



# On Board with Emotions: A Residential Emotional Intelligence Program

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## Further Information

This poster and further information is available at  
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## Introduction

Google identified that effective teams implement norms that encourage safe emotional conversations. Other research shows that collaborative interactions such as disagreeing respectfully or acknowledging other's views are emotionally demanding. Emotion influences a team's ability to communicate, make decisions, demonstrate empathy and resolve conflicts. This action research sought to investigate how developing emotional intelligence in a residential boarding context might enhance group collaboration.

## The Research Question

How might the implementation of an emotional intelligence development program enhance collaborative skills in Year Nine boys?

## Research Context and Participants

The Scots College is an all-boys school in Sydney, Australia. Pastoral Care features prominently at the College. Glengarry is a two-term, residential experience for Year Nine boys at the Scots College. Located in Kangaroo Valley, the program creates opportunities for boys to be challenged physically, spiritually, emotionally, socially and academically in the context of the outdoors. Students are divided into dorms of approximately twenty students. A single dorm of students, participated in this action research.

## The Research Action

Students were initially introduced to Daniel Goleman's (2010) model of Emotional Intelligence. Over the next four weeks, students attended weekly workshops. Content explored included some of the developmental constructs, outlined by Goleman, as shown below. Throughout the study, students were asked to spend one minute each morning, reflecting on and then recording, "how they felt" using a scaffold.

		Self	Social	<div>Week 1</div> <div>Week 2</div> <div>Week 3</div> <div>Week 4</div>
Recognition (Who I am)	Awareness	<b>Self-Awareness</b> Wk. 1 & 2 Know your emotions, drives, weaknesses, strengths & values.	<b>Social Awareness</b> Wk. 4 Understand the emotional makeup of others.	
	Regulation	<b>Self-Management</b> Wk. 3 Controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions and impulses.	<b>Social Skills</b> Managing relationships to move people in desired directions.	
		<i>Managing Ourselves</i>	<i>Handling Relationships</i>	
		• How do you feel? • 100 Emotions		Week 1
		• Shaping Experiences • Group Sharing		
		• Pain as emotional proxy • Ice Buckets		Week 3
		• Letting Others In • Group Sharing		Week 4



"A friend of mine . . .  
made me understand the  
trust he had in me"  
(Student CD)

"a specific dorm member  
recently lost a loved one . . .  
. . . I was able to gather the  
pain he was feeling, and . . .  
. . . change the way I acted . . .  
. . . to make him feel  
comfortable" (Student DT)



## Data Collection and Analysis

- Data were initially collected through anonymous online surveys
- During the project, participants explored their experience through semi-structured interviews. Key transformational moments were later explored through secondary interviews.
- Interviews were transcribed and coded to identify key themes. Post action surveys were also conducted to allow for comparative thematic analysis.

## Key Findings and Discussion

As a result of their involvement in the workshops, students reported Increased levels of trust with individuals or small groups within the dorm; a key foundation for effective teamwork.

*"You learnt more about others in the dorm and could have a better relationship with them, which helps you get along with them."* (Student DT)

*"Everyone really opened up and made the most of it . . . we all learnt a lot about each other and were able to support each other."* (Student TM)

An increased number of students expressed that (after the workshops) they were 1) able to discuss frustrations appropriately, 2) knew what to do or say when others in the dorm were angry or upset and 3) effectively dealt with things in the dorm that annoyed them.

*"The workshops helped me understand the people in the dorm better than I had before, and what they had been through."* (Student ZP)

## Conclusions

The results indicate that Emotional Intelligence can significantly impact on group collaboration and that a group's collaborative skills can be enhanced by explicitly focussing on the development of skills associated with Emotional Intelligence. Activities which involved a visceral experience of real and intense emotions seems to have had the powerful impact on the boys and an initial application will be to embed similar activities regularly into the Glengarry program across all dorms and with a greater range/number of activities. Further research around the impact of size on the application of emotionally intelligent collaborative skills would add further value to these results.

## Key Readings

- Druskat, V. U., & Wolff, S. B. (2001). Building the emotional intelligence of groups. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(3), 80-91.
- Goleman, D. (2010). *Emotional intelligence* (1st ed.). London: Bloomsbury.
- Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is Emotional Intelligence. *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence*, 3-31.