



# THE CULTURE

## New Professionals and New Members Forum E-Newsletter

### Emotional Intelligence: The Best Kind of “Mind Control”

By: Alice Hawley, MT(ASCP)  
New Idea Task Force Chair



Alice Hawley (right) and Nicole Lemieux (left), both  
Past ASCLS-ND Presidents, during Lab Week Run 2016

All of us have taken numerous tests over our lifetimes to test and confirm our grasp of the knowledge and skills needed to perform our jobs in the highly technical environment of a medical laboratory. However, have we ever taken a test to determine our “emotional intelligence”? Our what? Since when do emotions play a part in intelligence? Aren’t we told we should be leaving our emotions outside the door of the lab?

When we bring the skill of harnessing and understanding our emotions to our professional positions, it allows for the “ability to enhance and capitalize on the human potential of an organization”. And isn’t that what we are all striving to do – to bring not only our technical skills to our workplaces, but to also be seen and recognized for our potential impact on our organizations and on the care of our patients?!

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to identify and

manage our own emotions and the emotions of others which also includes the ability to harness emotions and in turn, apply them to tasks like thinking and problem solving. It is also the ability to regulate our own emotions and the ability to cheer up and calm down those around us. As Gleb Tsipursky, Ph.D. states, “Leaders gain EI in large part by learning about (and applying) science-based patterns to how our emotions work and how to manage them”.

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*Keep Calm and Put your Lab Coat On*

## Lab Week Run 2017

By: Ally Storla, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, Region III Communication Coordinator  
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The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lab Week Run has already kicked off and like seeing a sequel without watching the first film, if you weren't aware of the first year of Lab Week Run you may need some more information before you can get excited.

The first Lab Week Run was held April 24 - 30, 2016 as a virtual run during Medical Laboratory Professionals Week. A virtual run is a run which can be completed anywhere, anyway. The first year we had participants walk, run, push strollers, walk dogs, run on treadmills, combine the run with another run, and some

participants even chose to hike and kayak the distance of 5 kilometers or 3.1 miles. Lab Week Run's first year finisher medal featured a microscope with an acrylic slide dangle which every race participant received. The race came to be through the New Professionals and New Members Forum (NPNMF) and the first year's proceeds went towards the NPNMF and the Education & Research Fund. 500 finisher medals were ordered and a week before Lab Week the run sold the last race packet and sold out, raising \$7000 in profits and reaching 45 out of 50 states

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Lab Week Run Medal from 2016

## Committee Spotlight

### *Promotion of the Profession Committee*

"The Promotion of the Profession Committee has gotten off to a great start this year! The committee has been busy updating promotional tools and resources that are available through ASCLS. Some of these resources include the career recruitment toolkit and the Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) promotional guide. We are also in the process of partnering with other committees in ASCLS to bring awareness and start positive conversations about the medical laboratory profession. As a member of this committee, I am gaining so much knowledge on how to recruit and educate my peers and students of all ages about this field. I want others to know about this hidden profession that is truly saving lives everyday!"

-Courtney Hall, courtneyhall91@gmail.com  
Promotion of the Profession New Professional

## Balancing it All: Workplace Stress and Coping Strategies

By: Elizabeth LeFors, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, ASCLS Region VIII Communication Coordinator  
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All too often, we find ourselves struggling to juggle heavy workloads, manage relationships and family responsibilities, and effectively contribute to society, all while finding time to nurture outside interests. In our desires to live a fulfilling life, we create excessive stress for ourselves and for those who interact with us daily. Some workplace stress is normal, even helpful, but excessive stress can impact one's performance. It can inhibit concentration, cause irritability and depression, interfere with eating and sleeping habits, and harm personal and professional relationships. Excessive stress for extended periods of time can weaken the immune system and even double the risk of having a heart attack. But how much stress is too much stress? According to the American Stress Institute, stress is a particularly personalized experience and can vary considerably even in identical situations for different reasons. It is not the job that indicates the level of stress perceived, rather the person-environment fit. Some personalities thrive under the pressure of having multiple charges at the same time or a list of tasks to accomplish that may overwhelm most others. These same individuals may feel extremely stressed by assembly line work or common repetitive tasks. The extent of job stress not only depends on the significance of the demands, but also the sense of control and decision-making abilities one has in dealing with those demands. The key to reducing workplace stress lies in obtaining a good work-life balance.

