

- Showing empathy as being with others: Empathy is the ability to take the perspective of another person while being non-judgmental, recognizing the emotions they are feeling, and being able to convey their perspective back to them. . . . Reflecting back the other person’s perspective helps to make the other person feel understood, which in turn increases the likelihood of collaboration and support. Children generally develop empathy through observing how others show it – including watching teachers and students empathize with each other.
- Managing emotions and self-regulation: [The Sutton Trust](#) states that helping students improve their self-regulation – the ability to manage thoughts and feelings – is one of the most effective and efficient ways to support students. This is especially so in secondary schools, with the gap between [impulse control and sensation seeking being at its widest in early teenage years](#).
- What do self-regulation techniques look like? These include seeing events as an opportunity rather than a threat and [helpful self-talk](#) , for example. Reinforce to students that emotional management skills are not fixed but can be developed. This takes a considerable amount of effort and patience from both the student and the teacher, as it is often a gradual process over a large period of time.

## 2. [Why teachers with emotional intelligence are a boon to society](#)

- When teachers become mentors, they open the doors of knowledge and life. We all have fond memories of our teachers and remember those who have left some impact on us. For some, the teacher is good in her subject but for some, the teacher has encouraged and motivated us in many ways.
- The emotional connection between the teacher and the student is important as it stays forever. Although in a short period burdened with syllabi, a teacher has her limitations to interact with children at an emotional level. However, with little effort and sensitivity towards students’ emotional needs, the teacher can develop children of tomorrow with a positive outlook towards life.
- Highly emotional intelligent teachers tend to motivate their students better and understand their students’ behavioral and psychological wellbeing. They can also be more sensitive towards their students’ disruptive behaviors, academic performance and relationship management. They can handle and deal with various issues children are facing in a better way.
- Self-regulation is an important aspect of Emotional Intelligence. Thus, a more self-aware teacher can manage her children more successfully.
- A good and emotionally intelligent teacher will not only be self-aware but will also show empathy towards children, parents, peers, etc. Today, what children need is someone who understands their feelings and emotions, guides them and does not judge in any way. Empathy thus shown by the teacher makes a positive and an everlasting impact on a student’s mind.
- Many organizations and educational policies of Government are making considerable effort to develop a curriculum focused on emotional intelligence for children as well as teachers.

- Today, in both education and corporate world, the role of emotional intelligence for more sustainable and positive development is talked about. Across the Globe, Emotional intelligence has become a prime factor for human development. The fact is organizational culture is changing and employees and educators are being selected based on not only IQ but also all components of emotional intelligence like self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, etc.
- It is important to develop teachers who are emotionally intelligent for the growth and development of both students and schools. The need of the hour is to not only create teacher training modules on emotional intelligence but also impart the right kind of training.
- The influence of a good teacher can never be erased. An emotionally intelligent teacher, a guide or a mentor can make our lives positive and happy truly enlightening us.

3. [Developing Emotionally Intelligent Teachers](#) : By Ke Huang and Xianxuan Xu, April 2019

