

# What is Social and Emotional Intelligence?



Social and emotional intelligence refers to “the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.”<sup>1</sup>

There are four main components of social and emotional intelligence.<sup>2</sup>  
They are:

## Self awareness

the ability to assess your own feelings and determine what is causing those feelings. You are exercising self awareness when you notice you feel anxious while facilitating a conflict within a group.

## Self regulation

the ability to moderate your behaviour. You are self-regulating yourself if you consciously mask your strong feelings of anger when a participant criticizes you for cutting off debate on a topic.

## Social awareness

the ability to gauge and understand the causes of other people’s emotions. You are being socially aware if you can tell that the majority of meeting participants are feeling bored and disinterested because the group is spending too long talking about a trivial topic.

## Social influence

the ability to influence the emotions of other people to achieve your goals. You are wielding social influence when you affect how other people are feeling through your own behaviour, such as your approach to dealing with conflict.

Social and emotional intelligence can be learned.

<sup>1</sup>Salovey, P., & Mayer, J.D. (1990) “Emotional intelligence” *Imagination, Cognition, and Personality*, 9, P189.

<sup>2</sup>Cherniss, C (2001) “Emotional Intelligence and the Good Community”, *American Journal of Community Psychology* (Vol. 30, No. 1, Feb.), P205.