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## Emotional Intelligence and Ageing - A Statement of Intent

*Emotional Intelligence and Ageing* acknowledges the concepts, ideas and exercises that underpin the theories and practices of emotional intelligence (EI).

Recognising the importance of the relationship between the individual and the community, it promotes independence, free thinking and decision making while contributing to whichever communities we live in.

It is not a panacea for all ills, just one means of thinking about ageing in a positive and creative way. It may not appeal to all, it is written without prejudice by someone who is from the same generation as you. Providing guidelines and solutions, it is primarily something to be read and considered in the light of your own experiences, hopes and concerns over the future. There are no further instructions; after all, life doesn't come with an instruction manual: dip in, dip out, read intensely or skip to the practical solutions. No one is watching – you can make your own decisions as an independent and inspirational individual member of whichever communities you choose to be part of.

Fundamentally, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is about how good you feel about yourself. It acknowledges learnt and yet to be learnt skills, while recognising that we can all share our aspirations, thoughts, feelings and expertise, no matter how old we think we are.

This short course intends to promote well-being, motivate and illustrate the importance of using EI to contribute to a long and life fulfilling retirement.

It celebrates empathy but also independence and the right to follow a quiet life if that's how you want to live. There are no compulsory exercises to complete – the

underlying theme is to be aware of how you feel in the company of others or, if you chose, in your own company.

No one can provide all the answers as to how to manage ageing. This short course recognises difference and the importance of being able to make your own decisions. There's no factory clock ticking the hours away. At this stage of your life, you may have the freedom to think or, perhaps, to engage with the community you live in. As I've said – this is your choice – you chose what to do next.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) encourages a positive, practical and rational approach to life. EI is something we all have, whether we recognise it or not. Interestingly, research seems to suggest that:

1. Understanding EI will contribute to reducing isolation and loneliness in the Elderly through the development of group activities within learning and social communities.
2. EI may improve quality of life and contribute to improved mental and physical health.
3. By knowing your own emotional strengths and weaknesses, an emotionally intelligent individual is more likely to make a positive contribution to their community.
4. EI creates opportunities to evaluate how people interact with others.
5. The continued development of EI will enhance individual perception of the ageing process and how quickly you may adapt to changing circumstances.

EI can lead to an increased awareness of how you can contribute to the emotional management of your life.

Learning in your older years keeps your brain active, and discussing ideas and socialising is an important part of the university experience. Studying is an effective way for the over 60s to tackle the spectre of isolation, loneliness and depression.

*Professor David Latchman, Birkbeck College, University of London*

EI values different ways of being bright. It asserts that understanding someone else's point of view, or knowing how to deal with stress, are forms of intelligence, just as useful – indeed, quite possibly more so – than being able to solve logical brainteasers fast under pressure.

*An intelligent look at emotional intelligence, ALT, London 2005 p9*

So, is EI merely a question of becoming emotionally flexible? In other words, rather than becoming increasingly isolated, angry and insensitive to the feelings of others, EI provides the opportunity to engage with, and change, the ways in which you can adjust to coping with decreased mobility and increased leisure time.

### Learning and Enjoying Life

Now is not the time to engage in complicated assessment strategies and courses designed to raise levels of stress. *Emotional Intelligence and Ageing* uses three main strategies to promote interesting and interactive learning. Whichever section you start it will always feature a similar approach:

#### Self-Assessment

Through discussion, surveys, observation and self-evaluation that can be completed on paper, using a computer or through talking and listening

#### Activities

Let's talk about it – the art of living an emotional life - Talking, listening and remembering. A variety of activities designed to stimulate discussion or heighten your awareness of how you see life!

#### Bright Ideas

To promote further interactivity and food for thought



You may also see boxes like this that offer you further advice:

**Things to Remember:**  
By being aware of your emotions  
you can change them or promote them.

### Assessing EI

There are a number of different ways of measuring EI. None of them are perfect but can help you to evaluate your own level of emotional intelligence. These assessments rely on honesty, integrity and thinking about how you view yourself. They use self-assessment as a methodology – the need for formal testing is no longer required. The concept of EI promotes self-evaluation. There is no need for assessing whether you have passed or failed a particular assessment. The days of passing examinations are gone – EI recognises that there is much more to life than passing tests and checking out % marks. So, don't be surprised if the assessments, if there are any, are informal and thought provoking.

### In Search of a Simple life

Are you the sort of reader who turns to the end of the book to find out how it ends or the type of reader who doesn't want to know how it turns out until that surprising moment when all is revealed? If only life was as simple as that! Just two choices:

1: Turn to the last page

**OR**

2. Wait and see what happens.

Both are entirely normal reactions – both showing that you make the choice as a rational human being. The only problem is – other people: the advisors, families, religious leaders, health workers, neighbours, friends and that inner voice that says

*“I should always do as I am told. They must be right – they know what they’re talking about.”*

To some degree that inner voice makes a lot of sense. It’s your voice, your conscience, the rhythmic pulse that has kept you on track for decades. It’s made sure that you’ve been in the right place at the right times: at work, at school, weddings, funerals, births and ceremonies. It has provided structure, organisation and a sense of belonging, of doing the right thing.

