



Learning Outcomes

Emotional Intelligence

Core & Specialized Credentials

International Certification Alliance

Version 1.0 — August 2026



LICENSING INFORMATION

The work in this document was facilitated by the International Certification Alliance (ICA) and done through the contributions of various experts and practitioners. These learning objectives are intended to help the growing Tomorrow-Ready™ community worldwide.

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that accredited member organizations must address to offer ICA's Emotional Intelligence certification. To achieve the certification, a learner must complete the core credential plus at least two specialized credentials.

Each learning outcome (LO) follows a particular pattern, described below.

O.O Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The learning outcome's purpose further describes what is expected to be imparted to the learner (e.g., a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

CORE CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Emotional Intelligence Core

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is an 8-hour Core Credential for professionals who want to work more effectively with themselves and others by strengthening self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Learners develop the ability to recognize how emotion shapes perception and behavior, notice personal patterns and regulate responses more intentionally, interpret emotional cues without over-assuming, listen with empathy, and manage relationships more effectively by applying emotionally intelligent behavior in difficult professional interactions. The credential also helps learners understand how everyday EQ behaviors can strengthen or undermine trust and psychological safety.

Because emotional intelligence can surface sensitive personal material, learning environments should support psychological safety and keep personal disclosure optional. This credential develops professional skill and is not intended as psychological diagnosis or therapy.

1. Emotional Intelligence Principles

1.1 Emotional Intelligence as a Developable Capability

Emotional intelligence is sometimes treated as a fixed trait or vague soft skill. In this credential, EQ is a developable professional capability grounded in self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

Develop learners' understanding of EQ as a capability that can be strengthened through awareness, practice, and reflection. Distinguish EQ from personality, cognitive ability, or psychological diagnosis and recognize how the four components work together to influence professional behavior and relationships.

1.2 Emotions, Perception, and Behavior

Emotions influence what people notice, how they interpret situations, and how they communicate, decide, and respond. Ignoring emotion does not remove its influence.

Develop learners' understanding of emotion as information that can shape perception, judgment, and behavior. Examine how the same situation can be experienced differently depending on emotional state and distinguish between using emotional information thoughtfully and treating emotion as unquestioned fact.

2. Self-Awareness and Self-Management

2.1 Personal Emotional Patterns and Triggers

Emotions and emotional triggers can create recurring patterns in how people interpret and respond to workplace situations. Recognizing emotions and patterns creates more choice in how to respond.

Develop learners' ability to recognize and name emotions and recurring emotional patterns before they automatically drive behavior. Notice triggers, emotional or physical signals, habitual responses, and the effect those responses can have on judgment, communication, and relationships. Keep personal disclosure optional and allow learners to work with provided scenarios when appropriate.

2.2 Reactive and Intentional Responses

Emotional triggers can produce fast, habitual reactions that do not serve the situation. Greater awareness creates space for a more deliberate response.

Develop learners' ability to distinguish automatic reaction from intentional response. Examine what the trigger is pulling them toward, what the situation actually requires, and how values, goals, relationships, and likely consequences can inform a more deliberate choice.

2.3 Self-Regulation Strategies

Self-regulation means working skillfully with emotion rather than suppressing it. Different strategies may be useful before, during, or after emotionally demanding situations.

Develop learners' ability to choose self-regulation approaches that fit the situation and preserve intentional action. Consider strategies that help prepare for emotional pressure, stay effective in the moment, or recover and learn afterward, while recognizing that no single strategy works for every person or circumstance.

3. Social Awareness and Empathy

3.1 Emotional Cues and Assumptions

Emotion may be communicated through tone, pace, silence, body language, or what is left unsaid. Culture, identity, power, context, and change can all affect how those cues appear and what they mean.

Develop learners' ability to notice emotional information without treating interpretation as certainty. Distinguish observable cues from assumptions, consider contextual factors that may shape what they are seeing or hearing, and use curiosity or checking rather than mind-reading to better understand another person's experience.

3.2 Empathic Listening and Perspective-Taking

Empathy involves understanding another person's experience from their perspective without requiring agreement or taking responsibility for solving it.

Develop learners' ability to communicate understanding through empathic listening. Stay curious about another person's perspective, reflect the meaning or emotion they hear, check whether their understanding is accurate, and resist moving too quickly into advice, reassurance, agreement, or problem-solving.

4. Relationship Management and Applied EQ

4.1 EQ in Difficult Conversations

Disagreement, disappointment, performance concerns, and change can create emotionally demanding conversations. Avoidance, escalation, over-control, or over-accommodation can make them harder.

Develop learners' ability to integrate emotional awareness, self-management, empathy, and clarity in difficult professional interactions. Notice their own emotional response, acknowledge the other person's experience without losing the message or boundary, and stay constructive when tension or discomfort increases.

