



# Toxic Behaviors Assessment

An excerpt from the Social Intelligence Module in our Partners In Performance™ Fundamentals Series.

# Introduction to Social Intelligence



## What is Social Intelligence?

Social Intelligence is the capacity to know oneself and others. It involves social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive skills like staying calm, taking another's perspective, respectful communication, and learning from past experiences to improve social interactions inside and outside of work.

## Why Can Social Intelligence Be Difficult to Develop?

Have you ever accidentally offended someone without intending to?

Do you know people who just don't seem to be aware of how their words or actions are seen by or impact others?

We all have blind spots when it comes to our social and communication skills – some more so than others. To a certain extent, our brains are built this way. They're designed to process a lot of information very quickly, so they filter out any information that is deemed unimportant to achieving our goals. In the workplace – an environment where we are hyper-focused on completing tasks and achieving goals, we can sometimes miss the subtle social cues others send out about how they are reacting to what we are saying or doing. This leaves us prone to damage our relationships at work – something that has a negative impact on our productivity and results in both immediately and long term.


The good news is that we can all strengthen our social intelligence and improve our ability to get more results with less stress. In an increasingly connected world where the measure of success and sustainability is not so much growth, but our capacity to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances, collaboration is the new superpower.

The best place to start with strengthening this superpower, is to cultivate awareness of your current level of skill in this area. This assessment, based on concept introduced by Karl Albrecht, one of the early experts of Social Intelligence, will help.

# Toxic or Nourishing Behavior Assessment

## Part 1: Assess Your Team

It's easier to spot toxic behavior in others, so let's start with assessing your team. In the "Team" column, write a number from 0 through 4 to show how often you exhibit the behaviors listed one side or the other. 0 or 1 indicates your actions more closely match the 'toxic' behavior side. 2 is a mid-line. 3 or 4 indicate behavior which leans more to the "nourishing behavior" side.



	Team	Self	
Scowling, 'stay-away' signals			Keeping a positive, friendly expression
Throwing verbal barbs, 'zingers'			Kidding positively
Patronizing or 'parenting' people			Communicating 'adult-to-adult'
Putting others down non-verbally			Affirming others with positive 'strokes'
Seeking approval excessively			Speaking and acting assertively
Flattering others insincerely			Giving honest compliment
Losing your temper frequently			Pausing to listen and think
Playing 'head games' with people			Communicating openly and honestly
Disagreeing aggressively			Dialoguing, exchanging views
Speaking dogmatically, inflexibly			Expressing respect for others' ideas
Bragging, scoring 'status points'			Acknowledging the successes of others
Gossiping, violating confidences			Keeping confidences
Breaking promises and agreements			Making only promises you will keep
Joking at inappropriate times			Using humor constructively
Monopolizing the conversation			Sharing 'airtime' with others
Interrupting others frequently			Hearing others out
Changing the subject capriciously			Letting the topic 'play out'
Complaining excessively			Giving constructive suggestions
Giving someone the 'hard sell'			Suggesting, advising, negotiating
Insisting on getting one's way			Compromising, helping others
Attacking or criticizing others			Confronting constructively
Shooting down others' ideas			Deferring judgment, listening, reflecting
Inducing guilt in others			Persuading honestly; negotiating
Ridiculing others			Supporting others; sympathizing
Giving unwanted advice			Offering information, ideas, and options
Team Total Score >			< Self Total Score

# Toxic or Nourishing Assessment (cont'd)

## Part 2: Assess Yourself

Now it's time to assess yourself. In the "Self" Column, follow the same method to reflect on yourself. It can be tempting to rate yourself more on the nourishing side and ignore instances where you may have gotten feedback that you were behaving on the toxic side. If you suspect you might engage on the behaviors on the toxic side more often than you would like to admit, give this assessment to a colleague or an employee that you trust to give you honest feedback and see how they would score your behavior. For now, do your best to rate your behavior accurately on your own.

## Part 3: Add Up Your Scores

Now add the scores in both the Team and Self columns to get your total 'nourishing' behavior scores for yourself and your team overall. Look at the scores for yourself and your team and reflect on them. A score below 50 means that the behavior of you or your team skews towards the toxic side. If your score is 70 or more this is good news, but it's important to be aware that even if you or your team trend towards the toxic side on one of these behaviors on a regular basis, it can have a significant negative impact on team morale and productivity – and your own credibility and influence!

## Part 4: Create an Action Plan

Awareness is 90% of change! Now that you are aware of the types of behavior that are considered toxic and more conscious of what nourishing behavior to focus on cultivating instead, it's time to pick one or two key behaviors to change and create a plan to change them.

**What toxic behaviors do you want to stop engaging in?**

**How will you stop?** (Tip: Identify when you do it, why you do it, and what you notice right before you do it. Then create a way to interrupt the pattern and decide on an action to do instead. For example, you might notice that you joke at inappropriate times when you feel like conflict is brewing because you don't know what to do if people start arguing and you don't want to get involved. Instead of making a joke, you could choose to name what you're noticing and ask a question to check in. E.g. "It's feeling a bit tense in here. Can we pause for a moment identify the different perspectives more clearly?")

If you are using this assessment with your team, have the team identify the top three toxic behaviors they want to work together as a team to eliminate and use a similar process to the one above to create an action plan.

## Want to Learn More?

Social Intelligence is just one of many complex people leadership and systems thinking skills we teach at Kyosei Consulting. These essential “Relational Skills” like collaboration, problem solving, communication, cultural awareness, civility and citizenship, social intelligence and systems thinking are almost always at the root of the performance, productivity, and profit challenges that any organization faces.

If you found this exercise beneficial for yourself and/or your team and want to learn more about how what we do and how developing these skills in your business can positively impact your organizations financial bottom line while also reducing stress and improving the wellbeing of everyone on your team, get in touch.

Email: [info@kyoseiconsulting.com](mailto:info@kyoseiconsulting.com) and tell us a bit about the challenges you’re facing and the behaviors you would like to shift.

Book a Complementary Needs Assessment Call: <https://calendly.com/andrea-kyosei/team-training-needs-assessment-50min>

Or...

Complete Our Online Training Needs Assessment: <https://kyoseiconsulting.com/training-needs-assessment/>

*The Toxic and Nourishing Behaviors Assessment was sourced from Karl Albrecht. All rights reserved. It is used and adapted with permission by Andrea Jacques of Kyosei Consulting as a Certified Relational Skills Practitioner.*



© Workplace Education Manitoba 2022,  
wem.mb.ca. All rights reserved.