All these elements are important. They contribute to your role as a member of the community of life. But as you get older, perhaps this sense of routine falls away. How do you structure your day? What if there’s no reason to follow someone else’s routine? What happens if you are in a position to make your own decisions? Scary, isn’t it?

But, of course, you have already made and make a huge number of decisions every day. No one tells you when to wake, eat, sleep, walk, talk, moan or shout. You decide your levels of motivation, emotions and what you “need” to do on a daily if not a minute by minute basis. There is nothing new in all this except that it’s easy to forget what a great decision maker you are. Still not convinced? Why not try making a Decisions Journal? (There’s one included in this course!) It just may make a difference!

## Ageing and Exercise

It's not good sitting and worrying about getting older. Time passes quickly, or slowly, depending on what you do with it. Just marking time, it's a time-filler, where did all that time go or, even, I never seem to have enough time to do everything in my day, are just four phrases that are time-driven. In practical terms, we have to ensure that we have time to ourselves. In other words, taking your time is an emotional experience.

## What have you got to Lose?



Nothing! Your time is your own so why not begin to explore your emotional intelligence by accessing *Emotional Intelligence and Ageing*.

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## ANNEX A

1. What is Emotional Intelligence?
2. Emotional Intelligence: A brief history
3. Emotional Intelligence and the Elderly
4. A Change of Pace
5. Decision making and not dwelling on the past
6. What are loneliness and social isolation?

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### 1: What is Emotional Intelligence?

*“ ... the ability to understand ourselves and other people, and in particular to be aware of, understand and use information about the emotional states of ourselves and others with competence. It includes the ability to understand, express and manage our own emotions, and respond to the emotions of others, in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others... ”*

*Katherine Weare's definition of emotional literacy (2004)*

### 2: Emotional Intelligence: A brief history

In 1966, a German psychiatrist named Leuner wrote an article called 'Emotional Intelligence and emancipation' in which he hypothesised that the reason some women wilfully rejected the social roles and responsibilities that were expected of them was because of their 'low Emotional Intelligence'. As a cure, he prescribed a combination of LSD-induced hallucinatory 'trips' and psychotherapy.

In 1983, Harvard developmental psychologist Howard Gardner published a book called *Frames of Mind* in which he argued that the dominant forms of intelligence



associated with linguistic, logical and mathematical ability should be supplemented by five (later seven) others.

The new intelligences included (as well as musical, spatial and kinaesthetic intelligences), interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Interpersonal intelligence was defined as:

*“ ...the ability to understand people, what motivates them, how they work, how to work cooperatively with them ..”while intrapersonal intelligence involved ‘access to one’s own feeling life’, and ‘the capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself, and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life’. By picking out human abilities like emotional self-awareness, empathy and social skills, placing them alongside the traditional virtues of literacy and numeracy, and giving them the high-status designation of ‘intelligences’, Gardner legitimised their claim on teachers’ time and attention...”*

In 1990, researchers Jack Mayer, Peter Salovey and their colleagues published two articles that introduced the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ itself into mainstream American psychology. And then, in 1995, came psychology journalist Daniel Goleman’s best seller *Emotional Intelligence*. Goleman brought together the existing body of Emotional Intelligence research with an introduction to how emotion works in the brain, and added some practical examples of how ‘Emotional Intelligence’ was being cultivated in schools and workplaces around the USA. In this 1995 version, Goleman cherry-picked bits of both Gardner’s and Mayer and Salovey’s definitions to put together his own version of Emotional Intelligence, comprising knowing one’s emotions, managing one’s emotions, motivating oneself, recognising emotions in others, and handling relationships skilfully.

By 1998, however, in the follow-up *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman had decided to go for the kitchen-sink approach. Now Emotional Intelligence expanded to include, amongst many other things, 'self-confidence', 'trustworthiness', 'initiative', 'optimism' 'political awareness', 'leadership' and 'influence and negotiation skills'.

Almost everything we might possibly want in, to use Goleman's phrase, a 'successful person' is there, in other words – *except* the traditional educational concerns of literacy, numeracy, analytical thinking and knowledge about the world.

Given many educators' dissatisfaction with the extent to which schools were in thrall to these latter concerns, it is easy to see why 'Emotional Intelligence' struck such a chord. On the one hand the phrase offered a tantalising and eye-catching oxymoron. 'Emotional' pointed at some of the human qualities most conspicuously missing from the mainstream curriculum, while 'intelligence' seemed to borrow the credibility of earlier, apparently scientifically-based, uses of the word.

No longer was a concern with 'feelings' something rather suspect, marginal or 'touchy-feely'; it now had an air of intellectual legitimacy, and scientific clout, of its own. 'Emotional Intelligence' sounded simultaneously respectable, subversive and intriguing. It was a winner.