4.2 EQ, Trust, and Psychological Safety

Trust and psychological safety are shaped by repeated interpersonal behavior. Emotionally intelligent responses can influence whether people feel able to speak honestly, disagree, ask for help, or acknowledge mistakes.

Develop learners' ability to connect individual EQ behavior with the relational conditions that support trust and psychological safety. Examine how consistency, emotional regulation, empathy, curiosity, openness to disagreement, and responses to vulnerability can strengthen or weaken the willingness of others to speak and participate honestly.

SPECIALIZED CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Giving and Receiving Feedback with Emotional Intelligence

Giving & Receiving Feedback with EQ is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to navigate the emotional dynamics that can make feedback difficult to give, hear, and use. Learners develop the ability to recognize emotional triggers on both sides of a feedback exchange, combine clarity with emotional attunement when giving feedback and navigating the response, regulate their own reactions when receiving challenging feedback, and evaluate how feedback interactions affect future honesty, learning, and relationship quality.

1.1 Emotional Dynamics of Feedback

Feedback can trigger threat, identity concerns, defensiveness, or self-protection for both the person giving it and the person receiving it. These reactions can interfere with learning even when the message is accurate and well intended.

Develop learners' understanding of the emotional dynamics that shape feedback interactions. Examine common triggers on both sides of the exchange, notice how threat or self-protection can alter tone, listening, interpretation, and behavior, and distinguish the emotional response from the underlying information the feedback may still contain.

2.1 Feedback Clarity and Emotional Attunement

Feedback is more likely to be useful when clarity is paired with attention to timing, tone, relationship context, and the conditions in which the message is delivered.

Develop learners' ability to give feedback with both clarity and emotional awareness. Consider what the person needs to understand, how specific and direct the message needs to be, whether the timing and setting support the conversation, and how tone, relationship history, power, and emotional state may affect how the feedback is received. Stay attentive to the other person's response and adjust how the conversation proceeds without losing the substance of the feedback. Reinforce that emotional attunement should improve how feedback is delivered without diluting necessary honesty or accountability.

3.1 Receiving Feedback with Openness

Critical, unexpected, or poorly delivered feedback can trigger defensiveness, shame, anger, or withdrawal. Self-regulation creates enough space to understand the message before deciding what to accept, question, or do with it.

Develop learners' ability to regulate emotional reactions while receiving feedback without becoming passive or uncritical. Notice their internal response, stay engaged long enough to understand what is being communicated, ask clarifying questions, separate useful information from delivery problems or assumptions, and choose how to respond after considering the feedback rather than reacting immediately.

4.1 Feedback Relationships and Learning

Feedback happens within relationships, not as isolated transactions. How people give, receive, and respond to feedback over time can make future honesty and learning easier or harder.

Develop learners' ability to reflect on feedback interactions and strengthen the conditions for future candor and learning. Explore the emotional dynamics, message clarity, response, and relational impact of an exchange; recognize patterns that increase avoidance, defensiveness, or trust; and identify how future feedback could be handled differently to support both honesty and development.

EQ in Remote and Hybrid Environments

EQ in Remote & Hybrid Environments is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to apply emotional intelligence when distance and technology reduce context or create uneven experiences of connection and inclusion. Learners develop the ability to recognize the emotional demands of distributed work, interpret digital signals without treating assumptions as fact, choose communication modes based on the emotional and relational needs of the situation, and use emotionally intelligent practices to strengthen trust, inclusion, and connection across distance.

1.1 Emotional Demands of Remote and Hybrid Work

Remote and hybrid work can reduce many of the cues and informal interactions people use to understand one another. Digital fatigue, asynchronous work, ambiguity, and blurred boundaries can also create distinctive emotional pressures.

Develop learners' understanding of how distributed work changes the emotional demands of professional relationships. Consider reduced social cues, digital fatigue, asynchronous communication, isolation, blurred boundaries, and uneven experiences between remote and in-person colleagues, and recognize how these conditions can affect emotion, interpretation, behavior, and connection.

2.1 Emotional Signals in Digital Communication

Digital communication can reduce, alter, or remove cues such as tone, body language, facial expression, timing, and physical context. What is missing can be as important as what appears to be present.

Develop learners' ability to interpret emotional information in digital communication without treating inference as fact. Examine available cues such as wording, response patterns, silence, tone, pace, or video behavior; recognize important information that is missing or obscured; distinguish observation from interpretation; and use curiosity or checking when greater understanding is needed.

3.1 Communication Mode and Emotional Fit

The communication channel shapes what emotional information is available and how easily misunderstandings can be repaired. A convenient mode is not always the right mode for the sensitivity, ambiguity, or relational importance of the conversation.