- “Teaching can be a stressful job. Poor working conditions, lack of sufficient administrative support, low levels of collegiality, low pay, and student behavioral problems all can contribute to negative emotions such as tension, hostility, depression, anger, nervousness, and frustration. So, given the challenges that seem to be inherent in teaching, how might we help teachers to deal with job stress and the negative emotions that ensue? One possibility worth exploring is how emotional intelligence (EI) might relate to teacher well-being.”
- “Studies have found that individuals with high EI are better at regulating expressions of positive and negative feelings in themselves, and also recognizing the emotions in others (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). Additionally, when applying the evidence related to EI to teachers, it appears that those with high EI are more empathic and better at creating a learning environment that stimulates the development of students’ socio-emotional skills (Goleman, 2000).”
- “Several studies, conducted in different countries and across multiple cultures, have begun to identify the vital role of emotional intelligence (EI) in improving teacher effectiveness and teacher well-being. For instance, a study in Malaysia found that there is a positive and significant relationship between overall EI skills and overall teaching effectiveness (Hassan et al., 2015). This finding is also corroborated by studies conducted in India. EI was found as one of the factors to contribute to teacher effectiveness with respect to all dimensions such as teaching skills and personal characteristics (Patel, 2017; Srinivasan, 2015).”
- “Surprisingly, the extant research tends to suggest that EI is even more influential than intelligence when it comes to predicting teacher effectiveness and student learning (Patel, 2017). What’s more, recent research has found EI can improve the well-being of teachers to help them to cope with negative emotions and feel personally fulfilled in their work (Fernández-Berrocal et al., 2017). For examples, a study systematically reviewed 645 current studies to find that teachers with higher EI scores feel less work-related stress, and experience more engagement (Mérida-López, Extremera, & Rey, 2017). It indicated that high EI teachers demonstrate a higher level of vigor, dedication, and absorption toward teaching. In China, emotional intelligence has been found to help protect teachers from emotional exhaustion and teacher burnout (Ju, Lan, Li, Feng & You, 2015). Since burnout is negatively related not only with teachers’ effectiveness, motivation and job satisfaction (Thakur, 2012), but also with students’ academic achievement and non-academic outcomes (Dorman, 2003; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005), improving teachers’ EI holds the potential to improving both student achievement and teacher well-being.”

- “The good news is EI can be improved through training and practice! As a universal construct across cultures, various EI and EI-related programs have been shown to improve outcomes for students, teachers, and the school system overall (e.g., Keefer, Parker, & Saklofske, 2018; Lipnevich, Preckel, & Roberts, 2016).”
- “For teachers, EI training should not be a burden or another onerous hurdle to cross. Rather, it is best when viewed as a valuable opportunity to help teachers develop insights for understanding themselves and their impact upon students, and it should lead to personal or professional gains. In essence, it should be satisfying. EI training should be an experience that teachers, themselves, can direct and control. There should always be people to support teachers when they meet challenges. Finally, EI learning cannot be accomplished with a one-shot solution; instead, it should be a sustainable journey. Change – including reducing stress and improving performance as teachers – happens over time and EI development must be considered within this framework if it is to facilitate teacher well-being, growth, and improvement.”

4. [Educational Leadership: Leading with Emotional Intelligence](#) : By Janet Patti, 2018

- For school leaders, stress is inevitable. The day-to-day grind of leading is emotionally demanding, and new challenges and higher accountability create a fever pitch of emotion that can churn inside even the strongest of leaders.
- However, although stress is expected for education leaders, burnout can be optional. Moderate amounts of healthy stress triggered by efforts to achieve meaningful goals (called *eustress* in the research literature) can increase personal accomplishment and workplace engagement and even improve job performance (McGonigal, 2016).
- The problem arises when stress becomes so frequent and so overwhelming that it leaves educators physically and emotionally depleted and they no longer feel a sense of passion and personal accomplishment (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Le Fevre, Matheny, & Kolt, 2003). When this happens, stress becomes *distress*, and one runs the risk of burning out.
- To understand how a leader's sense of personal accomplishment and self-efficacy can fade or grow, we have to understand the power of emotions. A recent study found that school leaders who reported greater levels of emotional exhaustion were more likely to experience a range of negative emotions, such as anxiety or anger, and were less likely to experience various positive emotions, such as hope or joy (Brackett, Floman, & Bradley, 2018). Also, emotionally exhausted leaders were less satisfied with their jobs and were more likely to want to quit the profession or retire.
- Emotional exhaustion—a by-product of chronic unhealthy stress—is not inevitable for school leaders. A major cause of distress is when leaders mismanage emotionally charged situations. This suggests that, by developing the skills of emotional intelligence (EI) (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), school leaders can prevent much workplace stress.
- Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize emotions in one's self and in others, to understand the causes and effects of emotions, and to manage emotions effectively to suit a goal or situation (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016). Leaders with developed EI possess greater self-awareness: Among other actions, they pause multiple times throughout the school day to reflect on their emotions and their meaning. Critically, emotionally intelligent leaders learn to recognize the behaviors, triggers, and events that lead to unhealthy stress.