Primarily, the applied themes of *Emotional Intelligence and the Elderly* are as follows:

1. Understanding Emotional Intelligence will contribute to reducing isolation and loneliness in the Elderly through the development of group activities within learning and social communities.

2. Emotional Intelligence may improve quality of life and contribute to improved mental and physical health.
3. By knowing your own emotional strengths and weaknesses, an emotionally intelligent individual is more likely to make a positive contribution to their community.
4. Emotional Intelligence creates opportunities to evaluate how people interact with others.
5. The continued development of Emotional Intelligence will enhance individual perception of the aging process and how the Elderly may adapt to changing circumstances.

Current research indicates that some competencies should be developed through training leading to an increased awareness of how older people can contribute to the emotional management of their lives. But how do you teach Emotional Intelligence? Emotional Intelligence provides the opportunity to engage with and change the ways in which the Elderly cope with decreased mobility and increased leisure time while continuing to make a valuable contribution to their community. These are the issues that inform and contribute to the development of the relationship between teaching and learning. Following discussions with experienced practitioners and extensive research, this course will emphasise the interactive nature of blended learning to support teachers and the elderly in various aspects of Emotional Intelligence.

### **3: Emotional Intelligence and the Elderly**

There are many assumptions about emotional intelligence and age. Popular literature and “common sense” assert that older people are more aware, wise, and restrained. Is it true? Are older people more self-aware, better at self-management,

and/or do they make more principled decisions?

This study finds that some parts of emotional intelligence (EQ) do increase with age, though the effect is slight; in addition there are elements of EQ that do not increase with age indicating some competencies must be developed through training.<sup>1</sup>

This statement suggests that some competencies should be developed through training leading to an increased awareness of how older people can contribute to the emotional management of their lives.

*Learning in your older years keeps your brain active, and discussing ideas and socialising is an important part of the university experience. Studying is an effective way for the over 60s to tackle the spectre of isolation, loneliness and depression.<sup>2</sup>*

So, is Emotional Intelligence merely a question of becoming emotionally flexible? In other words, rather than becoming increasingly isolated, angry and insensitive to the feelings of others, Emotional Intelligence provides the opportunity to engage with and change the ways in which the Elderly cope with decreased mobility and increased leisure time.

#### 4: A Change of Pace

This change of pace requires self-management. How do you become emotionally self-sufficient when your former working life has been driven by someone else? This may equally apply to a non-working partner who suddenly finds that their “home-space” is taken up by their now retired husband, wife or partner.

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo Fariselli, Massimiliano Ghini, Joshua Freedman, *Age and Emotional Intelligence* White Paper, Jan 8 2008 revised,

<sup>2</sup> Professor David Latchman, Birkbeck College, University of London –11 March 2013 The Guardian

### 5: Decision making and not dwelling on the past

The ability to re-evaluate and to reflect on what may have been is not necessarily a positive approach to managing post-working life. Retirement does not have to signal a slow journey towards inactivity and isolation. The inter-generational gap may become an issue if organisations and projects fail to recognise the importance of engaging older professionals to contribute to or write the materials.

### 6: What are loneliness and social isolation?

The terms 'isolation' and 'loneliness' are often used interchangeably, but they refer to two distinct concepts. Isolation refers to separation from social or familial contact, community involvement, or access to services. Loneliness, by contrast, can be understood as an individual's personal, subjective sense of lacking these things to the extent that they are wanted or needed. It is therefore possible to be isolated without being lonely, and to be lonely without being isolated.<sup>3</sup>

The intention of encouraging an understanding of EI within older generations is to raise awareness of how it is just as important to recognise that there is more to living longer than ensuring a healthy and physically active lifestyle. Yes, these are important but it is equally important to recognise that the psychological, mental and emotional health of each individual will impact on their quality of life and longevity. The need to engage with, and understand, community groups, villages and rural communities often provide an emotional life-line for what may be considered an aging population.

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<sup>3</sup> Age UK, 'Loneliness and social isolation review', 2009

## ANNEX B

# An Introduction to Emotional Intelligence and Ageing (EIA)

## Course Material



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### Introduction

*Emotional Intelligence* is a skill you are born with or trained in, which influences everybody's daily life activities, including, family/friends relationship, work, and how you view yourself. It involves perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and managing emotions.

### What Will I Learn?

1. What is Emotional Intelligence?
2. Benefits of being Emotionally Intelligent.
3. How to become Emotionally Intelligent and how to use it in your daily life.

### Introduction to Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI describes the ability, capacity or skill to identify, assess, and control the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. Emotions whether we realise it or not, regulate and guide our daily life. By identifying emotions you will be able to determine how they influence your work and life, in a positive or negative way. If negative emotions guide your life, it might be time for you to change them. Become Emotionally Intelligent and improve your quality of life!

“Emotion is the language of a person's internal state of being, normally based in or tied to their internal (physical) and external (social) sensory feeling”. EI gives us the tools to identify and change those emotions, feelings, and thoughts, in order to take advantage of them. Not every person is emotionally intelligent, but it is possible to develop, nurture and improve those skills.