Develop learners' ability to choose and shift communication modes based on the emotional and relational needs of the situation rather than habit or convenience alone. Consider sensitivity, complexity, ambiguity, urgency, need for dialogue, available cues, accessibility, relationship context, and the cost of misunderstanding when deciding between asynchronous messaging, voice, video, or in-person communication. Reinforce that shifting communication modes can be an EQ choice when the current mode is no longer serving understanding.

4.1 Trust and Connection Across Distance

Trust and connection can weaken when informal contact, shared context, and physical presence are reduced. Distributed relationships therefore require more deliberate relational attention.

Develop learners' ability to use emotionally intelligent behavior to strengthen trust and connection across distance. Create clarity and predictability, make space for informal and relational connection, notice signs of isolation or disengagement without over-interpreting them, respond to emotional cues with appropriate curiosity rather than assumption, and adapt communication practices so remote or less-visible colleagues are not unintentionally excluded.

EQ Across Culture and Identity

EQ Across Culture & Identity is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to apply emotional intelligence effectively across differences in culture, identity, context, and power. Learners develop the ability to recognize that emotional norms are not universal, consider how power and positionality shape emotional experience and expression, engage across differences with cultural humility rather than assumption, and use emotionally inclusive practices that make room for different ways of communicating and participating.

1.1 Culture, Identity, and Emotional Expression

Emotional expression and interpretation are shaped by culture, identity, individual experience, and professional context. Behaviors considered appropriate or meaningful in one setting may be understood differently in another.

Develop learners' understanding that emotional norms are contextual rather than universal. Examine how cultural background, identity, professional norms, organizational context, and individual experience can shape how emotion is expressed, interpreted, and responded to. Reinforce that cultural patterns can inform curiosity but should not be used to predict an individual's behavior.

2.1 Power, Positionality, and Emotional Experience

Power and positionality affect which emotions feel safe to express, whose behavior is viewed as acceptable, and what consequences may follow from speaking or responding honestly.

Develop learners' ability to account for power and positionality when interpreting emotional experience across differences. Consider how formal authority, social identity, status, belonging, representation, and dependence can influence what people express or withhold; recognize additional emotional work such as monitoring behavior, adapting expression, or navigating stereotypes; and examine how their own position shapes what they notice, assume, or interpret.

3.1 Cultural Humility

Cultural humility means recognizing the limits of one's own perspective and remaining open to learning from another person's experience rather than assuming expertise about them.

Develop learners' ability to engage across cultural and identity differences with curiosity, openness, and self-awareness. Examine how to notice and suspend assumptions, ask rather than infer, remain willing to revise their interpretation, and adapt their response based on what they learn. Reinforce that cultural humility is an ongoing stance rather than mastery of another person's culture or identity.

4.1 Emotionally Inclusive Practices

Emotional inclusion is shaped by repeated interpersonal practices that allow people to express concerns, perspectives, and emotions without being required to conform to one preferred communication or emotional style.

Develop learners' ability to translate awareness of culture, identity, and power into everyday EQ practices. Notice whose emotional expression is treated as normal or professional, adapt expectations where appropriate, make room for different ways of communicating and participating, respond constructively when assumptions or misinterpretations surface, and reduce unnecessary emotional burden on people who differ from dominant norms.

Self-Regulation and Resilience Under Pressure

Self-Regulation and Resilience Under Pressure is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to remain effective when pressure affects thinking, emotion, and behavior. Learners develop the ability to recognize how pressure changes cognitive and relational capacity, identify their own early warning signals, apply self-regulation strategies that support intentional action in high-pressure moments, and build realistic resilience and recovery practices that help preserve capacity under sustained demands. The credential reinforces that resilience is not unlimited endurance but the ability to regulate, recover, and respond sustainably over time.

1.1 Pressure and Automatic Responses

Pressure can activate automatic physiological and emotional responses that narrow attention, increase reactivity, and reduce capacity for complex thinking and effective interaction.

Develop learners' understanding of how pressure can affect cognition, judgment, communication, and behavior. Recognize that pressure can trigger automatic responses, understand how those responses can be useful or disruptive depending on context, and connect awareness of the response to greater choice in how they act.

2.1 Personal Pressure Patterns

Pressure shows up differently for different people through physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral signals. Recognizing those signals early creates an opportunity to respond before pressure significantly affects effectiveness or relationships.

Develop learners' ability to recognize their own early pressure patterns and understand how those patterns can influence professional behavior. Notice signals such as changes in attention, thinking, emotion, energy, communication, or behavior; connect those signals to their likely impact; and distinguish early warning signs from later signs that capacity is already becoming depleted.

3.1 Self-Regulation Under Pressure

Self-regulation under pressure is not about eliminating emotion or stress. It is about preserving enough capacity to think, choose, communicate, and act intentionally when pressure is high.

