

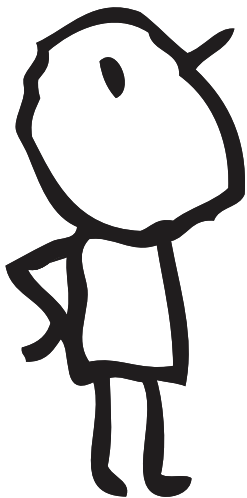
# Zero in

## ON KNOWLEDGE

### **A Practical Guide to the MSCEIT**

Written by David R. Caruso

“How are you?” is an important question. It’s important because you feel a certain way right now, and these feelings are directing your thoughts in certain areas. You feel this way for a reason, and understanding the reasons and what’s happening to you and around you can help you determine how the feelings will change. Whether you are feeling great or lousy is important because these feelings are sending you a message. You can ignore the message at your own peril, or attend to the emotional communication to make better decisions.



Emotions are complex, important, and above all else, they can be intelligent. With emotions playing a critical role in our decisions and actions, wouldn’t it be helpful to be able to objectively measure our emotions in some way? This is what the Mayer-Salovey- Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (the MSCEIT) does. The MSCEIT is like an IQ test for emotions. It is a powerful and sophisticated tool that measures a person’s actual emotional skills.

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I've written this practical guide to help practitioners better understand the MSCEIT and Emotional Intelligence (EI). The guide includes the following topics:

- About Emotional Intelligence
- The Importance of EI
- Measuring Skills
- The MSCEIT
- MSCEIT Applications
- For More Information

### ABOUT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotions are a complex and sophisticated form of information. Reasoning with them has been known as emotional intelligence. While there are many approaches to emotional intelligence, the approach I'm talking about here is the original, scientific conception. It's based upon the decade of research and theorizing by psychologists Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey, the originators of the theory of emotional intelligence. There is an ability model of emotional intelligence, which defines EI as the ability to reason with and about, emotions. Emotional intelligence combines feeling with thinking and thinking with feeling, and can be described as four different, but related, abilities:

*The MSCEIT is based on an intelligent understanding of emotion. We developed the MSCEIT guided by two principles:*

- *emotions are critically important to our success*
- *emotional skills can be measured objectively*

- Perceiving Emotions: the ability to accurately recognize how you and those around you are feeling.
- Using Emotions: the ability to generate emotions and use emotions in cognitive tasks such as problem solving and creativity.
- Understanding Emotions: the ability to understand complex emotions and emotional "chains," how emotions transition from one stage to another.
- Managing Emotions: the ability to intelligently integrate the data of emotions in yourself and in others in order to devise effective strategies that help you achieve positive outcomes.

These four abilities work together as a process model of emotions, something we refer to as an Emotional Blueprint. The Emotional Blueprint provides you with a general approach for better understanding and addressing critical situations. You first must accurately perceive how you, and others, feel. Next, you must use emotions to better guide your thinking. With the emotional data in hand, you can understand the situation better and try to predict how emotions will change. Finally, you must stay open to the data of emotions, and include (manage) the information in your decisions and behavior.

*We cannot check our emotions at the door because emotions and thought are linked— they cannot, and should not, be separated.*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF EI

It seems obvious that emotions are important and that they play a critical role in our lives. After all, emotions are integral to healthy and successful personal relationships. At work, however, there seems to be general recognition that we need to have greater control over our emotions when we punch the time clock.

This view of emotions and work is common and, in our view, incorrect. Emotions influence both what we think about and how we think. Decisions made “unemotionally” simply do not exist, and we are fooling ourselves if we proceed otherwise.

Emotions are critically important to our success and to our very survival. There are many reasons for this. First, emotions contain data and information about ourselves, other people, and the world around us. Second, emotions assist us in thinking and decision making. Third, emotions are not chaotic: they can be understood and predicted and often follow certain rules or patterns. And fourth, because emotions contain data, we must remain open to our emotions, no matter how uncomfortable it may feel, and utilize these emotional data points in our thinking, decision making, and our actions.

### Measuring Skills

#### EMOTIONAL SKILLS VARY

Reading people is not easy. Predicting how emotions change over time can be extremely difficult. There is a great deal of skill involved in emotion, and people differ in these abilities.

