

We have all witnessed the surprising and often puzzling version of ourselves that emerges during times of stress—as manifested in out-of-character statements, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. And we are just as surprised and puzzled when we see co-workers say and do things that seem strange and atypical for them.

The Myers-Briggs® assessment provides you with an understanding of your personality type characteristics and those of different types, as well as how stress can affect them all. It can help you recognize the warning signs of stress in yourself and others in your organization, and arm you with the insights to deal with stress productively.

Today's Tip: Become familiar with how stress can undermine personality strengths.

Under stress, different types are likely to act in different ways:

- ISTJ, ISFJ, ESTP, and ESFP types may get stuck on the details, lose track of common sense and fail to recognize possible solutions, and view the future in a negative light or turn unduly pessimistic.
- INTJ, INFJ, ENTP, and ENFP types may have a hard time deciding on a direction, become obsessed with less important details, and focus on one irrelevant fact as if it represented the entire domain.
- ISTP, INTP, ESTJ, and ENTJ types may become opinionated at the expense of reason, display emotion unexpectedly, be hypersensitive to perceived slights, and take criticism very personally.
- ISFP, INFP, ESFJ, and ENFJ types may stop listening to and accommodating others, avoid or ignore conflict, find fault with almost everything for illogical reasons, and try to dominate others.

Consider your type and reflect on the last time you were feeling stressed:

- Which behaviors did you engage in most frequently?
- How did they affect the situation at hand? Did they lead to conflict, misunderstanding, or a breakdown in communication?
- How did you resolve the situation?
- What steps can you take to avoid such behaviors the next time you are under stress?

Remember: Knowing your type and the type of others can help you determine what you can do when stress is affecting performance. For example, when Sensing and Intuitive dominant types are displaying the warning signs of stress, encourage them to consider which facts and possibilities are the most logical and/or salient to address. Or, when Thinking and Feeling dominant types are exhibiting the signs, invite them to gather the relevant facts and/or consider a wider range of options.

To learn more about stress and type in the workplace, read Introduction to Myers-Briggs® Type and Communication, by Donna Dunning, published by CPP, Inc., www.cpp.com.

Source: Adapted from Hirsh and Kummerow, *Introduction to Myers-Briggs® Type in Organizations*, 4th ed. (2016), p. 29.