Develop learners' ability to select and use self-regulation strategies that fit both the situation and their current level of pressure and capacity. Consider preparation before pressure rises, strategies for staying effective in the moment, and approaches that support recovery afterward. Reinforce that useful regulation changes the learner's capacity to respond intentionally rather than simply making discomfort disappear.

4.1 Resilience and Recovery Practices

Short-term regulation helps people stay effective in a difficult moment, but sustained pressure can gradually deplete attention, energy, perspective, and relational capacity. Resilience also depends on how people recover and replenish over time.

Develop learners' ability to build realistic practices that support recovery and sustained capacity under recurring or prolonged pressure. Consider boundaries, recovery, energy management, workload patterns, support, reflection, and other practices that reduce cumulative depletion or address sources of unsustainable pressure where possible. Reinforce that resilience is not unlimited endurance and should not be used to normalize unhealthy or unsustainable working conditions.

EQ for People Managers

EQ for People Managers is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who hold formal responsibility for the performance and development of others. Learners develop the ability to recognize how managerial authority changes the emotional weight of their behavior, understand how their reactions influence team climate and psychological safety, use EQ effectively in high-stakes manager–employee interactions, and respond constructively when employees raise concerns, disagree, admit mistakes, or take other interpersonal risks. The credential emphasizes using empathy and emotional awareness without losing clarity, accountability, or managerial responsibility.

1.1 Emotional Demands of People Management

Formal authority changes the emotional and relational dynamics of work. A manager's words, reactions, attention, and decisions often carry more weight because they can affect opportunity, performance, workload, recognition, and belonging.

Develop learners' understanding of how formal authority changes the emotional demands of professional relationships. Consider how employees may interpret manager behavior differently because of the power differential, how managers' own expectations and reactions can influence their behavior, and how managers can remain aware of both their own emotional experience and the greater impact their behavior may have on others.

2.1 Manager EQ and Team Climate

Employees learn what is safe, valued, and risky by watching how managers respond to questions, disagreement, mistakes, uncertainty, and emotion. Repeated manager behavior can shape the emotional climate of the team.

Develop learners' ability to recognize the ripple effects of manager EQ on team climate. Examine how consistency, reactivity, curiosity, emotional attunement, defensiveness, and responses to challenge can amplify or stabilize emotional dynamics and influence whether people speak honestly, ask for help, raise concerns, or withdraw. Reinforce that managers do not control team climate alone; their authority nonetheless gives their behavior disproportionate influence.

3.1 EQ in High–Stakes Manager Interactions

Performance concerns, accountability, change, conflict, and disappointing decisions can create emotional pressure for both managers and employees. Formal authority raises the stakes because the manager may need to maintain clarity and responsibility while responding to strong emotion.

Develop learners' ability to use EQ when managerial responsibility and emotional intensity are both high. Explore ways to notice and regulate their own reactions, acknowledge the employee's experience without losing clarity or accountability, distinguish empathy from agreement or avoidance, and make deliberate choices about when to listen, clarify, set a boundary, make a decision, or continue the conversation later.

4.1 Manager Responses and Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is shaped by what happens when someone takes an interpersonal risk such as raising a concern, admitting a mistake, disagreeing, asking for help, or challenging an idea. A manager's response can make similar behavior more or less likely in the future.

Develop learners' ability to respond constructively when employees take interpersonal risks. Examine how emotional regulation, curiosity, acknowledgment, defensiveness, punishment, dismissal, or overreaction can shape future candor; distinguish psychological safety from comfort or lack of accountability; and practice responses that keep it possible to speak honestly while still addressing performance, standards, or consequences when needed.

Personal Resilience

Personal Resilience is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to sustain energy, perspective, and effectiveness across the successive tomorrows that a Foundational Mindsets life requires.

1.1 Resilience as a Dynamic Capacity

Resilience is often treated as a fixed trait or a measure of toughness. In practice, it is a dynamic capacity that can be depleted, replenished, and deliberately strengthened.

Establish a practical understanding of resilience as a skill learners can actively manage and build. Resilience is the ability to process difficulty without losing the capacity to function effectively and move forward.

2.1 Recognizing the Signals That Resilience Is Under Pressure

Resilience is often noticed only after depletion has already affected effectiveness, relationships, or wellbeing. Recognizing early signals creates an opportunity to respond before recovery becomes harder.

Build learners' ability to recognize personal signs of depletion early enough to respond proactively. Depletion of resilience impacts individuals differently. Introduce common impacts of resilience depletion such as emotional (exhaustion, irritability, loss of motivation or purpose), cognitive (difficulty making decisions, negative self-talk, reduced creativity), physical (chronic fatigue, increase in pain, changes in appetite), behavioral (procrastination, reduced productivity, withdrawing from people).