Some people are superb at differentiating between the forced smile of a person in distress and the genuine smile of a happy individual. Others see the forced smile and conclude that the person is feeling happy. We all know that skills and personal traits vary from person to person, and emotional skills are no exception.

#### WAYS TO MEASURE SKILLS

There are many ways to measure people’s skills. Consider an example from baseball — not the majors, but from a recent little league experience I had. Coaches evaluate players during spring try-outs. Each batter gets 5 pitches.

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A miss gets 0 points, making contact yields 1 point, and a solid hit is 2 points, resulting in a possible score of 0 to 10. Danny, a 12-year-old, steps into the batting cage with a bit of bravado and swagger.

He gives the coach behind the pitching machine a bored, disinterested look, and takes a practice swing. He proceeds to foul off a pitch (1 point each), hit a blooper on 1 pitch (1 point), a weak foul ball on another pitch (1 point), and swings and misses on the last 2 pitches (0 points). It seems clear that Danny's score is about a 4; however, the two coaches who are filling out the evaluation form put their heads together and give Danny a rating of 7.5. When I give them a quizzical look, one of them replies "You know Dan, the big guy? This is his kid." Dan is another coach, one of the league commissioners, and there was no way that his coaching colleagues were going to give a son of Dan's a 4 rating.

And how did Danny evaluate his own performance? When Danny was asked about his performance by one of his friends, he said, "Well, I was pretty good. I'm a great hitter anyway. I don't know, I'd say a 7 or 8, around there." As the season played out, Danny's hitting was, in fact, not a whole lot better than a 4.

### MEASURING EI

A MSCEIT score is not based upon self-perceptions, nor is it based upon your reputation or other political factors. It's based on how many hits and misses you get when you step up to the plate and determine how people feel, understand the cause of emotions, and determine optimal emotional strategies.

***It is extremely important that we are able to objectively measure emotional skills through the use of an ability test. You have to find out what the person's actual skills are.***

Many of us are familiar with people who are extremely self-aware, and aware of other people. The problem is that their awareness is faulty. This is a person who buttonholes you as you are dashing out of the door to an important meeting, oblivious to your look of near panic. Of course, it might be a critical point your colleague wants to raise with you, except that he launches into a broad discussion regarding his upcoming weekend plans — which don't involve you.

## *The MSCEIT*

The MSCEIT measures the four core emotional abilities defined in the Mayer-Salovey model.

If you want to measure the ability to accurately identify how people feel, one way to do so is by asking the test taker what emotions are being expressed in a photograph of someone's face. For example, if you show a photo of a person displaying mild sadness and the test taker selects an answer indicating that the person is feeling a bit happy and somewhat surprised, then their answer is considered incorrect.

The MSCEIT includes many such tasks, each designed to test a person's emotional ability. The chart below lists the eight tasks included in the MSCEIT.

<b>ABILITY</b>	<b>TEST SECTION</b>	<b>TASK</b>
<b>Perceiving</b>	Faces	Identify subtle emotions in faces
	Pictures	Identify emotions in complex landscapes and designs
<b>Using</b>	Facilitation	Know how moods impact thinking
	Sensations	Relate various feeling sensations to emotions
<b>Understanding</b>	Changes	Answer multiple choice questions about how emotions change over time
	Blends	Answer multiple choice emotion vocabulary definitions
<b>Managing</b>	Emotion Management	Indicate effectiveness of various solutions to internal problems
	Emotional Relations	Indicate effectiveness of various solutions to problems involving other people

### **LEVERAGING THE SOPHISTICATION AND POWER OF THE MSCEIT**

The point has been made that the MSCEIT is different from other tests. The types of questions are different, the abilities it measures are different, and the way that it's scored is also different.

*One of the nice features of the online system is that it not only emails you when a client completes the MSCEIT, but indicates when they took it, and how long it took them to complete the test. Most of my clients take 30 to 45 minutes to complete the MSCEIT.*

### ADMINISTRATION

Most of my clients take the MSCEIT online. They go to a web address, enter a user group and password, and complete the assessment. The system then automatically sends me an email telling me that the client has completed the MSCEIT. I can score it right away, and download the results to my PC. A paper and pencil form is also available. The answer sheet gets mailed or faxed to MHS, the test publisher, and the report is faxed or mailed to you.

