What will it take to lead in healthcare?
The role of emotional intelligence to enhance the delivery of care

Presentation Author: Brenda Gamble, PhD
Olena Kapral, MA (Candidate) b, Paul Yielder, PhD a and Winston Isaac, PhD c

a University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Oshawa, Ontario, Canada; b University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; c Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Background and Objective
Continued leadership development in healthcare is important to ensure that healthcare leaders have the skills and competencies needed to help facilitate change within the healthcare system. Our team conducted three national surveys of Canadian healthcare leaders from both the military and civilian sectors to determine the views on the leadership skills necessary to lead in the hospital and community/homecare setting.

Methods
Survey
We surveyed members of the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL), the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA), and the Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS) Group using an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire included variables related to demographics, educational and employment history, and previous experience with the healthcare system. Note: The questionnaire items were the same for each group with minor changes made to the demographic items to appropriately describe each sample. Respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their views on the skills and competencies needed to lead in healthcare today.

Responses to the question - What do you feel are the top five skills/competencies needed to lead/manage successfully within the next 5-10 years? - were mapped against the National Centre for Healthcare Leadership Competencies Framework, which identifies the competencies for healthcare leadership now and in the future. Broad base trends were identified and results were aggregated into five categories.

Focus Groups
Additionally, focus groups were conducted at the 2011 CHCA Conference (+6 individuals participated in each of the 5 focus groups) and the 2012 National Health Leadership Conference (+8 individuals participated in each of the 6 focus groups). We asked each group the following questions:

Why do you think all groups identified the same competencies? In your opinion, are these skill sets and competencies the same regardless of the sector? Please explain why or why not?

Note: Semi-structure interviews will be held with CFHS group in November 2013 to determine their responses to this question.

Results
Cross tabulation analysis determined that respondents, regardless of place of employment, identified the same skills and competencies needed in leadership development: human resources, interpersonal and people skills; communication; flexibility; and systems thinking. Respondents from the CCHL and CFHS also identified analytical thinking as a needed competency.

Focus group participants were not surprised that respondents identified the same skills/competencies regardless of sector of employment. However, the manner in which skills/competencies are applied differed depending on the setting of healthcare delivery, the experience of the healthcare worker, and the client.

Table 1. Employment Fields of the Health Services' Leaders who Responded (n=716)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Field</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals and Institutions</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Agencies</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Military (Canadian Forces' Clinics)</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Take Home Message
Respondents identified skills/competencies that align with the concept of emotional intelligence (EI).

Why is this important?
During the last 15 years the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has garnered much attention in leadership circles as an important interactive psychodynamic tool that contributes to successful leadership in the workplace. EI is defined as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, as a motivational complex and also for recognizing and managing emotions in both ourselves and in others.2

EI is a combination of interpersonal (i.e., social awareness and relationship management) and intrapersonal (i.e., self awareness and self management) skills that are learnt and developed throughout one’s life in a maturational continuum that fundamentally supports intrinsic self-awareness and the capacity for relatedness to others.3 Many observers believe that these skills provide leaders with the capacity to understand and motivate their teams.

The importance and the usefulness of EI have been further highlighted in the healthcare leadership literature associated with the leadership and development of integrated teams.4 EI is also reported to be a useful tool for dealing with conflict by enhancing communication insight and awareness among team members there by enabling discrimination and enhancing choice in complex situations.5

References