One of the most important ways to achieve good work-life balance is to prioritize and set manageable goals. When setting priorities, think about what you want them to be, not what you think they should be. If it helps, ask yourself, "If I could only focus on one thing in my life, what would it be?" That is your top priority. Use these priorities to construct long-term goals; then set manageable goals each day that work towards your long-term goals. Being able to meet goals helps us feel a sense of accomplishment and control, and the more control we feel we have over our work, the less stress we feel. Remember to be realistic about workloads and deadlines. Make "to-



do" lists and take care of the most important tasks first. Once your priorities and goals are set, eliminate activities that do not align with them or delegate those activities to others. Do not spend time doing things that are not important to you. Delegating can be a solution where everyone benefits. It frees up your time to focus on other things and provides others with opportunities to grow, learn something new, and gain experience.

Although technology has helped make our lives easier, it has also created the expectation of continual accessibility. Phone notifications interrupt your time off, and inject an undercurrent of stress. To achieve a good work-life balance, you need to learn to unplug. Make the most of the time you have at work, and leave the rest for tomorrow. Avoid responding to work emails or phone calls while not at work. By not reacting to the updates from work, you will develop a stronger sense of resiliency. Resilient people tend to have more control over their lives, and are therefore less prone to stress than reactive people. Make true quality time with family and friends by reducing or eliminating multi-tasking completely, and maintaining focus on being in the moment.

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## ASCLS Hits the Hill!

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Since 1989, ASCLS has collaborated with organizations such as Association of Genetic Technologists, Clinical Laboratory Management Association, American Society for Clinical Pathology, and American Medical Technologists for the Annual Legislative Symposium in Washington, D.C. The Legislative Symposium also known as Leg Day, is a great educational opportunity for students and professionals alike to become acquainted with lobbying and the legislative process. Attendees are to make congressional appointments with their representatives and senators; the first day of the meeting, attendees will be mentored on how to effectively deliver clinically driven political information to the best of their ability. Presentations given are always well received in the congressional offices and as conference-goers leave The Hill they will feel confident that they made a difference. This year's symposium will be held from March 20-21st in Alexandria, VA at the Hilton Alexandria Old Town. Early-bird registration is open until February 20th, but attendees can still register onsite. If you haven't participated in a Legislative Symposium, I would highly encourage new professionals and new members to take advantage of this amazing opportunity. The experience you gain at Leg Day is irreplaceable, and it is of the utmost importance for us to let our voices be heard by our lawmakers. This year, the New Professionals and New Members Forum would like to congratulate our Legislative Symposium Grantee: Letycia Catalina Nunez-Argote! For more information visit: <http://www.ascls.org/advocacy-issues/legislative-symposium>

Prior to the Legislative Symposium, the Board of Directors will come together for our annual Interim Board Meeting held every spring in conjunction with Leg Day. On March 18-19th, the Board will meet face to face for the first time since the Annual Meeting to conduct business, take action, and plan out the future of our organization. Everyone is encouraged to come to the Interim Board Meeting on Sunday morning. It's a great way to stay informed and learn about current business and changes to come.

**BREAK ROOM:  
LAB WEEK RUN**



  
**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
WIN  
PRIZES**

## Emotional Intelligence... (Continued)

This is perfect for our profession because who does better with science than us? Our professional lives are based on test correlations and science-based patterns.

There are five basic components to Emotional Intelligence which are as follows:

- 1) Self-awareness – the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions and drives, as well as their effect on others.
- 2) Self-regulation – the ability to control or re-direct impulses and moods; the skills to suspend judgment and think before acting.
- 3) Empathy – the ability to understand the emotional make-up of other people along with the skill to treat people according to their emotional reactions. With our ever increasing cultural diversity, it has become increasingly more important to understand the emotional traditions and displays of a said culture to ensure proper perception and interaction amongst a diverse workforce.
- 4) Motivation – a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status along with the propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
- 5) Social Skills – a proficiency in managing relationships and building networks and an ability to find common ground and build rapport.

Think of these five basic components as being 80% of an iceberg that is submerged while the remaining 20% of the visible iceberg above the water line represents your IQ. Current research points to your EI as being a better test than your IQ in regards to whether you will be a productive and successful professional. The good thing is that even though your IQ is a set commodity, individuals can take steps to increase their emotional intelligence by monitoring and managing their emotional responses, decreasing disruptive impulses, learning to deal with others' negative emotions and reactions, and communicating effectively which includes resolving conflict.

