

# *Multidimensional Emotional Intelligence Assessment - Workplace*

**(MEIA-W)**

## **Brief Interpretation Guide**

This guide contains definitions and other material designed to assist with the interpretation of an individual's scores on each of the 10 components of emotional intelligence (EI) measured by the MEIA-W. The guide includes an easy-to-understand definition of each scale and provides corresponding sample items. It also provides information about why the component is important and is designed to serve as a catalyst for development. This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the test takers MEIA-W report.

## ***Multidimensional Emotional Intelligence Assessment – Workplace (MEIA-W)***

### **Brief Interpretation Guide**

Emotional intelligence has been widely recognized in the popular and professional media as a potentially important contributor to understanding workplace behavior. The MEIA-W is a 122-item self-report survey designed to assess 10 distinct aspects of emotional intelligence as expressed in the workplace (definitions are provided in the next section). The responses provided by the test-taker have been analyzed to yield scores on each of the 10 components of emotional intelligence measured by the MEIA-W.

In general, emotional intelligence is perceived as a “more-is-better” quality. This may be true for most aspects of emotional intelligence and perhaps even for most jobs. It is important to realize, however, that the value of emotional intelligence — considered broadly or in terms of its more specific components — depends critically on the nature of the job, and the work environment. Being high on a given aspect of emotional intelligence may be adaptive in some situations and counter-productive in others. Creative thinking, for example, can be desirable in jobs requiring innovative thinking, but undesirable in jobs demanding close attention to prescribed procedures. The value that is placed on an individual’s MEIA-W profile scores, whether they are high or low on any given dimension, must be judged relative to the demands that are faced in their particular work situation. This is important information to bear in mind as you review an individual’s MEIA-W profile, especially given that no information is offered in the MEIA-W report regarding the job and its particular demands.

This guide is designed to provide an enhanced understanding of the MEIA-W scales, and to assist in interpreting a test-taker’s scores. Below, you’ll find definitions and other interpretive material concerning each of the 10 components of emotional intelligence assessed by the MEIA-W. The definitions will help you better understand what is being measured by each of the MEIA-W scales. Sample items provide an indication of the statements that make up each scale, and allow you to review response patterns with the test-taker. These are followed by a Quick Guide section that summarizes the essence of each scale, and goes on to offer an idea of the importance of each scale, as well as some of the work-related downsides that can be associated with high scores on a particular scale.

### **Development**

If the MEIA-W is used for development purposes, we recommend that the test-taker arranges to share his or her profile with someone familiar with their job and their performance in it, someone they trust who is willing and able to guide them in interpreting the profile in light of his or her work situation. This individual may be his or her direct supervisor, a co-worker, a human resources specialist in the organization, or a professional developmental coach. The information in the MEIA-W report is likely to be most beneficial when reviewed in conjunction with a formal performance appraisal. It is intended to offer insight into an individual’s

workplace behavior. There is certainly more to understanding a person’s job performance than can be conveyed in any single assessment profile, whether it is emotional intelligence, personality, ability, or any other characteristic. It is our hope, however, that the MEIA-W report will serve as a catalyst for the test-taker’s development as a valued leader, employee, and co-worker.

## **Selection**

Use of the MEIA-W in a selection or promotion process requires careful analysis of the role of emotional intelligence in the position being considered, as well as in the organization as a whole. We recommend validating the importance of the MEIA-W scales using incumbents and performance data before including the MEIA-W as a component in the selection process. In addition, we recommend that the MEIA-W only be used as part of a more comprehensive selection process, with the MEIA-W results being interpreted in the light of other information about the job candidate, including experience, aptitude and other personality information.

## MEIA-W Definitions of Emotional Intelligence Components

Below are definitions of the 10 components of emotional intelligence included in the MEIA-W. Two sample items are provided for clarification. Agreeing with the first item in each case would indicate a high score (H) on the given scale. Agreeing with the second item in each case would indicate a lower score (L) on the given scale. A quick guide is also offered for each scale that identifies why that component is important, and possible drawbacks of being too high on that aspect of emotional intelligence. Note that these descriptions clarify the meaning of *high* scores on the given scale, regardless of where the test-taker falls on that scale. All told, the 10 components described below are considered representative of emotional intelligence.