- Since 2015, the New York City school district has spearheaded an unprecedented initiative to infuse EI training throughout the school system. Partnering with our organizations—[Star Factor Coaching](#) and the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)—NYC has developed a program that includes intensive professional development training and coaching in emotional intelligence for district and school leaders.
- The focus on emotionally intelligent leadership in NYC public schools has fostered a systemwide effort to build a culture anchored in emotional intelligence. The leaders' training has helped to transform multiple school communities into collaborative learning environments with a shared vision, common values, and clear norms of how to develop together. With enhanced EI skills, healthy relationships thrive and supportive social networks accelerate student success. Through the ripple effects of implementing EI training in leaders, positive communication and healthy social-emotional development can spread to teachers and to students (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
- In these school communities, self-awareness and self-management skills have become the pillars of pedagogy and school culture. Educators become proactive with their emotions, which helps them to avert the array of workplace stressors that trigger burnout and turnover. This can also lead to more conscious interactions, generative relationships, and a willingness to support one another through challenging moments. In schools with this developmental focus, conflict gets put on the table instead of under it, and adults work through the hard issues instead of avoiding them. Assumptions are challenged, and differences are explored to find common ground. In schools where EI is integrated throughout, adults are equipped to work through all of the hard spots.
- When given time and space for EI development, education leaders are more likely to see moderate levels of stress as a pathway toward self-efficacy and personal accomplishment. With self-awareness to detect the onset of unhealthy stress and helpful strategies to manage stress, leaders are more likely to reach out for emotional and community support, avoid burnout, reconnect with their purpose, and more passionately and skillfully cultivate flourishing schools.

**General Articles on How EI can reduce workplace stress, help workers manage stress, and improve quality of life:**

1. [Emotional Intelligence: The Key Trait to Reducing Stress and Improving Your Quality of Life](#) : December 2017, Arash Asli, founder and CEO of Yocale.com
  - “As someone who has always had a very busy life and high-intensity career, I find that working on my EQ is one of the best ways to cope with stress. My goal is to share what I’ve learned in the hopes that you, too, can improve your quality of life and cope with stress and anxiety, no matter what these feelings are stemming from.”
  - “Emotions have the ability to override our objective mind. They can influence how we run our personal lives, manage our business and deal with loved ones, co-workers, customers, employees, etc. Irrational thinking like this is an obstacle that can only hold you back from success and lead to bad relationships, stress, anxiety and even depression. But training your EQ helps put you back in charge.”
  - Author proceeds to discuss the two key components discussed in Goleman’s book: Self-awareness and social-awareness.