**Things to Remember:**

Emotions influence your daily life activities!

**Things to Remember:**

By being aware of your emotions you can change them or promote them.

Our emotions do not only influence ourselves, they also influence others, as we are also influenced by other's feelings. By understanding emotions you will be able to use them to influence others. Emotions have the ability of being appealed to, when hoping to get another person to see our point of view. Emotions also affect your health, and the health of the people around you. By being emotionally intelligent you will be able to transmit to others, positive things, emotions and thinking.

### Perceiving your emotions

**Things to Remember:**

Positive thinking attracts positive things while negative thinking attracts negative things!

Emotions are not rational and therefore there are not good or bad emotions. Sometimes they lead to behaviour that may be constructive or destructive. Rational thoughts help us choose our actions. You can learn how to lead with them, living peacefully with them, release them and manage them. Some methods to identify what you are really feeling about a person, place, situation or thing, are given below.

**Try them!**

- i. There are different options to perceive emotions, such as paying attention to our thoughts and daydreams;
- ii. Record, for a period of time, what makes you feel strong; Identify things, people, places, that provide you with good vibrations;
- iii. Identify negative thinking to be able to turn it into positive;
- iv. Write down your feelings to easily recognise them; etc. Identify your positive thinking, and keep it that way, you will see positive results!

**Things to Remember:**

Emotions are reliable indicators of what is really going on inside of us.

Emotions control your thinking, behaviour and actions.

With a small effort you can improve your EI through:

**Self-awareness:** the ability to recognise your emotions

**Self-regulation:** the ability to control your emotions

**Motivation:** the ability to motivate yourself and others

**Empathy:** the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of others

**Social Skills:** the ability to communicate well and to have good personal relationships

## Benefits of being emotionally intelligent

By identifying emotions and using them to obtain positive results you will become more emotionally intelligent. You will be aware of what makes you feel good and/or bad and be able to change the way you confront those feelings or the situations that create them. So, the same situations will be viewed from a different perspective and different solutions may be found.

By identifying your own feelings you will be able to determine whether you are “full” of positive or negative thinking/behaviour; recognising the things that make you feel well and happy. Using your positive feelings at work will help you to improve your relationship with others including family, friends and carers.

**Things to Remember:**

A small effort in identifying your emotions will provide great benefits!

**Things to Remember:**

Understanding your ability to change things will have a positive impact on your life

## How to become emotionally intelligent and change how you live

The exercises provided in the following sections will help you to develop your Emotional Intelligence Skills. Go through the different sections to learn and improve the skills necessary to be emotionally intelligent in later life, leading to a stimulating and rewarding retirement.



Smiling changes our mood, releases stress, is contagious, lowers the blood pressure, releases endorphins, natural pain killers and serotonin – a great way to become more emotionally intelligent!

### Things to Remember:

A smile will help you and the people around you to feel better and to improve your life

Emotional Intelligence helps you to see things from a different perspective, providing opportunities to find different solutions, reached thanks to more rational thinking, and not derived from an emotional situation.

It is easy to learn to be more emotionally intelligent by doing small exercises. Nothing difficult – just an opportunity to think about yourself and how you are best suited to life beyond 60.

**START BECOMING EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT SIMPLY BY GOING ONTO THE NEXT SECTION!**

## Self-Assessment

This simple questionnaire has been created to help you to assess your how you cope with particular situations. Each question raises issues that are intended to help you reassess how you view your life!

## 9 Quick Questions to help you think

Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

1) How would you describe your health?

- a) Good – no serious problems
- b) Mostly good – occasional colds
- c) I seem to catch everything going and feel tired all the time
- d) I live with one or more chronic illness and am often in pain

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

2) Which of the following best describes what you do when you feel stressed?

- a) I get irritable and angry and shout at people
- b) I talk to a close friend about it
- c) I don't let it worry me, I know it will pass
- d) I seek out sources of information like books or tapes to help me cope better

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option

3) How do you spend your spare time?

- a) I read books, newspapers or magazines
- b) I do something like an evening class or go for a walk
- c) I sit and watch television or listen to the radio
- d) I don't have the energy to do much

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

4) How would you describe your friendships?

- a) I have a lot of acquaintances but no close friends
- b) My really close friends live some distance away, and while we talk on the phone I don't see them much
- c) I have good friends whom I see on a regular basis
- d) I have lots of friends but never seem to find time to spend with them

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

5) Which statement best describes your attitude to retirement?

- a) I enjoy being retired and find it rewarding
- b) I miss the structure of going to work
- c) I regret not having retired earlier
- d) I would like to continue to work or volunteer part-time

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

6) How often and where do you laugh?