### 1. Recognition of Emotion in the Self.

The first component of emotional intelligence denotes *the degree to which an individual is in touch with his/her feelings and can describe those feelings in words*. An example would be knowing when you are afraid and being able to find the words to describe that feeling.

H I know precisely what is bothering me when I am feeling down about my job.

L Sometimes I feel troubled at work without knowing exactly why.

#### Quick Guide

- Being in touch with your feelings
- Knowing when you are angry, happy, frustrated, sad, and why

#### Importance:

- First step in self-control
- Helps in managing your own emotions

#### Downside:

- Emotions can be overwhelming
- It may be adaptive at times to ignore your own feelings, if only temporarily

### 2. Nonverbal Emotional Expression.

The second dimension refers to *the degree to which an individual communicates his/her feelings to others through bodily (i.e., nonverbal) expression*. An example would be a willingness to show satisfaction with what a co-worker has accomplished. Recognition of emotions in the self and nonverbal emotional expression contribute to emotional intelligence by providing a basis for dealing with emotionally provocative situations in a productive and socially appropriate manner.

- H My co-workers would say that, emotionally, I am very easy to read.  
L When talking with my boss, my body language often says something different from the way I feel.

#### **Quick Guide**

- by accurately expressing how you feel using nonverbal behavior you avoid giving others mixed messages

#### *Importance:*

- A high score would suggest that others see you as predictable, which can help in managing others' feelings

#### *Downside:*

- “Wearing your heart on your sleeve” can be seen by some as a weakness; keeping a “poker face” can be helpful in some situations

### **3. Recognition of Emotion in Others.**

The third component is concerned with *the detection and understanding of others' feelings*. What people tell us they are feeling often provides an incomplete message. Richer information can be obtained by subtler, nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, facial expression, and posture. Attending to such cues is important for maintaining good interpersonal relations because the appropriateness of one's own behavior in social encounters depends in part on what others are experiencing emotionally.

- H I am good at reading the inner feelings of people I work with, even if I don't know them very well.  
L When I am talking with people at work, it is difficult for me to read their body language.

#### **Quick Guide**

- Accurately picking up on what others are feeling
- Active listening and perceiving; being attuned to others

#### *Importance:*

- First step in regulating others' feelings; helps you know when and how to change your behavior in dealing with co-workers, clients, etc.

#### *Downside:*

- A high scorer may tend to read too much into others' feelings and reactions

#### 4. Empathy.

This dimension also deals with others' feelings; but, more than being concerned with reading those feelings, it denotes an individual's willingness to *understanding others' emotions by relating them to his/her own experiences*. Empathy is considered to be a major contributor to emotional intelligence in that it not only facilitates understanding of others' feelings but also shows accessibility to one's own.

H If I saw someone I work with being harassed, I would get upset.

L Generally, a co-worker's suffering doesn't affect me very much.

##### **Quick Guide**

- Relating well to how others are feeling
- Almost experiencing co-workers' pains, joys, frustrations, anxieties, etc.

##### *Importance:*

- If you have a high score, co-workers may see you as caring, which can help in developing and maintaining close personal relationships with others

##### *Downside:*

- Having a high score may suggest difficulty in making proper business decisions, if people's feelings are favored over the bottom line

#### 5. Regulation of Emotion in the Self.

*Controlling our own feelings* is fundamental to emotional intelligence for several reasons. First, emotions can overpower rational thinking, which can lead to errors in judgment. Second, strong negative emotions are stressful if not sufficiently regulated, and prolonged stress can be detrimental to both your physiological and psychological well-being. Third, emotions are inherently pleasant or unpleasant and there is value in being able to manage your feelings so as to maximize positive feelings and minimize the negative. Self-regulation can be achieved unconsciously, as in anticipation of pleasant outcomes, as well as consciously, as in the deliberate selection or avoidance of mood inducing situations.

H In the workplace, I am clearly the master of my own emotions.

L One of my biggest problems on the job is my inability to control my emotions.