How do you develop your emotional intelligence? Luckily, EI can be coached. It does also seem to improve as you get older. Thus, when we think about mentoring and the mentor/mentee relationship, EI is one area that should be stressed. A seasoned mentor might be just what a mentee needs because they can coach, give feedback and relay lifetime experiences which have helped develop the mentor's own EI. As an ASCLS region, we have begun discussions about bringing the topic of Emotional Intelligence into our ASCLS Region V Leadership Academy curriculum because of EI's impact on professionalism and leadership.

So, when all is said and done, what's in this for you? Is it worth your time to strive to increase your EI? Here is just a partial listing of increased attributes: more positivity/warmth, self-confidence, awareness, self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability, increased initiative and achievement, more influence and communication, better leadership, teamwork and collaboration, and an increased empathy and awareness of your peers and/or staff. If you are interested in a leadership position, 71% of hiring managers state EI is more important than IQ. So, what do you have to lose? Potentially a lot. What do you have to gain? The above list speaks for itself. As Aristotle once said, "knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

I would recommend a wonderful book called *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Bradberry and Greaves. This text has wonderful examples as well as an individual EI overview test that can be taken to obtain a personalized score in the various areas of EI.

If you have any questions or comments or want to know more, feel free to give me a shout-out.

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### Lab Week 2017... (Continued)

(including Alaska and Hawaii) and having two international participants – one in Spain, one in Japan.

The first run was successful and well received so we decided to have the run again! This year the funds raised will benefit the NPNMF and the Student Forum for travel grants to attend the ASCLS Annual Meeting in San Diego, California 2017 and the Legislative Symposium in Washington, DC 2018. This year the finisher medals will be streaked out microbiology plates in solid gold with a running gram positive cocci cartoon on the front with an acrylic lid. We ordered 1000 this year and we have sponsors and runner prizes! The runner prizes include a copy of the game 'Pathogenesis' which was recently funded on Kickstarter and will be available in June 2017. We have 3 core copies of the card game Cards Against Humanity, 3 awesome science themed nail polishes from Joy Lacquer, 4 nail polish cuticle whips from Joy Lacquer, a beautiful horizontal DNA necklace from somersault18:24 Science Inspired Jewelry, and plushies from Giant Microbes. We have 3 copies of MediaLab Inc's LabCE Exam Simulator, which is one of the most recommended study guides for passing your ASCP/AMT board exam. For more information including how to win visit: [www.labweekrun.com](http://www.labweekrun.com) and click on "Prizes".

We've made a lot of improvements to the website including a better time submission system using Google Forms. We are proud to be offering group discounts and special student pricing this year. The early bird rate is \$25 per race packet before April 1, 2017 and \$30 after. Our group rate is \$2 off each race packet after 3 or more. Student pricing is \$15 per race packet for up to 3 students and any more than 3 get a rate of \$10 per race packet. We are very excited for this upcoming year and we hope you can join us for another great, healthy event to celebrate Medical Laboratory Professionals Week!

### ASCLS NPNMF 2016-2017 Leadership Roster

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Email</u>
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Larson	klarso42@fairview.org
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<b>Secretary</b>	Tiffany Montalvo	tiffany.montalvo@sdstate.edu
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<b>Advisor</b>	Gilma Roncancio-Weemer	gilma.roncancio-weemer@hshs.org
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<b>Region X</b>	Amanda Reiner	areiner8182@gmail.com



## What is the best advice you have ever gotten from another tech?

"Everyone makes mistakes - you will make them, but that's how you learn. We try our very best, but sometimes mistakes still happen. It's about how we learn and grow from our mistakes that matter."

-Kelcey Harper, NPNMF Vice Chair

"Always carry a notebook of some kind. If you don't know something, write it down and refer to it until you do."

-Tiffany Montalvo, NPNMF Secretary

"Label everything with two patient identifiers. Working in a fast paced lab environment, it's easy to forget things when working with multiple patient specimens...always, always, always label!"

-Jazmen Myers, NPNMF Director



"Never stop learning. If something is unique or different from what you were taught, ask questions about it. Do research. Your pathologist, supervisors, and managers love to have employees who want to know more than what was taught in school. It goes beyond unique specimens or diagnoses. Learn your instruments. Learn how to troubleshoot. Learn your procedures and how you can improve them. This will separate you from your co-workers and make you a desirable employee."

-Gretchen Brocksmitth, NPNMF Past Chair

"Keep your head up. There are nights where you feel like it's overwhelming and you can't get it all done, but you just have to stay calm and collected. Get what you can done. And don't sweat the rest!"