### SCORING

There are two answer keys for the MSCEIT. The first key (General Consensus) is based upon the consensus of thousands of people to converge upon better and worse answers. General Consensus scoring works because emotions communicate information about people.

The second key (Expert Consensus) is based upon the answers of a panel of emotions experts. This is somewhat similar to the process used by standard IQ tests.

You also have the option of generating a report using norms based on age, ethnicity, and/or gender. EI does vary somewhat across these groups, and your scoring decision will vary depending upon your application. Not sure which way to go? My preference is to use Expert scoring with no corrections. It's clean and straightforward.

### REPORT

The standard MSCEIT report describes EI and then lists the client's actual EI scores. Because it is extremely difficult to estimate your own emotional skills, many clients are surprised, and sometimes upset, by their scores.

That's why we've created a more client-friendly report. This developmental report is more descriptive of emotional skills. In addition, the developmental report includes questions and suggestions to help your client use the skills they possess, and develop those skills that they lack.

## *MSCEIT Applications*

We use the MSCEIT in a number of ways. Here are some examples of common MSCEIT applications:

- selection and promotion
- career development
- executive coaching and leadership development
- counseling and therapy
- seminars and workshops

## USING THE MSCEIT IN SELECTION AND PROMOTION

### ***Advantages***

The MSCEIT is an ability test. This means that a candidate cannot “fake” their performance. The MSCEIT measures skills that no other test measures.

### ***Application***

As with any test that is used for selection purposes, a job analysis is key. Remember that EI is not always important, and that there may be certain of the EI abilities that are more or less related to performing a given job.

The MSCEIT must never be used as the sole criterion by which a job-related decision is made. We recommend that you use other assessment tools and as many job performance ratings and recommendations as possible in making such a decision.

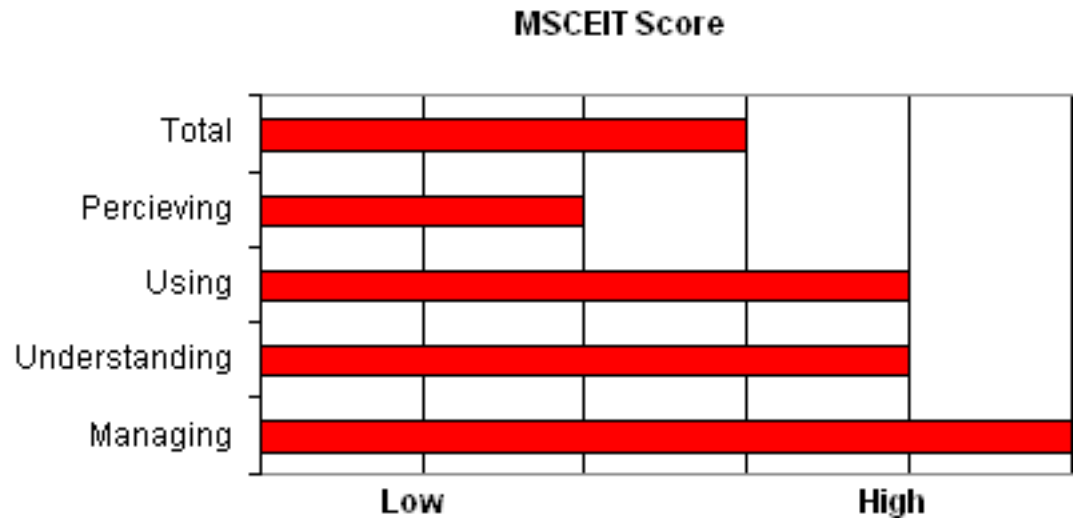
### ***Example***

Consider the VP of human resources at a services firm who wanted to promote Val, a young woman, to replace an older man as the department head. The current head, William, was not an effective group manager, although he was a talented sales person. The idea was to move William into a full-time sales role, and to bring Val in as his replacement.