- a) I hardly ever laugh
- b) I have a good laugh with my friends when I go out
- c) I try to see the funny side to most things
- d) I rarely see the funny side to most things

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option

7) In a crisis situation what best describes your behaviour

- a) I feel that sorting it out is my responsibility and take complete control
- b) I walk away and pretend there is no crisis
- c) I ask others to help me
- d) I blame it on someone else

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

8) How would you rate your level of concentration and alertness

- a) I'm always forgetting things
- b) I sometimes lose concentration
- c) I'm alert most of the time
- d) I can't seem to remember as much as I could

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

9) How often do you indulge yourself in something that gives you real pleasure or joy

- a) Never
- b) Once a week
- c) Once a month
- d) Once a year

Select an option:

- Option a  Option b  Option c  Option d

### NEXT!

Once you've answered all the questions you may like discuss them with the rest of your group or in pairs. There are no wrong answers! Becoming emotionally intelligent is all about knowing your strengths – both emotional and physically – and sharing them with others. Of course, you may like to talk about any answers that surprised you or, indeed, seem to suggest that you live your life differently from others. But it is not a competition – you are in charge of your own destiny even if you don't always believe it!

#### Activity

1. Look back over your answers – is there anything that surprised you? Share your thoughts with others.
2. Discuss similarities with other people in your group.
3. Take time to listen to what other people say. Sharing is a two-way activity.



## EI and Retirement: Newly retired or ready for retirement? Read ON!

### Emotional Intelligence and Managing your Retirement

Based on a variety of good practices these techniques may help you to manage the physical and emotional aspects of reaching retirement. If they seem right for you, try them and you can always take part in a short self-assessment exercise if it helps you to identify whether they work well for you or not.

**Things to Remember:** if you find that a particular technique works for you it's good to make a note because you never know when you might need to use it again!

**Self-Assessment Exercise: A Good Idea?** If you find that that something works for you please tick the Y (YES) box. And if something doesn't work for you tick the N (No) box.

Exercising is good for you		
1	<p>Regular exercise helps you to relax but for many people exercise conjures up images of working out in the gym, playing soccer or running. However, it doesn't have to be like that and if you want to keep fit it may be better to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Walk regularly each day</li> <li>2. Use the stairs rather than the lift</li> <li>3. Walk rather than use the bus or Metro</li> <li>4. Get off a metro or bus stop early and walk the last part of your journey.</li> <li>5. Regularly walk the dog or take your grandchildren to the park at weekends</li> </ol>	
A Good Idea?		Y   N
Comments:		

Managing My Anger		
2	<p>Anger Management: If you find it difficult to manage your anger levels it's worth:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognising that some people are easier to relate to with than others and that there will be situations that arise because you may find each other difficult to relate to.</li> <li>2. Avoiding situations that are beyond your experience, expertise or ability. In this way you may avoid any misunderstandings.</li> <li>3. Understanding that we get mad with our families because we know that we can. We feel secure and confident enough to be able to predict the reaction. But it's different in a community or neighbour relationship where your anger may cause further difficulties</li> </ol>	
A Good Idea?		Y   N
Comments:		

Reducing Isolation				
3	<p>If you worry about becoming isolated or lonely in retirement, it may be worth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking Yoga or relaxation classes</li> <li>• Exploring your creativity by taking music, painting or ceramics classes</li> <li>• Ensuring that you get enough sleep to keep you healthy!</li> <li>• Taking the time to eat and drink food that will help you to keep well.</li> <li>• Using meditation techniques to create a moment of calm in your busy life.</li> </ul>			
A Good Idea?		<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Y</td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> </tr> </table>	Y	N
Y	N			
<p>Comments:</p>          				

Keeping a Diary			
4	<p>Managing your life can become very complicated! It is worth thinking about keeping a <i>Retirement Diary</i>. This can help you to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remember key moments and events over a period of time</li> <li>2. Create a daily routine that will contribute to keeping track of your emotions and how you relate to others.</li> <li>3. Provide an interesting way to record the small but important things in life including weather, visits to friends, unusual wild-life: in fact anything that is of interest to YOU!</li> </ol>		
A Good Idea?			Y   N
Comments:			

**Managing a Busy Life**

5 Some people handle retirement better than others. In fact, some experts suggest that people thrive on the stress and order associated with working and miss it when they retire. This may not be you! But how do you spend your time? Many artists and writers maintain that it is important to record what you do so that you can see how busy you really are!

The first step is to review a typical week in your life! You can do this by:

1. Keeping a log for seven days recording everything you do.
2. Drawing up a timetable that includes ALL your daily activities.
3. Reviewing each day before going to bed and falling asleep.

And remember: used in association with keeping a *Retirement Diary* you may recognise that you live a very busy life and that we all need to take time out to recuperate.

A Good Idea?	Y	N
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Comments:

**These are just 5 examples of managing the emotions associated with being retired. For more detailed information please see the resources section of this learning programme.**

**Activity**

1. Look back over your answers – is there anything that surprised you? Share your thoughts with others.
2. Discuss similarities with other people in your group.
3. Take time to listen to what other people say. Sharing is a two-way activity.