-Alexa Pierce-Matlack, Region II Co-Communication Coordinator

"When struggling to make a decision, pretend the patient you are deciding on is a family member. This will help you make the right decision."

-Ally Storla, Region III Communication Coordinator

"Always ask questions when you are unsure about something. Especially as a new tech gathering information from other techs is very useful."

-Kelsey Jones, Region IV Communication Coordinator

"Question everything you're seeing and working on. If something doesn't seem quite right whether it be a sample or instrument, investigate the issue. We are scientists and it's natural for us to be curious and figure out the problems at hand."

-James Gardner, Region VII Co-Communication Coordinator

"Never rush your work, if you make a mistake it will only end up costing you more time in the end."

-Amanda Reiner, Region X Communication Coordinator

## ASCLS NPNMF Update

We continue to have another great year in the New Professionals and New Members Forum! We have a very dedicated group of NPNMF leaders who are working hard to bring you great resources and make thoughtful decisions on behalf of our forum members. Here are a few highlights of what we've been working on lately:

- We used some of the profits from the first Lab Week Virtual Run to grant two \$500 travel scholarships for NPNMF members to attend the Legislative Symposium.
- Are you attending the Legislative Symposium this year? We are planning a joint evening out with the Student Forum. We'll have dinner together and for those that are interested – we'll try out an escape room! Escape rooms involve many clues to a series of puzzles so that as a team you try to find your way out within 60 minutes. For more information, view the website by clicking [here](#). If you are interested in the dinner, the escape room, or both – please e-mail or text me.
- We are preparing for the second annual Lab Week Virtual Run! We are so excited to be partnering with the Student Forum to ensure the run continues to grow and thrive! We have 1,000 race packets available to runners this year. That's double our number from last year! Stay tuned soon for more information and check out [www.labweekrun.com](http://www.labweekrun.com) for the most current news!
- Over the next several months we will work to update the NPNMF Quick Guide – a document that is essential for all those in our forum to understand its structure, its purpose, and the responsibilities of each leadership role.
- After many thoughtful discussions, we have decided to make a request for action to the Board of Directors in our February report. We are requesting that the bylaws be changed to adapt the structure of the leadership progression in the NPNMF. Currently, the Student Forum Chair moves into the role of the NPNM Director, serving on the ASCLS Board of Directors (BOD) as our NPNM representative. We are requesting that instead, after first being elected as NPNMF Vice Chair and then serving as NPNMF Chair, the Chair transitions to serving as the NPNM Director. With input from members who have served in these roles before, we feel that this change will promote continuity and provide the background experience necessary to be the best advocate for our group while serving on the BOD. I welcome any and all feedback on this proposal before it will go to the House of Delegates for a vote at the 2017 Annual Meeting if first approved by the Board of Directors.

On behalf of all of us as your NPNMF leaders, thank you for the privilege of serving as your representatives in ASCLS. We are excited to begin the second half of our ASCLS year with the energy, drive, and motivation to be the best we can for each of you! Thank you for your membership and involvement in ASCLS!

Karen Larson, NPNMF Chair  
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Cell Phone: 763-221-0114

## Balancing It All... (Continued)

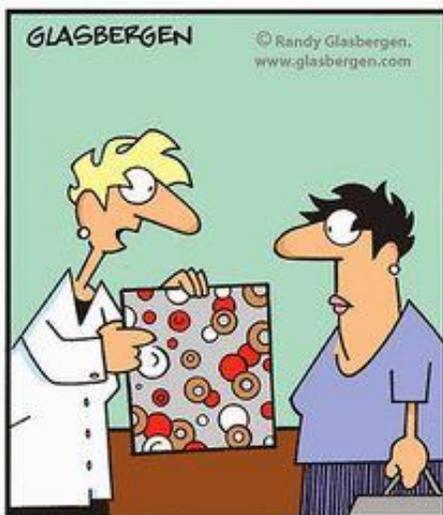
One of the best pieces of advice I have ever received is that if you are going to act on your priorities, you must make time for them. This means that you should actively schedule time solely for those activities. Get a calendar or planner and some colored pens. Map out the week ahead of time starting with those events most important or least flexible to you. Nothing short of an emergency could make you miss an important meeting at work, so treat priorities the same way. Once that time is scheduled, stick to it. Be sure to make time for hobbies, passions, and relationships outside of work too. However, it is important to remember not to over commit. You do not have to say "yes" to every opportunity that comes your way. If it does not fit into your schedule or align with your priorities and goals, do not overwhelm yourself by taking on more. Free time does not necessarily have to be available time. Sometimes we feel obligated to use free time to get other things done, but it is important to have some time totally for you, free of responsibility to just unwind, reduce stress, and avoid burn-out. Respect your private time. Read a book, take a walk, watch some TV, or just be alone.