Given the importance of this position, it was felt prudent to conduct an assessment on Val to determine her strengths and possible problems that she might have in such a challenging new role. Val received a battery of tests, including a personality inventory, an interest survey, a leadership inventory, and the MSCEIT.

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Her assessment results indicated that she was a hard-working, team-oriented professional with a strong desire to manage teams. Val's MSCEIT scores were as follows:



*Val's MSCEIT results suggest that she has the potential to motivate and inspire the team (Using Emotions), to predict how people would react to various initiatives (Understanding Emotions), and to make effective decisions (Managing Emotions).*

Val, at times, was disappointed in people. She was somewhat trusting, and while not naïve, she did give people the benefit of the doubt. The result was that there had been occasions when a colleague she was working with had not come through on a project as promised. As a department head, such a style could lead to significant problems. This problem was reflected by her low score on Perceiving Emotions. However, Val had a number of important skills. The decision was made to promote Val to department head. She also received some training on how to evaluate her perceptions of people when the stakes were high.

### USING THE MSCEIT IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

#### Advantages

I use the MSCEIT as part of a test battery that includes interest, values, style, and personality tests. The MSCEIT is not meant to replace these other measures, but to enhance your understanding of a client's skill set.



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Typical interest inventories include skill self-ratings. Unfortunately, self-ratings of skills and abilities aren't always accurate. The MSCEIT offers the career counselor an objective means of gauging a client's "people knowledge and skills." Those clients considering a service-oriented, or helping, career may be well-served by higher MSCEIT scores.

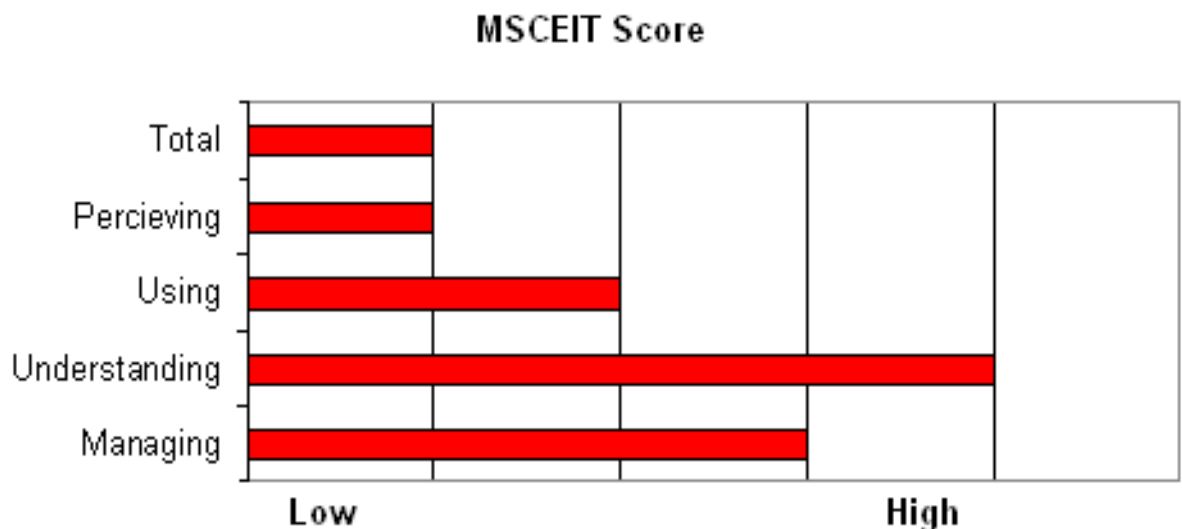
**Application**

One of the best aspects of the MSCEIT is the ability model on which it is based. As mentioned before, the ability model serves as an Emotional Blueprint. Let's take a look at how each MSCEIT ability score can help you better assist your career development clients:

- Perceive: Does the client pick up on subtle cues when interviewed?
- Use: Can the client establish rapport with others? Are they able to generate alternative plans and ideas?
- Understand: Can the client project how they will feel about a specific job and predict their emotional reactions as the job search process unfolds?
- Manage: Will the client make a decision that considers all of the facts, no matter how uncomfortable they may be?

