

# EQ Measurement as a Tool in Healthcare Recruitment and Development

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The push for enhanced patient-centered care in the US healthcare system has led to demand for the core skills that make up emotional intelligence, or EQ: Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Acknowledging these behaviors can make the healthcare industry smarter—and recruiting efforts more strategic.



## EQ's Connection to Healthcare

Although the term EQ has existed since 1930, emotional intelligence practices are just now finding their way into healthcare recruitment. Not surprisingly, the recent focus on this type of intelligence corresponds with the push for enhanced patient-centered care. In fact, it is proven that EQ leads to higher patient satisfaction and improved clinical performance. After all, healthcare is not only medical, but also highly emotional.



EQ is especially relevant when it comes to identifying strong physician leadership, which is critical for organizations in today's healthcare environment. According to the American Board of Physician Specialties, "All doctors are intelligent, but it takes more than an impressive IQ to be a good leader. Emotional IQ, empathy, and the ability to build consensus are highly valued traits that can reveal someone's leadership potential."

## Measuring EQ in Healthcare

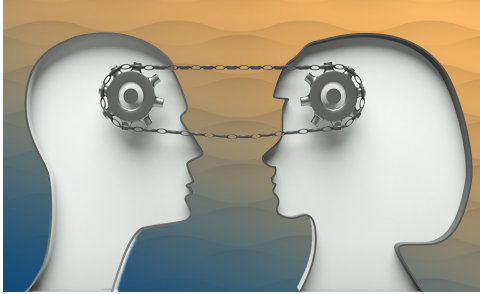
There is no doubt that recruitment is the best time to introduce EQ measurement. One of the primary tools available to help identify levels of EQ is personality testing. The topic of personality testing in healthcare is a highly debated one due to the long-held belief that physicians require a broader, knowledge-based set of skills more important than an individual's particular personality. But with healthcare organizations facing increased hiring pressure due to physician shortages, the high cost of healthcare professional turnover, and the focus on population health, more and more organizations are examining the value of integrating personality assessments into the recruitment process.

The key question organizations are asking: Is there a measurable benefit to personality testing in physician recruitment and development? If so, how can organizations successfully leverage the available resources and implement personality testing processes into their organization to cut turnover costs and more strategically plan for the future?



## Measurable Benefits of Personality Testing

There's a reason the pre-employment testing industry is currently worth \$2 billion and growing by 20 percent annually (ACOG Career Connection). It's the same reason that personality assessments are currently used by 457 of Fortune 500 companies. Organizations see tangible benefits. Here are just a few specific to the healthcare industry:



### Reducing Turnover

Between separation costs, recruitment costs, and onboarding costs, employee turnover expenses can total anywhere from \$800,000 per physician to \$64,000 per nurse. Hiring the right healthcare professionals who will stay and thrive in their jobs has never been more critical. That's why healthcare organizations are measuring personality traits with complex algorithms in an effort to hire candidates who consistently exceed expectations and feel connected to their employer's values and goals.



### Higher Quality of Care

According to Jim Thompson, principal psychologist at Somerville Partners, there are dramatic differences in personality between nurses in different specialties. "Given these differences, it's not surprising that most nurses work in an average of five specialties before finding the right one for them," says Thompson. The problem is that for every 10% of nurses who report dissatisfaction in their job (NCBI), the patient recommendations for the hospitals drop 2% in patient satisfaction scoring. This is a direct result of the loss of morale that stems from hiring the wrong personality type.



### Identifying Physician Leaders

EQ is especially relevant when it comes to identifying strong physician leadership, which is critical for organizations in today's healthcare environment. Clinical and operative competencies are no longer enough in the era of population health; physicians are required to lead staff, care teams, community initiatives, and more. They are required to collaborate, inspire consensus, negotiate, facilitate, and connect stakeholders. Hiring with an eye towards physician leadership qualities will prove fruitful for years to come.

## Implementing Assessments During Recruitment

There are thousands of personality tests on the market from which an organization can choose. The three most common to the healthcare industry are DiSC, Hogan Personality Inventory, and Myers-Briggs. While they are by no means an exact science and should not replace traditional recruitment efforts, they can provide a lot of additional insight that will prompt additional interview questions.

For example, if a provider completed a DiSC assessment and was found to be a D (Dominate) personality type, it is likely that he or she values competency, action, concrete results, personal freedom, and challenges. However, they may be limited by a lack of concern for others and impatience. Knowing this, the hiring organization should craft interview questions surrounding collaboration to ensure the candidate can thrive in today's team-based approach to healthcare.



## Leveraging Testing for Development & Beyond

The benefits of personality testing are not limited to the pre-hire process. Tests can also be used for existing individual or team development. DiSC, for example, has been used to help determine a course of action when dealing with problems as a leadership team—that is, taking the various aspects of each type into account when solving problems or assigning jobs.

As personality testing continues to gain ground in healthcare, organizations who value EQ and learn how to leverage personality testing throughout recruitment and beyond will be better equipped to thrive throughout the uncertain years ahead.

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