Work and Life Balance Part 1: Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction

Zubin Austin BScPhm MBA MISC PhD FCAHS
Professor and Murray Koffler Chair in Management
Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto, Canada
Disclosures

• Zubin Austin has received an honorarium and travel expenses for preparation and delivery of this workshop in Seattle Washington
CPE Information

- Target Audience: Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians
- ACPE#: 0202-0000-19-079-L04-P/T
- Activity Type: Application-based
Learning Objectives

After completion of this application-based activity, participants will be able to:

1. **Discuss the importance of emotional intelligence as it pertains to productivity and job satisfaction**
2. **Utilize strategies to manage emotions during stressful circumstances**
1. Which of the following is NOT a Big 5 personality trait?
   A. Punctuality
   B. Openness
   C. Conscientiousness
   D. Neuroticism
2. Divergers:
   A. Prefer quiet autonomous work with clear instructions and direction
   B. Value interpersonal interactions and relationship building
   C. Are driven by competition and the ability to win
   D. Are self directed and prefer to learn by trial-and-error
3. Emotional intelligence
   A. Is generally fixed at birth as a genetic trait and is resistant to environmental factors
   B. Is a function of the ways we receive, interpret, and respond to social and environmental cues
   C. Cannot be learned but is innate to each individual
   D. Is the combination of intelligence (IQ) and one’s current emotional state
Assessment Questions

4. Assimilators:
   A. Frequently mistake their own confidence for competence
   B. Dislike preparation and prefer to fly by the seat of their pants
   C. Frequently mistake other’s confidence for competence
   D. Dislike individual work and prefer group-based interactions
Why worry about work-life balance?

• The health care system – and patients – need us like never before
• The most important resource the health care system has to help patients is its workforce
• Unhappy, stressed, or apathetic health care professionals simply cannot do what is needed to optimize patient care
Managing work life balance by managing ourselves

- Understanding who we are as human beings will help us to better understand what we can contribute as pharmacists
- Self-reflection is essential to managing emotional stress
- Controlling our selves and our emotional responses requires us to first think deeply about who we are
Think about the following...

For each of the following questions, what percentage of pharmacists do you think:

a) Were bullied as children or teenagers?

b) Do not disclose their profession to physicians or other healthcare professionals when they themselves are patients or caregivers?

c) Have knowingly gone along with/agreed to something they knew was not in the best interests of a patient simply to avoid conflict with a prescriber?

d) Invest their personal savings into CDs or packaged mutual funds rather than direct investment in stocks?
Why the random questions?

Though we are all different individuals, pharmacists are a “tribe” – a group of people with many common characteristics who are part of a collective profession.

The label “pharmacist” is a strong social cue to others – patients, customers, other health care professionals etc – and (rightly or wrongly) this label is used by others to categorize and sort us.
Who are we as a profession?

- What makes pharmacists pharmacists?
- How might knowing this help us better manage ourselves, our emotions, and our work-life balance?
- The key is emotional intelligence – and understanding it better!
Things that make you go “huh”

The experience of pharmacists who become patients or caregivers

Anisah Mahamed, MSc Thesis 2008

“At the time when it counts the most, this study demonstrated little reliance upon the pharmacist part of their self-identity…”
Things that make you go “huh” 2

Negotiation of interprofessional culture shock: the experiences of pharmacists who have become physicians

Austin et al J Interprof Care 2007 2(1): 83-89

“The culture of professions has a profound effect on the way we relate to other professions – we carry around interpersonal psychological “baggage” in all our interactions...”
Things that make you go “huh” 3

Pharmacists’ experience of conflict in community practice


>65% of community pharmacists were characterized as conflict avoiders – while ~65% of family physicians were characterized as “forcers”
Responsibility and confidence: identifying barriers to advanced pharmacy practice

Frankel G et al 2013 CPJ 146(3): 155-161

“Pharmacists feel neither responsible nor confident for their clinical decisions in ambiguous situations due to social, educational, and personal reasons.”
Things that make you go “huh” 5

*Are pharmacists the ultimate barrier to pharmacy practice change?*

*Rosenthal et al 2010 CPJ 143(1): 37-42*

i) Lack of self-confidence
ii) Avoidance of new responsibility due to high need for perfection
iii) Paralysis in the face of ambiguity
iv) Strong need for approval from others
v) Risk aversion
How did you get to be this way?

• How did you become the professional you are today?
• The vast majority of pharmacists were once nice, smart, well-intentioned, polite kids – and society/teachers/parents frequently channel such kids into health professions such as pharmacy
• We are shaped by i) our internal psychological traits and ii) our emotional selves
1. Psychological Traits

*The “Big Five” Personality Traits:*

- Openness
- Conscientiousness
- Extraversion
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism
Are we really all that different?