3.1 Personal Resilience Practices

Many resilience practices are useful but difficult to sustain in real conditions.

Introduce a variety of practices that can build or rebuild resilience. Develop learners' ability to create a resilience practice that fits their actual constraints and remains usable when time, energy, and attention are limited. A resilience practice that requires conditions that rarely exist is not a resilience practice, it is an aspiration that adds guilt to an already depleted practitioner.

4. Sharing Resilience

4.1 Sharing Your Resilience

Sharing resilience signals and practices can build team resilience.

Cover the importance and value of sharing your resilience depletion signals with others. Such as how transparent communication about your current level of resilience can impact team support, workload distribution, and psychological safety.

4.2 Supporting Others' Resilience

Colleagues rarely announce that their resilience is depleted. It usually shows up as changed behavior that is easy to read as attitude, disengagement, or a performance problem.

Develop learners' ability to recognize depletion in others and respond in ways that genuinely help, including recognizing the limits of peer support. Cover the difference between offering support and taking on responsibility for another person's recovery, and when a situation should be directed to a manager, HR, or professional support. Introduce practices that can support others in building and sustaining resilience specific to the person and situation.

Coaching Presence and Stance

Coaching Presence and Stance is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to strengthen their ability to maintain an effective coaching stance when their own reactions make that difficult. Learners deepen their understanding of coaching presence through observable behavior, recognize the internal reactions and triggers that can pull them away from an effective coaching stance, and practice self-management that supports intentional choices in live or simulated coaching interactions. Through practice and reflection, learners strengthen their ability to evaluate how their presence, reactions, and choices affect the quality of the client's thinking, ownership, and development.

1.1 Behavioral Coaching Presence

Coaching presence is visible in how a coach pays attention and responds in the moment. Without it, even good coaching techniques can become mechanical or driven by the coach's agenda.

Develop learners' understanding of coaching presence through observable behavior rather than as an internal feeling or personality style. Build learners' ability to recognize presence through attention, curiosity, responsiveness, self-management, comfort with uncertainty and silence, and the ability to stay with the client and what is emerging rather than moving prematurely toward solutions, particularly when the coach experiences an impulse to intervene or direct.

2.1 Triggers and Coaching Stance

A coach's internal reactions can pull them away from an effective coaching stance and influence how they respond in the moment. Recognizing what triggered the shift makes intentional choice more possible.

Develop learners' ability to recognize when an internal reaction has begun to pull them away from an effective coaching stance. Build learners' capacity to identify triggers such as urgency, discomfort, silence, emotion, judgment, the impulse to rescue or demonstrate expertise, the desire to be useful, or attachment to a particular outcome, and recognize how those triggers influence their behavior. Connect the resulting stance drift to its effect on curiosity, client ownership, and the direction of the conversation.

3.1 Self–Management in Coaching

Coaching interactions can involve silence, emotion, discomfort, uncertainty, urgency, or a strong desire to help. Self–management allows the coach to notice their own reactions to what is happening without automatically acting on them.

Develop learners' ability to notice internal reactions and choose how to respond rather than reacting automatically. Build learners' capacity to recognize what is happening internally, pause when needed, reconnect with curiosity and the client's agenda, and make an intentional behavioral choice that preserves space for the client's thinking. Reinforce that effective self–management can draw on different practices rather than requiring a particular mindfulness, somatic, or regulation technique.

4.1 Evaluating Coaching Stance

A coaching interaction can feel comfortable to the coach without meaningfully supporting the client's thinking or development. Reflection helps connect the coaching stance to its effect on the client and identify what to strengthen next.

Develop learners' ability to evaluate how their presence, stance, and self–management affected the quality of the client's thinking. Build learners' capacity to recognize evidence such as greater awareness, new perspective, expanded choice, deeper exploration, or stronger ownership; distinguish those shifts from the coach simply feeling confident or comfortable; and identify what they would sustain or change in future coaching.

Authentic Leadership

Authentic Leadership is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for people managers who want to lead with greater clarity, integrity, and consistency. Learners clarify the values and purpose that guide their leadership, examine how their intentions are experienced by others, identify gaps between stated values and actual behavior, and make deliberate leadership choices that balance personal principles, context, and responsibilities to others. The credential reinforces that authentic leadership is not about leading one fixed way, but about adapting appropriately while remaining grounded in what matters.

1.1 Leadership Values and Purpose

Authentic leadership begins with clarity about what matters and what guides leadership choices. Without that clarity, leaders can default to habit, organizational pressure, or others' expectations without recognizing the trade-offs they are making.

Develop learners' ability to clarify the values and sense of purpose that guide how they want to lead. Distinguish meaningful leadership values from aspirational labels, explore how values influence priorities and choices, and recognize that values can come into tension with one another or with organizational expectations.