**Example**

Jean was a 56-year-old human resources manager who took a battery of assessments as part of an outplacement program. She was extremely confident in her skills and noted that she could teach, re-enter the corporate world, become an executive coach, or switch areas to leadership development. Jean's MSCEIT scores were as follows:



**What the MSCEIT results added to Jean's career development picture was a suggestion that her self-perception regarding her emotional insight and skills may not be accurate.**

Jean could speak the language of emotional development and growth. However, it was clear in her interactions with her counselor that she was somewhat "off" when reading others. Jean also had difficulty connecting with people.

Career options that involved the need to read others, see their perspective, and manage difficult, highly-charged situations did not seem realistic for Jean. Through career exploration activities, Jean was directed toward an HR administrative role that would better suit her profile.

### USING THE MSCEIT IN EXECUTIVE COACHING

#### Advantages

The MSCEIT provides a unique look at a person's management and leadership skills. While most senior executives find management assessment to be of interest and value, they often are not surprised by their assessment results. Certainly, the results are useful, but the MSCEIT consistently provides information of a different sort. In fact, when I get to their MSCEIT results, it is common for the client to say something like "That was the test that was a little different. What was that all about?"

#### Application

The MSCEIT, like all tests, can help you to develop questions or hypotheses about a client. Each of the four key MSCEIT scores can generate discussion around key coaching objectives.

MSCEIT SCORE	QUESTIONS TO ASK
<i>Percieving</i>	Does the person "read" others well?
<i>Using</i>	Do they emotionally connect? Are they idea oriented?
<i>Understanding</i>	Do they perform adequate what-if analyses regarding people?
<i>Managing</i>	Are they effective decision makers?

In addition, executives readily understand and can apply their MSCEIT results in a broad fashion through the use of the Emotional Blueprint.

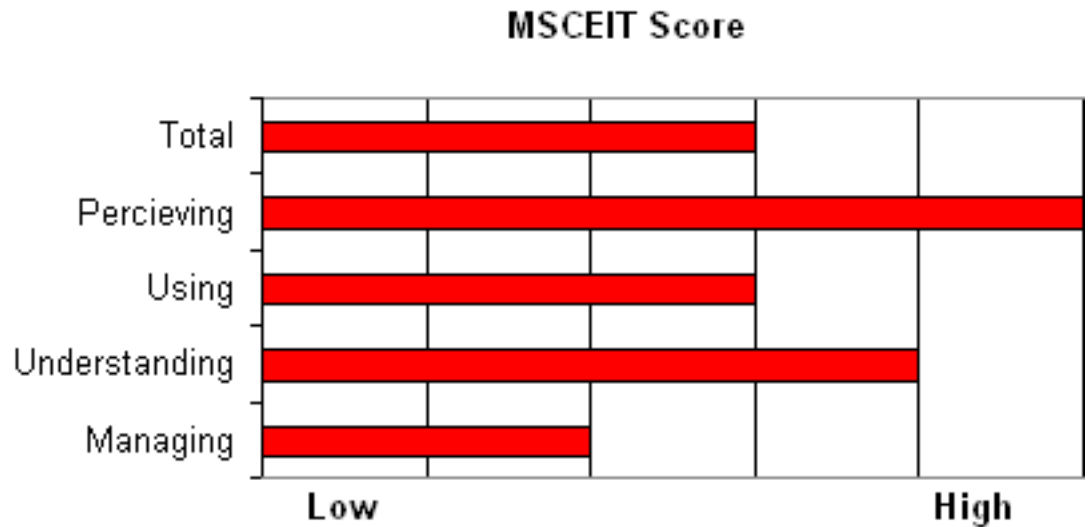
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**Example**

Jerry was an operations manager for a major Wall Street firm. He was asked to relocate most of his staff from NYC to a new building across the river in New Jersey, about a 10-minute ferry ride away. Most of his staff lived in New Jersey and welcomed the move. Jerry and a few of his staff remained in NYC.

