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Important to Improve Their Emotional Intelligence in the  
Workplace**

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Key Skills Used for Managing Emotions*

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**Nine in Ten (91%) Managers and Supervisors Agree It's Important to Improve Their Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace**  
*Three-quarters (73%) Have No Significant Strength in Any of the Four Key Skills Used for Managing Emotions*

**Toronto, ON** – Nine in ten (91%) managers and supervisors 'agree' (37% strongly/54% somewhat) that 'it's important for them to continue improving their skills in managing distressed workers', according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. Less than one in ten (9%) 'disagree' (1% strongly/8% somewhat) that it's important for them to improve their emotional intelligence.

When it comes to managing emotions in the workplace, most managers and supervisors want to accommodate and support emotionally distressed workers. Nine in ten (91%) 'agree' (25% strongly/66% somewhat) that 'they are confident they have the ability to improve how I react to emotionally distressed workers', although one in ten (9%) 'disagree' (1% strongly/8% somewhat) that they are confident they have this ability. Another nine in ten (85%) 'agree' (26% strongly/59% somewhat) that they 'feel it's a good use of time to focus on building skills that will help them better respond to emotionally distressed workers', while two in ten (15%) 'disagree' (2% strongly/13% somewhat) about this use of time. Two-thirds (65%) 'agree' (9% strongly/56% somewhat) that 'they could do their job more effectively if they found ways to more easily manage distressed workers', although one-third (35%) 'disagree' (5% strongly/30% somewhat).



Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 48 statements pertaining to their ability to manage issues in the workplace dealing with psychological health and well-being. These statements were then grouped into four “skill areas” and analysed as either challenges or strengths. The outcome of this analysis shows that managers consider themselves more adept at dealing with the negative emotional states of those they manage (17% view as a significant strength) and in dealing with their own levels of stress and anger (15% view as a significant strength) than in communicating effectively with employees in stressful or emotionally fraught circumstances (29% identify as a challenge) or in understanding how their own emotions and emotional reactions may impact those they manage (27% identify as a challenge).

While most managers and supervisors believe it’s a good use of time to effectively support emotionally distressed employees, at least three-quarters (73%) have no significant strength in any of the four key skill areas for managing emotions (Dealing with other people’s negative emotions and reactions, communicating effectively, understanding your reactions, and managing your reactions).

Across all sectors, managers and supervisors claimed they had more challenges with these key areas than strengths. The sectors in which managers are most likely to face challenges in managing emotions (with two or more challenge areas) include wholesale trade (36%), accommodation and food services (31%), construction (29%), administrative and support (29%), and waste management and remediation (29%). Managers more likely to have strengths in managing emotions (with two or more strength areas) tended to work in sectors such as educational services (18%) and public administration (18%), although 82% of managers and supervisors in these fields identify they have one or fewer areas of strength.



The analysis of results indicated that female managers and supervisors are likely to have more strengths and fewer challenges in these skill areas. Fourteen percent (14%) of women were found to have two or more strengths in the four key skill areas for managing emotions, compared to just 11% of men. Conversely, three in ten (27%) male managers and supervisors were found to have two or more challenge areas within key skills to managing emotions, compared to only two in ten (21%) of female managers and supervisors who respond with similar challenges.

The group found to experience the greatest challenges, outside the wholesale trade sector, however, were younger managers and supervisors. Four in ten (35%) managers and supervisors aged 18-34 experienced challenges in two or more skill areas needed for managing emotions. Almost one-quarter (23%) of middle-aged (35-54 yrs. old) managers and supervisors were found to have two or more challenge areas, while two in ten (16%) of senior managers (55+ yrs. old) share similar challenges. Senior managers and supervisors (14%) slightly edge middle-aged managers and supervisors (13%) in experiencing two or more strengths in the key skill areas for managing emotions, compared to only 8% of younger managers and supervisors who have the same number of strength areas.



*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between July 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, on behalf of Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. For this survey a sample of 6,624 Canadians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. This includes a total of 4,307 employees and 2,317 managers/supervisors. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of +/- 1.7 percentage points for employees and +/- 2.3 percentage points for managers and supervisors. For more information on credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website at [http://ipsos-na.com/dl/pdf/research/public-affairs/IpsosPA\\_CredibilityIntervals.pdf](http://ipsos-na.com/dl/pdf/research/public-affairs/IpsosPA_CredibilityIntervals.pdf)*

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### How to Calculate Bayesian Credibility Intervals

The calculation of credibility intervals assumes that  $Y$  has a binomial distribution conditioned on the parameter  $\theta$ , i.e.,  $Y | \theta \sim \text{Bin}(n, \theta)$ , where  $n$  is the size of our sample. In this setting,  $Y$  counts the number of “yes”, or “1”, observed in the sample, so that the sample mean ( $\bar{y}$ ) is a natural estimate of the true population proportion  $\theta$ . This model is often called the likelihood function, and it is a standard concept in both the Bayesian and the Classical framework. The Bayesian<sup>1</sup> statistics combines both the prior distribution and the likelihood function to create a posterior distribution. The posterior distribution represents our opinion about which are the plausible values for  $\theta$  adjusted after observing the sample data. In reality, the posterior distribution is one’s knowledge base updated using the latest survey information. For the prior and likelihood functions specified here, the posterior distribution is also a beta distribution ( $\pi(\theta/y) \sim \beta(y+a, n-y+b)$ ), but with updated hyper-parameters.

Our credibility interval for  $\theta$  is based on this posterior distribution. As mentioned above, these intervals represent our belief about which are the most plausible values for  $\theta$  given our updated knowledge base. There are different ways to calculate these intervals based on  $\pi(\theta/y)$ . Since we want only one measure of precision for all variables in the survey, analogous to what is done within the Classical framework, we will compute the largest possible credibility interval for any observed sample. The worst case occurs when we assume that  $a=1$  and  $b=1$  and  $y = n/2$ . Using a simple approximation of the posterior by the normal distribution, the 95% credibility interval is given by, approximately:

$$\bar{y} \pm \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}$$

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<sup>1</sup> *Bayesian Data Analysis, Second Edition, Andrew Gelman, John B. Carlin, Hal S. Stern, Donald B. Rubin, Chapman & Hall/CRC | ISBN: 158488388X | 2003*



For this poll, the Bayesian Credibility Interval was adjusted using standard weighting design effect  $1+L=1.3$  to account for complex weighting<sup>2</sup>

Examples of credibility intervals for different base sizes are below.

Sample size	Credibility intervals
2,000	2.5
1,500	2.9
1,000	3.5
750	4.1
500	5.0
350	6.0
200	7.9
100	11.2

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<sup>2</sup> Kish, L. (1992). *Weighting for unequal Pi*. *Journal of Official Statistics*, 8, 2, 183200.