2.1 Leadership Intent and Impact

Leaders often judge themselves by intention, while others experience their words, decisions, priorities, and repeated behavior. Gaps between intent and impact can weaken trust and credibility even when intentions are positive.

Develop learners' ability to examine how leadership values and intentions become visible through behavior and how those behaviors may be experienced by others. Consider the signals created by decisions, communication, follow-through, use of authority, and responses under pressure; distinguish intention from impact; and use feedback or other evidence to test assumptions about how they are showing up.

3.1 Values–Behavior Alignment

Leadership credibility is strengthened when behavior consistently reflects stated values and weakened when repeated choices contradict them. Alignment becomes especially difficult when pressure, competing priorities, or organizational expectations create real trade-offs.

Develop learners' ability to recognize alignment and misalignment between stated leadership values and actual behavior. Examine moments where pressure, incentives, conflict, competing responsibilities, or fear may pull behavior away from stated values; consider the consequences of that gap for others; and distinguish authentic leadership from simply acting on personal preference.

4.1 Values–Aligned Leadership Choices

Authentic leadership is demonstrated through choices, particularly when values, relationships, performance needs, and organizational pressures compete. Alignment does not mean choosing the easiest or most personally comfortable option.

Develop learners' ability to translate leadership values into deliberate action in complex situations. Consider competing values and responsibilities, identify where adaptation is appropriate without abandoning what matters, make a leadership choice that is consistent with their principles and role obligations, and explain how they would communicate or act on that choice with integrity.

Recognition, Motivation, and Retention

Recognition, Motivation, and Retention is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for managers who want to move beyond generic praise and one-size-fits-all perks to build genuine engagement and retention on their team. Participants examine what actually motivates individual employees, how to recognize contributions in ways that land, and how to notice and respond to early signs of disengagement or flight risk. Learners will explore individual motivation drivers, meaningful recognition practices, reading engagement and disengagement signals, and responding to retention risk.

1.1 Individual Motivation Drivers

Employees differ in what motivates them. Motivated employees generally produce better work, stay engaged for longer, and are less likely to leave, which is why understanding what drives a given individual matters to a manager.

Build learners' understanding of individual variation in motivation and the limits of one-size-fits-all approaches. Recognition, autonomy, growth opportunities, or other factors may matter differently from one person to another.

2.1 Meaningful Recognition

Recognition is more effective when it is specific, timely, and meaningful to the individual.

Develop learners' ability to match recognition to the employee and the contribution being recognized. Generic praise may fail to reinforce the contribution or behavior the manager wants to encourage. Recognition should be thoughtful, specific, acknowledge the effort or skill, and aligned with what the person values.

3.1 Early Signs of Disengagement

Disengagement often appears gradually through changes in initiative, participation, or communication. Managers who notice these shifts early have more opportunity to understand and address what is happening before it is too late.

Develop learners' ability to notice early signals of disengagement before they become larger retention or performance concerns. Introduce signals such as participation trends over time, someone who used to volunteer for stretch projects has gone quiet, or shifts in language during check-ins, where detailed forward-looking updates give way to vague, noncommittal answers like "yeah, it's fine."

4.1 Retention Conversations

Noticing disengagement or a retention risk only matters if a manager also knows how to respond to it. Observation without a genuine, well-handled conversation just means watching someone drift toward leaving without doing anything to change it.

Develop learners' ability to respond to disengagement and retention risks in a direct, intentional conversation considering psychological safety. Retention conversations can backfire when managers respond with pressure, defensiveness, or vague reassurance. A useful response needs to address the employee's actual concerns while considering psychological safety.

Inclusion & Belonging

Inclusion and Belonging is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to build working environments where every person can contribute fully, be seen accurately, and experience genuine belonging, not as a benefit extended by those with privilege, but as a structural and cultural condition that organizations create deliberately.

1.1 What Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Mean

Diversity, inclusion, and belonging get used interchangeably, but having a diverse team doesn't guarantee anyone actually feels able to contribute.

Build an understanding of how diversity, inclusion, and belonging differ, and what actually makes belonging possible. For example, a team can be demographically diverse on paper but that doesn't mean all of the various viewpoints and experience is being heard and included. But even when that is desired, full benefits depend on psychological safety, the sense that it's safe to speak up and take an interpersonal risk.

2.1 Everyday Exclusion and Bias

Everyday exclusion and bias erodes collaboration quietly, the cost shows up as disengagement and withheld ideas long before it shows up as an open conflict.

Build the ability to notice both obvious and easy-to-miss patterns of exclusion, including where bias plays a role. Exclusion usually shows up as small, repeated patterns such as who gets credit, whose voice gets airtime, or who does the invisible labor. Bias is only part of what drives it. Such as when the same person's idea gets credited to whoever restates it, or the same few people always ending up with the thankless coordination work nobody notices. Bias can drive some of these patterns, but not all of them; some come from habit, convenience, or structural defaults that have nothing to do with anyone's conscious or unconscious attitudes.