## Other forms of Self-Assessment

There are a number of different ways of measuring EI. None of them are perfect but can help you to evaluate your own level of emotional intelligence. These assessments rely on honesty, integrity and thinking about how you view yourself. They use self-assessment as a methodology – the need for formal testing is no longer required. The concept of EI promotes self-evaluation. There is no need for assessing whether you have passed or failed a particular assessment. The days of passing examinations are gone – EI recognises that there is much more to life than passing tests and checking out % marks.

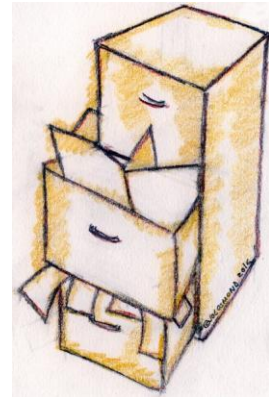
But, with so many different ways of working through your emotions, how can you decide the best approach for you?

### **You don't know how good you are and how much you know!**

**Things to Remember**

**N** There are so many different ways of managing your emotional life, especially as you grow older as you've got so much experience to use. It's almost as if your head is like a filing cabinet, filled with lots of information that is just waiting to be used or even shredded.

Try completing a SWOT Analysis to recognise, acknowledge and highlight your independent spirit and the vast bank of life skills that you've accrued and can use. Remember, now is a good time to show that Ageing is a positive action rather than a negative reaction.



## SWOT Analysis:

- Strengths:** What have you learned through life? Are you good at making decisions, creative or good at giving advice? List them here!
- Weaknesses:** If you recognise your weaknesses then perhaps you can begin to see how you can use your retirement to learn new skills.
- Opportunities:** Retirement can be a very positive experience! How will you use it? List things here that you would like to do!
- Timing:** Time passes so make the most of it! Add skills that you intend to enhance or ideas of how you can spend more time with family.

Strengths:	Weaknesses:
Opportunities:	Timing:



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Pause for reflection. Feeling sociable? Share your thoughts with others. If not, reflect on who you are and how you value yourself.

## Decisions Journal

It is worth reflecting on how many decisions you make that you are entirely responsible for. One way to acknowledge the vast amount of times that you have to make a personal decision on a daily or even minute by minute basis is to keep a **Decisions Journal**. How you complete this, is entirely up to you. (That's the First Decision!) But, just in case you would like some guidance, here are a few suggestions:

1. List every decision that you make in the first hour of waking. Even the smallest decision – from when to wake o when to get out of bed or have your first coffee of the day should be recorded. You may wish to use a template like this:

<b>A DECISIONS JOURNAL: A <i>Sample Template</i></b>	
Time	Day/Date: Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016

	Activity
7.00am	Alarm Rings – turn it off.
	Think about getting up
7.05am	Get Up
<i>Continue to complete up to one hour</i>	

2. Alternatively, you could complete a **Decisions Journal** that only highlights the main decisions taken on a particular day:

A DECISIONS JOURNAL: A <i>Sample Template for Main Decisions</i>	
Time	Day/Date: Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2016 Activity
7.00am	Wake, wash, make breakfast
9.00am	Check email. Arrange to meet Community Action Group @ 10.30am in local coffee shop
10.30am	Meet Community Action Group - decide to record our memories using George's Digital Recorder. Arrange to complete this on Wednesday at 10.30am in same location
<i>Continue to complete for one day only</i>	

These are just two examples. You can use any format you like. This is one way of recognising how many decisions you make that will ensure that your day goes smoothly. Some may have no impact whatsoever on others. Other decisions may result in recurring social interaction.

The main reason for completing a **Decisions Journal** is to emphasise how much you responsibility you take for your own actions. No one is telling you to make any of these decisions. It's all up to you. You may decide not to get up this morning. You may decide to go for a long walk at sunrise without breakfast or a wash. It is entirely up to you!

## How do you see yourself within your community?

EI also helps to recognise confidence and how you feel about life. When you retire you may feel disenfranchised. (Powerless when it comes to decision making) By completing an **IVRi** you are able to identify just how you feel about your place within your community. There is nothing complicated about this – it's just another form of self-assessment that should be completed quickly. Remember that it is entirely personal and doesn't need to take you more than 2 minutes to complete!

**IVRi** – Give yourself marks out of 5. FIVE being the highest – ONE the lowest!

	Description: How TRUE is this statement?	1 – 5(high)
<b>Invisible:</b>	I feel invisible and rarely see anyone else apart from the occasional visitor	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Visible:</b>	I know a lot of people and maintain a visible presence by being outgoing and joining in.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Respected:</b>	I have lived here for a long time and feel that I am respected in my community	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ignored:</b>	I often feel ignored and find it difficult to make my feelings known.	<input type="checkbox"/>



Pause for reflection. If you have tended to score 5s then perhaps you can think about how you appear to others. Of course, it depends on which element you're answering but, generally speaking, Invisible/Ignored 4 or 5 may have highlighted feelings of

emotional insecurity while scoring 4 or 5 for Visible/Respected indicate a higher community profile.