The move itself went well, but there arose a number of unusual personnel problems in the subsequent weeks. The problems consisted mainly of complaints at first. Jerry patiently listened to these complaints, addressed them, and understood their cause. As each problem was addressed and resolved, a new one appeared. The problems increased in frequency, and began to have a noticeable impact on the group's productivity. At this point, Jerry was referred for executive coaching to help him resolve these issues.

Jerry's MSCEIT scores were as follows:



Jerry's scores on the Perceiving and Understanding subscales were superb. That was no surprise: Jerry was excellent at perceiving how his staff felt about the move. He understood why his staff felt a loss, and how these feelings were changing (Understanding Emotion).

*In Jerry's case, the results of the MSCEIT provided a confirmation and clarification of the issues involved in his leadership at that point in time.*

However, while Jerry was aware of and understood the issues, he was not integrating this emotional information into his decision making. He did not engage with these emotions, but instead blocked them out and relegated them to a lesser standing in his thought process. Jerry addressed each concrete problem, but not the real, underlying emotion-based problem: the sense that the team had been split apart and cut-off from Jerry.

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The MSCEIT results, as well as the ability model, provided Jerry with both the insight and the process by which he could enhance his leadership style.

### USING THE MSCEIT FOR COUNSELING AND THERAPY

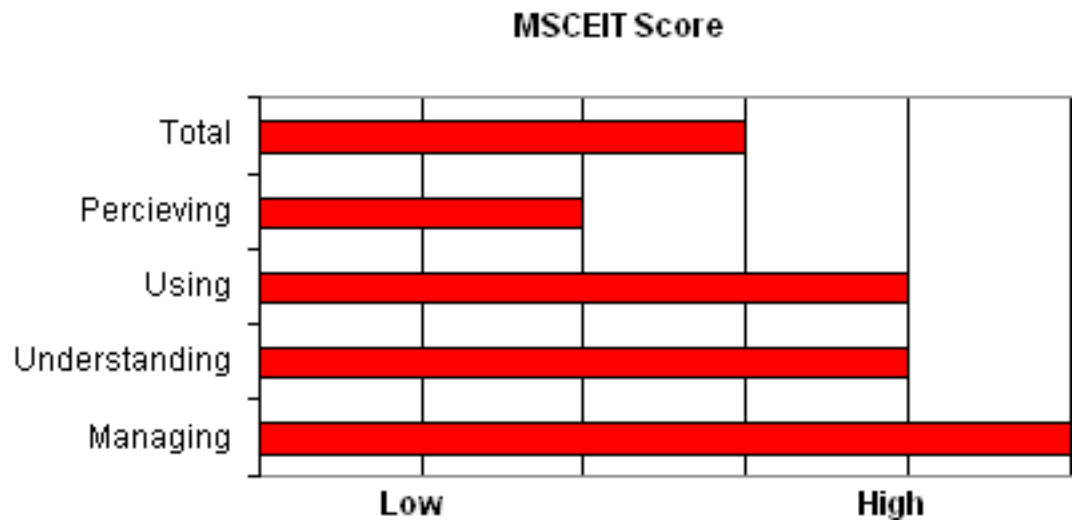
#### **Advantages**

Assessment can assist the clinician in pinpointing their client's strengths and weaknesses, and the MSCEIT provides an additional set of data in this process. As the MSCEIT uniquely assesses a client's emotional skills, it is especially suited for use in clinical settings.

#### **Example**

Will, a 39-year-old attorney, was experiencing problems at home. His wife felt neglected and misunderstood by Will. At times, he could be smooth and sophisticated, whereas at other times, he was inappropriate and a bit "off."

Will spoke well. He was articulate and sophisticated. Will seemed to have a great deal of insight into himself and others. The therapist who was working with him found him delightful, and Will was brilliantly insightful in his therapy sessions. It was difficult to determine just what it was that gave Will so much difficulty in his life, as he appeared to be emotionally sophisticated and aware. It was at this point that Will took the MSCEIT. His MSCEIT scores were as follows:



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*Will sometimes had a great deal of empathy for others (Using Emotions), and could feel what other people felt. His emotional vocabulary was superb, and if his beginning assumptions were correct, Will was able to accurately predict other's emotional reactions (Understanding Emotions).*

Will's decision making was usually right on target, but sometimes seemed totally off the mark (Managing Emotions). The success or failure of Will's judgments and decisions seem to stem from his initial "read" of his or other people's feelings. Often, this emotional read would be inaccurate, due perhaps to Will's lack of awareness or attention.(Perceiving Emotions).