Gregory P and Austin Z. Comparing Big 5 scores of medical and pharmacy students at the University of Toronto. Poster presentation at Graduate Research in Progress Day, University of Toronto, June 11 2018.
Our traits, ourselves

• Emotional intelligence (EI) is a general term that describes one’s ability to successfully interact within diverse social settings
• It is built upon a foundation of being able to “read” and “respond” to social and environmental cues in an appropriate manner
• Based on personal competences (such as self-awareness and self-management), as well as social competences (such as social awareness and relationship management)
• EI is correlated with diverse personal and professional happiness and success factors

Understanding your own EI

• Complete the EI instrument
• After you’ve completed the instrument by yourself, you’ll be asked to move into small groups to discuss your answers to the questions on the back of the inventory, and share your thoughts with everyone else

Diverger EI Profile

![Graph showing the Diverger EI Profile with the Big Five personality traits: Openness, Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness.](Image)
Diverger EI profile

• First impression generally based on being friendly, likable, approachable, and non-judgmental
• Less interested in details, technical prowess, or perfection
• Hesitant to make decisions, or disagree with others
• Uses charm as a coping mechanism
• As pharmacists, diversers typically have a hard time multitasking, making quick decisions, and managing high stress workloads
• As pharmacists, diversers typically end up in teaching, management, highly clinical (e.g. non-technical) roles
Assimilator EI Profile
• “Lack of organization on your part is no reason for an emergency on my part” – first impression may be a bit aloof, shy, but smart
• Very focused on processes, policies, algorithms, guidelines
• Able to manage large volumes of technical/detail oriented work provided structures are in place
• As pharmacists, assimilators typically have a hard time with disorganization, conflict, thinking on their feet, ambiguity
• As pharmacists, assimilators typically end up in operational/supervisory roles, quality assurance, technical/detail oriented positions
Converger EI Profile
Converger EI Profile

• First impression may be a bit intimidating, very confident, trustworthy
• “Relax everyone – I’m here to help” – natural leaders who respond well to competition
• Can sometimes confuse their own confidence with competence
• As pharmacists, convergers typically get bored easily, like interpersonal interactions that allow them to demonstrate mastery; most frequently found in family health team settings
• As pharmacists, convergers typically end up in leadership or entrepreneurial roles, tend not to respond well to bureaucracy, policies and procedures, prefer flexibility and thinking on their feet
Accommodator EI Profile
Accommodator EI Profile

- “Are we there yet?” – First impression of accommodators usually that they are busy doing things, not too concerned about interpersonal relationships, focused on getting things done quickly
- At their best, accommodators value efficiency and can manage large volumes of technical work confidently
- At their worst, accommodators may value efficiency over efficacy and can get bored quickly by routine, bureaucracy, policies
- As pharmacists, accommodators effectively manage high volume, high stress environments and supervision of technical staff
- As pharmacists, accommodators typically end up in manufacturing/mass compounding environments
Reflecting on your EI

- How do you “fit” in your current workplace?

- How does your current workplace support you in expressing your EI to the fullest potential?

- What can you do to enhance the alignment between your EI and your workplace?
Work and Life Balance

• What do you need in order to find the right balance between “who you are” and “what you do”?  

• What can you do – tomorrow – to help support yourself in finding that right balance?
Work and Life Balance

• Work consumes a lot of our time and psychological energy; while it is not the only reason we are happy (or unhappy) in life, it is frequently a major determinant of our psychological state, especially for professionals.

• Burnout can be defined as misalignment between personal psychology and environment, particularly in the workplace.

• Understanding your own psychological needs and drivers is the first step in being able to articulate (to yourself and others) what makes you happy and productive – and what others need too.
Group Activity

- In groups with those of the same/similar emotional intelligence style as you, consider the following questions:
  
a) What aspects of your current practice do you find most energizing in terms of impact on the rest of your life?
  
b) What aspects of your current practice do you find most draining in terms of impact on the rest of your life?
  
c) What options are available to convert some of (b) into (a)? And what could be your first step in doing so?

Be prepared to share your group’s discussion with everyone else.
Self-Reflection Activity

• What has been most important for you today in this session?
• What might you be able to do differently tomorrow as a result of this session?
• What else do you need to help you to better balance work and life responsibilities and opportunities?
What does this all mean for you?

• Learning more about ourselves is the essential first step in thinking about enhancing our practice
• Personal development and professional development are the same thing: reflecting upon our EI strengths and areas for improvement can provide a pathway to elevating our practice
• For the next session – we’ll flip this around and look at how you can apply emotional intelligence to help yourself optimize professional satisfaction and prevent burnout
For further reading


Assessment Questions

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