Many have debated about the concept of intelligence, including how to define it, measure it, and whether or not there are multiple intelligences. Typically, intelligence in our society is thought of as “book smarts.” However, this is probably only one set of abilities that we possess. In the 1990’s, John D. Mayer, Ph.D., Peter Salovey, Ph.D., and David R. Caruso, Ph.D. proposed the idea of emotional intelligence. They suggested the following four-branch model of emotional intelligence where each branch describes a set of skills:

- Managing emotions so as to attain specific goals
- Understanding emotions, emotional language, and the signals conveyed by emotions
- Using emotions to facilitate thinking
- Perceiving emotions accurately in oneself and others

Other models of emotional intelligence have been proposed that may be considered mixed models as other traits have been included in these models (e.g., self-esteem, motivation, and assertiveness). Many of these models have become popular, particularly in the business world.

What can happen if we ignore our emotions?

- Say things we don’t mean
- React to something else (i.e., reaction to a current situation may be out of proportion)
- Emotions may leak out in our non-verbal communication (90% of our communication is nonverbal)
- We may develop physical problems (e.g., back pain or headaches)
- Avoidance of situations that need attention which increase the potential for conflict

It is helpful to develop multiple strategies to manage emotions so that they do not feel out of control or over-powering. Once the emotions aren’t so big, we can then use the information provided by the emotions to help guide our behavior.
• Channeling the energy generated by emotions—clean, exercise, do homework
• Focus on positive thoughts
• Distraction—read a fun book, watch a comedy, listen to upbeat music, play a mental game (i.e., how many words can you think of that start with the letter A?), call a friend and chat
• Spend time each day getting in touch with yourself by breathing, meditating, practicing yoga or Tai Chi
• Develop your emotional vocabulary (link to emotion words handout)
• Individual or group counseling may be helpful in order to learn other strategies or to provide a place to discuss what information emotions may be giving you. Contact Counseling Services for more information or to make an appointment www.k-state.edu/counseling/student/appointment.htm


For other strategies, visit the resource section of KSU Counseling Services’ web page www.k-state.edu/counseling/topics/resources.htm

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