Will's therapist now had identified the source of Will's interpersonal difficulties; they did not need to spend time on teaching Will emotion management strategies, nor did they have to help Will develop insight or empathy for others. Instead, the therapeutic work focused on creating greater initial awareness. Once Will was able to become more open to and aware of the emotional world, he was taught how to accurately attend to others, to pick up on cues (subtle and not so subtle), and to integrate this information to reach a conclusion about how other people were feeling.

## USING THE MSCEIT FOR TRAINING SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

### **Advantages**

The MSCEIT provides workshop participants with objective information on their emotional skill set. It can help people better understand the nature of emotional intelligence.

### **Application**

Some of the group training applications for which the MSCEIT can be used include:

- emotional intelligence seminars
- social skills training
- team effectiveness
- career development and planning
- self-exploration workshops

### **Example**

A one-day workshop designed to promote greater awareness of emotional intelligence was held for a group of 18 people from a single organization. The session promised to offer insight and knowledge, but we were very careful not to promise any sort of lasting change or development based upon a one-day group workshop! In addition, the plan called for a series of half-day sessions over a 6-month period, as well as individual development planning sessions for the participants.

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**Workshops are a great introduction to the MSCEIT — what it measures, and also how it measures it. The best explanations came not from the instructor, but from other participants. A few high-scoring individuals explained how emotions are literally felt, and that creative thought and emotional empathy may be tied to our ability to create an emotion and to then actually feel the emotion.**

A letter (email) was sent to the 18 participants asking them to take the MSCEIT online. A deadline was given, along with instructions on how to take the test.

The workshop coordinator monitored people's progress, and a few days before the workshop, he contacted the few people who had not yet taken the MSCEIT—100% participation prior to the workshop is important, as the MSCEIT forms the basis of the workshop content.

The day began with a hands-on exercise on people's ability to display a neutral emotion when viewing emotionally charged material, and for other people to be able to read these expressions. Other exercises and role-plays led up to an overview of emotional intelligence. Discussion on the MSCEIT came next, and many people had a lot to say! A few people said that the test was "weird" or "kind of strange," mostly referring to the designs task, as well as the questions asking about the color or texture of a feeling.

During the workshop, a sample MSCEIT report was displayed on the screen, and participants were told how to interpret a few different profiles. The report was a developmental report, which means that test scores were reported in a relative fashion, not with high or low scores—in other words, the pattern of relative strengths and weaknesses was the basis for the report. The test results were handed out just before a break. A sign-up sheet was posted so that each participant was scheduled to speak to one of the instructors, and the instructors also stayed in the room to debrief participants.

The instructors used the actual MSCEIT scores to create various small discussion groups, mixing people who were, for example, strong in identifying emotions with people who were weak in this area. It was also stressed that the results were confidential and that no one would be asked or pressured to share their results with any other workshop participants.

The MSCEIT, and the workshop, raised people's awareness about emotional intelligence. The test results also provided the first step in helping people to better understand their emotional skills.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

We now have a two-day skills-based workshop program available. It includes participant manuals, a facilitator guide, and all materials (See [www.emotionaliq.com](http://www.emotionaliq.com) for information on this complete training package).

This is a new field of study, but one with great promise. We are extremely excited about the MSCEIT and the ability approach to emotional intelligence. Used intelligently, the MSCEIT offers a powerful new tool to assist you and your clients in many aspects of their lives.

**AUTHOR**

David Caruso is a psychologist and co-author of the MSCEIT™ assessment. Dr. Caruso is a Research Affiliate in the Department of Psychology at Yale University and is Vice President of Assessment at Harris-McCully Associates, a human resources consulting company based in New York City.

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Some of the material for this report was adapted from the book, *The Emotionally Intelligent Manager*, by David Caruso and Peter Salovey (April 2004. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).



Emotional Intelligence Assessments and Solutions

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