Even when we are busy, we make time to eat, sleep, and other crucial things in life. One of the most important things we can do for ourselves is to exercise, but all too often that is the first thing to get eliminated from our schedule as our calendar starts to fill up. Aside from the obvious physical benefits, regular exercise can reduce depression, anxiety, and enable you to better cope with adversity. It boosts your immune system and increases your tolerance to stress by stimulating the production of endorphins. Exercise refreshes your mind, body and soul. Dedicate some time each week to some kind of self-care, whether it is exercise, meditation, or yoga. Short meditative exercises, such as deep breathing or grounding your senses in the present surroundings, are a good place to start. They are easy to do, and require little effort or time.

Strong and healthy support systems can make all the difference in achieving a good work-life balance. This requires that you communicate your desires effectively with your boss, family, colleagues, and anyone else involved in your life. Tell them what your plan is and ask them to respect it, and to help you stick to it.

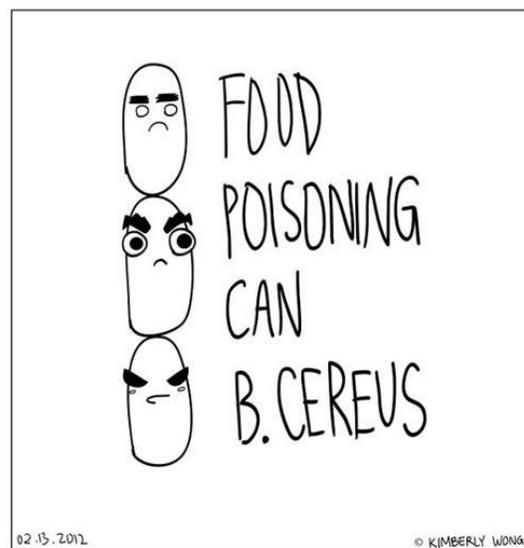
There are a lot of steps involved in changing your lifestyle choices to attain a better work-life balance. If we try to take on too much too quickly, it is easy to get overwhelmed and give up. Instead, start small, experience some success, and build your way up. Do not let stress stand in the way of a happy and healthy life.

## Gags & Funnies



**"The red circles are your red blood cells.  
The white circles are your white blood cells.  
The brown circles are donuts. We need to talk."**

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/59110432424439>



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<https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinning.com/736x/7f/ee/c4/7feec4f5eb0707c4261ef55d90c7420e.jpg>

## Purpose and Charges of the ASCLS NPNMF 2016-2017

The **purpose** of the ASCLS NPNMF is to engage and inform individuals new to the profession and ASCLS about the various opportunities that membership affords. Forum driven activities will support the needs and interests of Forum members.

**Charge 1:** Establish a key network of those members interested in participating in efforts of the NPNMF and communicate with them on a monthly basis.

**Charge 2:** Educate members of the NPNMF on ASCLS and opportunities within ASCLS so all involved gain a better understanding of the inner workings of ASCLS.

**Charge 3:** Identify the needs of those new to the profession and/or ASCLS to determine how ASCLS can help meet those needs as an organization.

If you have an announcement, article or essay you would like to contribute to *The Culture*, please feel free to submit it for publication! Please send ideas and submissions with the subject line, "NPNMF E-Newsletter Submission" to Vathani Logendran at [vathani.logendran@gmail.com](mailto:vathani.logendran@gmail.com)

Visit the website at <http://www.ascls.org/new-professional-new-member-forum>

### What's the buzz?

This year, the ASCLS NPNMF has started some fun, helpful, and informative columns on our Facebook page! Check out the summaries for more information on these new columns below!

1. **Maintenance Monday:** Continuing education related posts so you can stay up to date on your CE Credits!
2. **Fast Track Friday:** Posts on the importance of professionalism in this field. The side effect from the shortage in our field is a lot of younger individuals are moving up the ladder very quickly in their hospitals.
3. **Spotlight Saturday:** Interesting books/multimedia related posts as well as showcasing individuals in ASCLS. This column will be posted as often as we have content.

Join and check out our NPNMF Facebook page for these posts and more! Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NPNMF/>

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