##### **Quick Guide**

- Self-control; staying on an even keel; remaining "calm, cool, and collected"
- Not flying off the handle; reacting calmly in stressful situations

*Importance:*

- If you are high on this scale, others may see you as balanced, reliable, someone to turn to in times of stress and uncertainty

*Downside:*

- Keeping everything “in” can be unhealthy; sometimes, strong emotional reactions can inspire others

## 6. Regulation of Emotion in Others.

An important part of establishing and maintaining productive interpersonal relationships is *the ability to influence others' emotions*. Particular cases include leadership, as in motivating others to reach a shared goal, and friendship, as in cheering up a companion when he or she is feeling down. This aspect of emotional intelligence can be subtle to detect because being good at it can require a lack of awareness on the part of those whose emotions are being regulated. This is especially likely in leadership, where feelings of manipulation can produce resistance to change efforts.

- H I am generally very good at calming my co-workers down when they are upset.  
L When it comes to a team project, I sometimes find it difficult to motivate other people.

### **Quick Guide**

- Cheering others up when they're down; calming others down when they're agitated
- Manipulative but not necessarily in a bad way

*Importance:*

- High scorers may more likely to motivate others when they need it

*Downside:*

- High scorers may be seen by some as manipulative

## 7. Intuition vs. Reason.

The next four components pertain more to applications of emotional intelligence than to its elements. The first of these applications is *willingness to use emotions in the pursuit of important life goals*. Feelings can be beneficial in that they provide a broader array of considerations in decision-making. In the MEIA-W, this dimension was conceived as a preference to base life decisions on *feelings over logic*.

- H In making big business decisions, gut feelings are often better than reasoning through every detail.
- L Good business planning is based on facts, not feelings.

#### **Quick Guide**

- Going with “gut feelings” vs. being logical; following your heart not your head
- Going on instinct rather than weighing all the pros and cons

#### *Importance:*

- Instinct can be a powerful and useful force

#### *Downside:*

- It is often better to think things through logically than react solely on “gut feelings”

### **8. Creative Thinking.**

A second application of emotional intelligence is its contribution to *creativity*. Positive emotions may facilitate creative thinking by altering the organization and use of information stored in memory. Emotionally intelligent people are better able to develop and maintain positive feelings, which contribute to creative thinking. Creativity, in turn, gives individuals more options in dealing with life events.

- H Some of my co-workers think my ideas are daring.
- L My thinking is pretty much like that of my co-workers.

#### **Quick Guide**

- Thinking outside the box; coming up with good ideas when others don't
- Not just unique ideas, but potentially useful ones

#### *Importance:*

- Problem-solving, especially in “think-tank” situations

#### *Downside:*

- A high scorer may tend to go off on tangents and have more misses than hits

### **9. Mood Redirected Attention.**

A third utilization of emotional intelligence *is the capacity to attend to information when powerful – usually negative – emotions occur*. Such emotions can improve self-awareness by directing attention to their source, which, in turn, can reveal latent priorities. An example would be the revelation of problems dealing with customers brought on by

frustration in a previous customer-focused job. People high in emotional intelligence utilize their emotional reactions to help them see their limitations (and their strengths) as a first step in overcoming them. (All items on this scale are positively keyed.)

- H Getting upset on the job allows me to see what is important in my life.  
H Strong emotions brought on by my job allow me to understand myself better.

### **Quick Guide**

- “Every cloud has a silver lining”; keeping a positive outlook on the past
- Looking back on bad situations as “learning experiences”

#### *Importance:*

- It’s good to learn from past mistakes and not dwell on them

#### *Downside:*

- High scorers may tend to avoid facing reality and their own responsibilities

## **10. Motivating Emotions.**

The last application of emotional intelligence refers to *motivation in the pursuit of one's goals*. There are two aspects of this dimension: optimism and perseverance. The first attaches a positive value to the pursuit of goals and the latter is needed to overcome hurdles to goal attainment. Both may be critical for success in diverse avenues of life, especially job performance.

- H I am a highly self-motivated worker.  
L When I’m having a bad day at work, sometimes I wish I could just go back to bed.

### **Quick Guide**

- Being optimistic, hopeful; looking ahead with positive anticipation
- Being persevering; willing and ready to work through obstacles

#### *Importance:*

- Positive thinking can keep you on track, focused, motivated

#### *Downside:*

- The future may not be as rosy as it seems; need to be able to cut your losses and move on