

Personal Development - Stress

1. Understanding what causes us stress. The MBTI provides useful insights into the factors that cause us to experience stress and how we tend to act under stress. We are likely to be stressed or drained by tasks and activities that utilise our non-preferred attitudes or functions.

Examples of stressors in the workplace	
For E's	For I's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working mainly alone ◆ Having to think things through alone ◆ Focusing on one thing in depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Working mainly with others ◆ Having lots of interruptions ◆ Too many tasks at once
For S's	For N's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Focusing on concepts and possibilities ◆ Changing a familiar way of doing things ◆ Giving an overview without details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Focusing on the here and now ◆ Doing things the tried and tested way ◆ Attending to detail
For T's	For F's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adapting to individual needs ◆ Noticing and encouraging positive aspects of performance ◆ Using personal experience or empathy to decide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Being objective and impersonal ◆ Giving tough feedback ◆ Critiquing flaws in performance
For J's	For P's
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Having to leave decisions unmade ◆ Finishing at the last minute ◆ Being very flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Having to plan ahead ◆ Working within tight deadlines and schedules ◆ Make decisions and move on

2. How we act when stressed. When we experience stress we may invest more energy in our preferred or dominant function so as to get things back under control. If the stress continues this can lead to us using our dominant function in an exaggerated way.

The exaggerated state – An ESTP under stress

At their best ESTPs are straightforward, sociable and proactive, with an eye for detail. Under stress this can become exaggerated so that straightforwardness becomes bluntness, sociability becomes intrusiveness, proactivity becomes hyperactivity, and their grasp of detail becomes pedantic

An INFJ under stress

At their best INFJs are people who solve problems, they have clear a vision of how things could be and they usually have well developed theories to support their views. Under stress, the problem solving can have an arrogant edge, the visions are unrealistic and their reliance on careful theorising becomes an unwillingness to look for help outside themselves

When our dominant function is exaggerated as a way of dealing with stress;

- ◆ Logical, objective thinking can become cold and impersonal
- ◆ Independence can become isolation
- ◆ The ability to see lots of possibilities can become indecisiveness
- ◆ Focus on facts can become an obsessive fixation on certain facts

- 3. In the Grip.** Under severe or prolonged stress, MBTI theory suggests that we may reach a point where the inferior function takes over. Because it's our least preferred function, we don't use it well and it has a negative flavour. This may happen suddenly and we refer to it when we say someone "just flipped" or was "beside themselves" or when we say "I don't know what came over me"

Type	Typical "in the grip" experience
Dominant Extraverted Intuition ENFP, ENTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Becoming withdrawn ◆ Fixating on details and data ◆ Hypersensitive to physical symptoms
Dominant Introverted Sensing ISTJ, ISFJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Imagining a multitude of negative future possibilities – "catastrophising" ◆ Making leaps of judgement and acting impulsively
Dominant Introverted Intuition INTJ, INFJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Become overwhelmed by facts and details ◆ Overindulge in sensing type experiences such as food or TV
Dominant Extraverted Sensing ESTP, ESFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Prone to a negative "doom and gloom" view of the world ◆ Attribute false motives to others ("they don't care about me")
Dominant Extraverted Feeling ESFJ, ENFJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Becoming overly critical ◆ Poor use of logic (which seems fine to them at the time)
Dominant Introverted Thinking ISTP, INTP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Uncharacteristic displays of emotion ◆ Overly sensitive and defensive
Dominant Introverted Feeling ISFP, INFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Become harshly critical of themselves and others ◆ Judgmental
Dominant Extraverted Thinking ESTJ, ENTJ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Overly sensitive to criticism ◆ May feel alone and unappreciated

4. Dealing with Stress.

- ◆ Recognise what will stress you - and minimise it
- ◆ Build in things that will recharge and replenish your energy. For instance, an Introvert dreading a week of meetings and interviews might build in some lunchtime walks or time alone in the park
- ◆ Recognise when you are in an exaggerated state or in the grip and do something about it. Depending on your type, taking time out or talking things through with trusted friends or colleagues may help.