3.1 Inclusion Practices and Personal Commitment

Being aware that exclusion happens doesn't change anything on its own. It takes specific behaviors, including knowing how to respond when exclusion happens in front of you.

Build the ability to turn awareness of exclusion into practical action, both planned and in the moment. Most people can identify exclusion after the fact, but far fewer have a ready response for the moment someone gets talked over in a meeting. Introduce inclusion practices, personal commitments, and in the moment responses such as rotating who speaks first, checking in with quieter members before a decision is finalized, pausing before repeating an idea already voiced by someone else, or naming when exclusion is happening directly in the moment.

4.1 Inclusion Conditions and Lived Experience

An organization can believe its culture is inclusive while the people most at risk of exclusion experience something different. Good intent doesn't close that gap on its own.

Build the ability to assess inclusion by comparing what an organization says it values against what people actually experience. Help learners be able to diagnose where stated values and lived experience diverge and recommend both a structural change, such as revising how promotion decisions or credit for ideas get allocated, and a behavioral change, such as how meetings are run so quieter voices are actively drawn out rather than left to compete for airtime.

Remote & Hybrid Collaboration

Remote and Hybrid Collaboration is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who collaborate with colleagues they rarely or never share physical space with.

1.1 Differences in Remote and Hybrid Collaboration

Colleagues in the same location pick up an enormous amount without ever scheduling a meeting for it and none of that transfers automatically when a team moves to remote or hybrid work. Teams often chalk up the resulting friction to individual effort or attitude, when the real cause is structural. Proximity itself was quietly doing work that now has to be done deliberately, or not at all.

Build an understanding of what physical proximity actually contributes to collaboration, and what's lost when it's removed. For example, in-person work provides informal updates and quick clarification that quietly disappear, or become unevenly distributed, once a team goes remote or hybrid. This is a structural change, not a matter of individual effort.

2.1 Trust and Shared Understanding at a Distance

Remote and hybrid teams lose many of the informal interactions that normally build trust, and those mechanisms don't get replaced automatically.

Build the ability to build trust and shared understanding intentionally when a team can't rely on informal, in-person contact. For example, practices like opening a meeting with unstructured personal check-in time, or narrating context out loud that would otherwise be picked up incidentally in person, can rebuild some of what distance removes.

3.1 Distributed and Asynchronous Collaboration Design

Trying to replicate in-person work through more meetings tends to disadvantage people across time zones and schedules, rather than solving the collaboration challenge.

Build the ability to design collaboration practices that fit distributed and asynchronous work, rather than defaulting to more meetings. Help learners be able to design an approach that deliberately splits work between synchronous elements, such as a live discussion reserved for genuine debate, and asynchronous elements, such as a shared document with a comment deadline for input that doesn't require everyone online at once. While also building in a specific mechanism to maintain equitable participation, such as rotating meeting times across time zones or requiring async input be reviewed before a decision is finalized.

4.1 Health of Remote and Hybrid Collaboration

A remote or hybrid team can look productive on paper while quietly excluding some participants from information, influence, or a sense of belonging.

Build the ability to assess remote and hybrid collaboration health by criteria beyond whether the tasks got done. Help learners examine specific factors driving inequitable participation in a given scenario, such as who gets called on first in a hybrid meeting or whose messages get responses versus left unread.

Impactful Feedback

Impactful Feedback is a 2–4 hours Specialized Credential that builds on the foundations introduced in the Communication Core Credential. This course equips practitioners with practical techniques for giving, receiving, and applying feedback constructively, in ways that support growth, build trust, and strengthen performance.

1.1 Why Impactful Feedback Matters

Feedback is one of the highest-leverage tools for improving performance and more. Yet, poorly delivered or defensively received feedback can erode trust and discourage people from asking for it again.

Develop learners' ability to build a working understanding of the importance of impactful feedback for supporting growth, building trust, and improving performance. Cover how to determine what separates feedback that strengthens from feedback that damages.

2.1 Preparing to Give Feedback

Situations calling for feedback differ and a default, one-size-fits-all approach that fits one situation well may cause damage in another.

Develop learners' ability to choose and deliver a feedback approach that fits the specific situation, such as praise, correction, or advice, rather than defaulting to one approach regardless of context.

3.1 Asking for and Receiving Feedback

People typically receive less candid feedback than they need, leaving blind spots that persist unless the person actively works to counter this.

Develop learners' ability to elicit feedback despite hesitations such as power dynamics, trust, fears, etc and to receive it without becoming defensive.