Of course, the numbers are almost irrelevant – it’s what you choice to do about the outcomes that can lead to a shift in your emotional well-being.

## Life Achievements (LAs)

Rather like a SWOT exercise, **Life Achievements** gives you an opportunity to recognise and celebrate just what has made you who you are today. There are no wrong answers. This is just another way of saying “how good you are” and what makes you, you!

**Physically:** What are you life achievements? Brilliant swimmer, dancer, footballer, walker or runner: List them below.

**Emotionally:** Raising a family, being a grandparent, surviving difficult times –war, famine, economic hardship. This may help you to reflect on your achievements if you list them below.

**Culturally:** Painter, poet, actor, writer, linguist, translator, charity organiser, volunteer or supporter? List below!

**Economically:** These could include financial gains, houses, properties or anything that has contributed to your lifestyle or the lives of others. Include these below.

Physically:	Emotionally:

Culturally:	Economically:



Your place within the community and way you approach getting older is directly related to understanding your emotions. EI is just one form of recognising the importance of maintaining a highly personalised and proactive approach to retirement. Think, reflect and take action – EI is just waiting to help!

**WANT TO PUT YOUR NEWLY FOUND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING INTO PRACTICE? USE YOUR EI BY GOING ONTO THE NEXT SECTION!**

**Things to Remember:**

Make the most of your EI by trying out a few practical solutions that may enhance your retirement.

## Practical Solutions:

There's little point in knowing about your emotions and understanding the outcomes from the self-assessment exercises if you don't do anything with what you've discovered or confirmed about yourself.

## About Time

I had found myself thinking of time – time and perception, time and consciousness, time and memory, time and music, time and movement. I had returned, in particular, to the question of whether the apparently continuous passage of time and movement given to our eyes was an illusion... I found myself referring again to the “cinematographic” sequences of stills described to me by migraine patients and which I myself had on occasion experienced.

Oliver Sacks, *On the Move - A Life*, Picador (Oxford) 2015, 350-351

What does all this mean? Once again, it is up for interpretation. The ways that time passes are not written in stone but in days, hours, minutes, seconds and milliseconds. The illusion of time is a necessity otherwise it could drive you crazy. There is little value from returning to relive time – if you believe in anything then it should be this: that time passes whether you care to notice it or not!

'Life must be lived forwards but can only be understood backwards' - Søren Kierkegaard

Whichever way you look at it, Sacks and Kierkegaard have a point. Both consider the passing of time and both reflect on how life has turned out. Sacks may have a complex relationship with visualising time – who hasn't – while Kierkegaard's statement is simple in its complexity – the nature of Zen itself!

So, where do we go from here? Do we remain in a state of contemplation – doing little throughout our ageing years or make a decision to live each day as if it's your last and make the most of living life to the full? You have the time, you may even have the money but are you really able to live life to the full while 'giving something back' to your community?

### Using EI to contribute to your community

There are no perfect solutions, just as there are no prescribed answers but if you remember that the introduction to EI (Statement of Intent) included the following statement:

*By knowing your own emotional strengths and weaknesses, an emotionally intelligent individual is more likely to make a positive contribution to their community.*

Great words, but how can you make a difference? Purely subjective but what follows are a range of activities that may prove right for you.

#### Three examples of successfully engaging in community projects

##### 1: Men in Sheds

'A shed is to a man what a handbag is to a woman. Both contain all the essentials to survive the modern world. Here at Age UK Cheshire, we believe that every man needs a shed. Sheds have an important place in the local community by undertaking work for other charitable organisations, council groups and churches and even the elderly residents in the community.' (Cheshire Age UK)

### 2: Shared Tuesday Lunches

A small Quaker community raised its profile for many years through providing Tuesday Lunches, which provided a simple lunch and raised thousands for charity. This simple model – managed by volunteers - provided opportunities to eat, think, talk and share on a regular weekly basis. Not restricted to an elderly group, it also provided opportunities for inter-generational discussion. A typical meal consisted of *Soup of the Day*, bread, tea/coffee and cake with a “what you can afford” bowl for donations. All monies collected in this way were given to local charities. (Alton Hampshire UK)

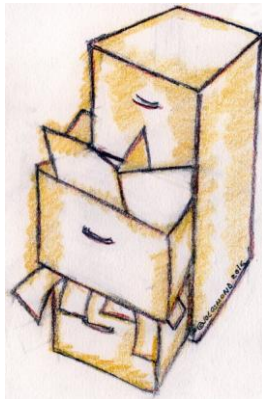
### 3: International Women’s Group:

This concept brings together women from different countries and cultures. Locally based, it provides an opportunity to share a common language or to become more confident in communicating with others. Each community has its own aims and objectives although food -sharing recipes, stories and family traditions – seems to provide a common focus for meeting and eating! If there’s not one in your area, why not think about starting one like this one:

*Mazí Mas was founded to help migrant women who could not find work, or did not have the right to work, and had little support to help them find their feet in a new place. They came to volunteer because they wanted to put their culinary skills to use, gain work experience, meet new people, and give back to their communities. And, overwhelmingly, these women dreamed of one day having their own small food businesses. Read their full story at: <http://www.mazimas.co.uk/>*



## Practical Solutions: Ageing Well



### Things to Remember

Remember that filing cabinet? Perhaps, it's time to use some of that information or to spring-clean by getting rid of those negative retirement blues!