- Here is his conclusion: “Training your EQ helps manage your emotions in healthy ways. It enables you to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage your expectations of others, and adapt to changing circumstances to stay on the path towards your goals. As the saying goes, what’s urgent is seldom important, and what’s important is seldom urgent. What’s urgent is to focus on the important aspects of life and enjoy the journey.”
2. [Improving Emotional Intelligence: When it comes to happiness, success and reduced stress, EI matters just as much, if not more than your IQ](#) : October 2019, Multiple Authors
- “As we know, it’s not the smartest people who are the most successful or the most fulfilled in life. You probably know people who are academically brilliant and yet are socially inept and unsuccessful at work or in their personal relationships. Intellectual ability or your intelligence quotient (IQ) isn’t enough on its own to achieve success in life. Yes, your IQ can help you get into college, but it’s your EQ that will help you manage the stress and emotions when facing your final exams. IQ and EQ exist in tandem and are most effective when they build off one another.”
  - EI Affects:
    - **Your performance at school or work.** High emotional intelligence can help you navigate the social complexities of the workplace, lead and motivate others, and excel in your career.
    - **Your physical health.** If you’re unable to manage your emotions, you are probably not managing your stress either. This can lead to serious health problems. EI can help you learn how to manage stress well.
    - **Your mental health.** Uncontrolled emotions and stress can also impact your mental health, making you vulnerable to anxiety and depression. EI can help you understand, get comfortable with, and manage your emotions in a healthy way.
    - **Your relationships.** By understanding your emotions and how to control them, you’re better able to express how you feel and understand how others are feeling.
    - **Your social intelligence.** Being in tune with your emotions serves a social purpose, connecting you to other people and the world around you.
  - The article proceeds to discuss in detail these 4 skills of EQ, how to improve them, and how improving them can reduce stress and improve quality of life: Self-management, Self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management.
3. [Squashing Stress with Emotional Intelligence](#) : Travis Bradberry
- “In a study conducted earlier this year at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York, Dr. Diana Fernandez, MD, found that job stress not only makes workers unhappier but also harms their health. In her study of 2,782 employees at a large manufacturing facility, Fernandez and her team found strong links between job stress and cardiovascular disease, depression, exhaustion, and weight gain.”
  - “But what if you could reduce stress without having to wait for the economy to improve? A promising stream of research linking emotional intelligence (EQ) to stress- reduction offers exciting new clues about how to beat stress in spite of economic woes.”
  - “A team of Belgian researchers led by Dr. Moira Mikolajczak found that levels of emotional intelligence—a person’s ability to understand and manage his or her own emotions and those of other people—determine how effectively people cope with stress. Mikolajczak found that



people with high emotional intelligence report better moods, less anxiety, and less worry during times of tension and stress than those with less ability to identify and manage their emotions.”

- “But emotional intelligence is not just about naïve optimism or disguising negative emotions by forcing yourself to put on a happy face. Mikolajczak discovered that emotionally intelligent people *actually feel less stress*. Emotionally intelligent people have improved their ability to engage their emotions and rational thinking simultaneously. . . as your EQ increases, you actually FEEL less stress.”
- “Emotionally intelligent people not only *claim* to experience less stress, they also physically and mentally *experience less stress*.”
- “The Belgian researchers uncovered two primary reasons for emotional intelligence limiting stress. First, they found that emotionally intelligent people evaluate their environment differently. In the words of Dr. Mikolajczak, they “are particularly inclined to look for the silver lining, invoke pleasant thoughts or memories in order to counter their current emotional state, think about what steps to take in order to handle the problem, and put it into perspective.”
- “Second, and perhaps most important, people who are good with emotions are more likely to choose a “problem-focused” coping strategy. Each problem we encounter presents us with two choices: address the problem head- on or bury our heads in the sand, hoping that the issue will resolve itself. People who employ a problem-focused coping strategy devote their attention to solving the problem, rather than ignoring it. This adaptive approach to solving problems works to squash the cause of the stress *and* lessens the amount of stress experienced because the mere act of devising a plan makes you feel more relaxed and in control.”
- “In contrast, less emotionally intelligent people let their fear and anxiety drive them toward a “problem-avoidance” coping strategy, which only prolongs the tension.”
- In theory, it would seem that you could take a shortcut by skipping the emotional intelligence piece and just learning the adaptive coping strategies. The only problem is that Mikolajczak’s team also found that people who aren’t good with emotions are also poor at using a problem-focused strategy. Only the emotionally intelligent bunch— who know how to fend off the distractions created by fear, sadness, anger, jealousy, shame, and the like—are able to effectively implement a problem-focused approach.”
- “Fortunately, in a 2009 study published in the *Personality and Individual Differences* journal, Mikolajczak and her colleagues showed that virtually anyone can develop emotional intelligence with training. The Belgian team (this time led by Delphine Nells) proved that emotional intelligence can be significantly improved with only a handful of short training sessions.”
- “people who received emotional intelligence training not only maintained their new emotional intelligence skills six months after the training ended but also showed a *slight improvement in their EQ* at the six-month follow-up. We can only imagine how much they would have improved had they received even a brief reminder to practice their emotional intelligence skills every few days.”