4.1 Practicing Impactful Feedback

Feedback skills discussed but never practiced tend not to transfer to real communication.

Develop learners' ability to build confidence and skill in using feedback skills. Provide techniques or approaches for noticing and dealing with human reactions such as nerves, power dynamics, and emotions that complicate giving and receiving feedback.

Difficult Conversations

Difficult Conversations is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential that builds on the foundations introduced in the Communication Core Credential. This course is for anyone who needs to navigate high–stakes interpersonal exchanges in the workplace, whether delivering unwelcome news, addressing a pattern of behavior, raising a concern with a senior stakeholder, or naming tension that others are avoiding. It is role–agnostic: these conversations are part of professional life at every level.

1.1 What Makes a Conversation Difficult

A conversation becomes difficult not simply because people disagree, but because something important feels at stake. What feels high–stakes to one person may not feel high–stakes to another.

Build learners' ability to recognize what is making a conversation difficult and why the stakes may be experienced differently by each person. Explore factors such as the stated issue, emotions, past history, future uncertainty, power, identity, relationships, and perceived consequences. Help learners recognize when surface tension may be masking deeper concerns, and identify signals that the stakes are rising, such as defensiveness, disengagement, emotional reactions, or escalation.

2.1 Preparation for Difficult Conversations

Preparing for a difficult conversation is not about scripting or controlling how it will go, but without thoughtful preparation the conversation can derail before it really begins.

Build learners' ability to prepare intentionally for a difficult conversation by clarifying what they hope the conversation will make possible, examining their assumptions, considering the other person's perspective and likely stakes, considering what verbal and nonverbal responses may occur and planning how to open the conversation in a way that supports constructive dialogue.

3.1 Maintaining Dialogue Under Pressure

A difficult conversation may be anticipated, or an ordinary conversation may become difficult without warning. When conversation shifts, the ability to stay present, recognize what is happening, and respond intentionally can determine whether dialogue continues or breaks down.

Build learners' ability to maintain constructive dialogue when a conversation becomes emotionally charged or difficult. Develop self-awareness of their own reactions, the ability to recognize verbal and non-verbal signals in others, and a repertoire of techniques for responding intentionally, such as de-escalating defensiveness, recovering from missteps, redirecting dialogue, and recognizing when to pause or step away rather than force an unproductive conversation to continue.

4.1 Outcomes of Difficult Conversations

A difficult conversation does not have to end in agreement to have a useful outcome. But ending without clarity can create false closure and allow the issue to resurface/escalate.

Build learners' ability to bring a difficult conversation to a constructive close by clarifying what has been resolved, agreed, acknowledged, or remains open, and identifying appropriate next steps. Develop the ability to distinguish among different types of outcomes and determine what each requires for moving forward.

Rebuilding Trust

Trust erodes for many reasons—broken commitments, misalignment, unmet expectations, or simple disconnection. Once lost, the relational residue, guardedness, and unspoken resentment can quietly undermine collaboration for months or years. This 2–4 hour Specialized Credential focuses on what happens after trust breaks down: how it fractures, what genuine repair requires, and how to re-establish the conditions for productive working relationships.

1.1 How Trust Breaks Down

Trust is rarely broken in a single moment. It erodes through repeated experiences that accumulate into a sense of unsafety.

Establish an understanding of trust as a dynamic and fragile relational resource, the experiences that damage trust and why time alone does not restore it.

2.1 Genuine Repair and Surface Resolution

Attempts to repair trust often fail when they address the immediate incident but not the broader sense of unreliability, harm, or reduced safety.

Develop learners' ability to distinguish genuine repair (addressing the relationship rupture) from surface resolution (addressing the incident) and recognize what conditions are still missing. Introduce practices to support relational repair such as acknowledgment, accountability, and renewed agreements.

3.1 Accountability and Acknowledgment in Repair

Accountability can support repair when it clearly acknowledges impact and responsibility without becoming blame or a performative apology.

Build learners' ability to support repair through acknowledgment, accountability, renewed agreements, and other practices that restore working relationships. Cover the importance of addressing the impact on the other party, taking clear responsibility, and offering a concrete forward commitment.

4.1 Sustained Trust Building

Rebuilding trust requires follow-through or risk falling back into old patterns causing loss of trust again.

Develop learners' ability to assess whether a trust-rebuilding effort has created the conditions for sustained repair, using criteria such as consistent behavior, agreements being honored, or moments where old patterns resurface. Help learners recognize that continuing to evaluate progress and adapting is an act of trust building.

SPECIAL THANKS

ICA would like to give special thanks to the contributors:

Kerri Sutey · Paulo Dias · Christina Hartikainen · Tricia
Broderick · Shane Hastie · Samantha Davis · Mahmoud Ghaz ·
Laura Powers