**Physically:** eat well, sleep less, exercise and reflect. Take regular health check-ups and try not to ignore that niggling pain that has been there for so long that it's become part of your daily routine.

**Emotionally:** Celebrate aging, independence and the opportunities it gives you to be different, or just yourself. Not knowing what you're looking for? Consider the various sections devoted to **Life Achievements**, **SWOT Analysis** and **How do you see yourself within your community? (IVRi)**

**Creating your own Rhythm:** Without a factory clock checking your very move, you can establish and maintain your own unique waking and living rhythm. Make the most of this time before someone realises that you wake early and can phone to find you things to do.

**Celebrating Role Models:** These can be personal – the neighbour you've always respected, the daughter you've lost touch with because of time or energy or seemingly different values. OR, famous people who have successfully continued to

create and inspire long after many others have retired. Get together with family, friends or your community to talk about your role models – you may find you share similar values that can lead to further developments.

**Creating opportunities for Sharing:** These may be community based – providing talks, thoughts and taking part inspirational activities – or family and friendship opportunities for storytelling and sharing how you became who you are!

**Recording and Sharing** – a more permanent record. There may be opportunities to record your life experiences for your own enjoyment or perhaps for future generations to listen to or read. This could form the basis for a small community project. Digital technologies allow this to happen easily.

## And finally here's another idea!

### **The Storyteller Syndrome: Raising your personal profile**

We all have stories to tell. They may not be entirely true but they're entirely false, either. Storytelling is an opportunity for reflection and for sharing with family, friends, communities and strangers at bus stops! There is nothing wrong with sharing your life experiences. It may provide an opportunity for you to feel more confident about what you have done and how you view yourself today. Storytelling is not about boasting but ensuring that the people in your life know what you have done and where you have come from. In many societies, storytelling is a means to pass on your experiences, family histories and scary moments so that they can be passed from generation to generation.



So, what stories do you have to tell?

Who would you share them with?

And, how can they be recorded for future generations?

Use your EI to promote a positive and reflective approach to life!

**Things to Remember**

EI is all about you and how to interact with and, continue to develop all those skills that you have accrued in life! You are not alone – there are so many opportunities to live a long and happy retirement. Read Annex B for further inspirational and life affirming publications.

## ANNEX C

### Further Reading

Emotional Intelligence: Perspectives from Educational and Positive Psychology  
by Jerrell C. Cassady, Mourad Ali Eissa, 2008

Peter Salovey, Marc A. Brackett, John D. Mayer, *Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model*, 2007

Adele B. Lynn, *50 Activities for Developing Emotional Intelligence*, 2000

*Promoting Emotional Health and Well-Being*, UK Department for Education and Skills/Department of Health booklet available from The Health Development Agency, [www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk](http://www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk)

#### **Additional biographically based books:**

Marie de Hennezel, *The Warmth of the Heart Prevents the Body from Rusting – Ageing without growing old*. Pan Macmillan 2012

Marie's book carries the central message that even when our bodies start to fall apart, in our hearts and our spirits we can still remain active and youthful.

Her advice includes:

1. Being alert to new experiences
2. Retaining the capacity for joy and wonder

3. Being receptive to new people and ideas
4. Not expecting too much of others
5. Having a positive attitude in order to avoid feeling excluded

Shari Graydon, *I Feel Great About My Hands: And Other Unexpected Joys of Aging*  
Douglas & McIntyre (2011)

Women's advocate and acclaimed writer Shari Graydon sets out to counter the supposed downhill slide-inspired grief by inviting notable women-all over fifty-to provide an alternative perspective. The result is a colourful anthology that challenges the melancholy with a lively, often thoughtful, sometimes irreverent and ultimately uplifting celebration of the wonderful aspects of maturity.

Donald Hall, *Essays after Eighty*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, (2014)

Donald Hall has lived a remarkable life of letters, a career capped by a National Medal of the Arts, awarded by the president. Now, in the “unknown, unanticipated galaxy” of very old age, he is writing searching essays that startle, move, and delight. Most memorably, Hall writes about his enduring love affair with his ancestral Eagle Pond Farm and with the writing life that sustains him, every day: “Yesterday my first nap was at 9:30 a.m., but when I awoke I wrote again.”

### Things to Remember

“In newspapers and magazines I read about what’s happening. Apparently Facebook exists to extinguish friendship. E-mail and texting destroy the post office. eBay replaces garage sales. Amazon eviscerates bookstores. Technology speeds, then doubles its speed, then doubles it again. Art takes naps.”

Donald Hall, *Essays After Eighty*