



Help individuals manage stress
to build resiliency and *be better.*

Tips on Using the MBTI® Stress Management Report and *In the Grip*

The MBTI® Stress Management Report details the signs of stress for an individual's type, describes the impact of stress on personality characteristics, provides do's and don'ts for handling stress and leveraging natural strengths, and suggests approaches for tapping others for support. The *In the Grip* booklet also helps people discover and understand the effects of chronic stress on individuals at all levels of an organization. Here are some tips for using the report and the booklet to manage stress and build resiliency.

1. When individuals are “in the grip,” consider the dynamics at play and look for ways to help them return to their natural style. Ask questions that require individuals to take action that will alleviate their “stressed” state, remembering that these questions will be different based on the individual type. Keep in mind that the goal is to help people return to using their dominant function—their most natural way of approaching situations and others. Consider some general questions to guide discussion, such as, “What are you like when you are most yourself?” or “What qualities define you as an individual?” Create a vision for what the person's natural state looks like.

2. When coaching or working with individuals under stress, avoid behaviors that will exacerbate stress levels and cause a sustained “grip” response. Help them understand how to seek support from others—and arm them with specific do's and don'ts. For example, Introverted Sensing types (ISTJ, ISFJ) will benefit from being allowed to ventilate with another person who can act as a “sounding board” rather than a “problem solver.” The MBTI® Stress Management Report provides information for each type regarding how to ask others for support and assistance that will help alleviate stress.

3. Identify circumstances or events that are likely to trigger stress reactions. It is important to recognize that what is stressful for one person may be energizing or motivating for someone else. Ask questions such as, “What events or circumstances are likely to provoke the reactions and any changes you are experiencing?” You can use the MBTI® Stress Management Report as a way to facilitate discussion around specific personality types and their likely stress triggers. The *In the Grip* booklet can be used to promote further understanding and can be particularly helpful when a group or team

is looking to gain a better understanding of which situations may trigger stress responses in others and how to best support one another.

4. Identify the most and least effective ways for dealing with stress and “grip” responses. Ask individuals to consider how they typically deal with chronic stress. Is their approach working or not working? Review the sections in the MBTI® Stress Management Report that are most relevant for them and explore key areas for further development. It is important for individuals to recognize which of their behaviors help or hinder their return to a natural way of functioning. For some people the ongoing stress becomes the norm in their life and they are largely unaware that they are responding to a new habitual situation in an out-of-character manner.

5. Create plans for garnering support in the future by identifying the most and least helpful ways others may respond to their “grip” behavior. Assign parts of the MBTI® Stress Management Report as homework—being careful not to assign too much of the report at one time. Use it as an opportunity to learn from the stress reactions and to test strategies that build resiliency. For example, you might encourage an ENFP to find a way to include quiet, reflective time into her daily life, or to review her commitments each week and consider saying no to new requests until her “to-do” list has been reduced.

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Make conflict work for you and *be better*.

Tips on Using *Introduction to Conflict Management* and *Introduction to Conflict and Teams*

These two TKI booklets provide guidance on how to use each conflict mode constructively. *Introduction to Conflict Management* provides skill building for individuals and is intended for management and/or supervisory training and coaching. *Introduction to Conflict and Teams* offers guidance for team members and leaders and is intended for team-based training or intervention. Here are some tips for using these booklets to help navigate conflict without unnecessary stress.

1. Address the positive motives of the five conflict styles:

competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. This can be a powerful intervention in conflict situations or as a part of team building. Competitors, avoiders, and accommodators, especially, welcome this recognition of their positive intentions. Give examples of how to appeal to those positive motives during a conflict. It's a good idea to have people role-play the various patterns of conversations between different conflict-handling styles or at least to demonstrate those kinds of conversations. A more complete description of the common misperceptions of motives between people with different conflict styles can be found in *Introduction to Conflict and Teams*.

2. Make individuals aware of the adverse effects (or costs) of their “temptation to resist” behaviors on teammates—and be on guard for those behaviors.

To begin with, individuals can be informed of the list of temptations for people with their conflict style. (A complete list of the style temptations—or behaviors to guard against—is included in *Introduction to Conflict and Teams* on page 11.) They are the kinds of unnecessary stressors that make teammates roll their eyes. However, it is important for the team leader (and/or workshop leader) to provide feedback to individuals who continue to engage in these behaviors. Executive coaches, as well, can point out how these behaviors can limit effectiveness and career success. In high-trust teams, individuals can be encouraged to ask teammates to tell them when they begin to engage in those behaviors.

3. Besides covering when to use the five conflict modes, provide key skills in training, coaching, and interventions.

Depending on your purpose, emphasize specific skills or leave it up to individuals to identify skill areas (or modes) that they believe they have trouble with—for example, their least preferred modes. Skills can be chosen in several ways. For example, a coach can direct clients to skills that seem most useful for their developmental needs. A change agent can select skills most needed for team functioning. A trainer can assign *Introduction to Conflict Management* and have clients pick skills to practice.

4. Have individuals practice key collaborative skills:

- + Identifying the underlying concerns in a conflict
- + Posing the issue as a mutual problem
- + Using “firm flexibility” when required

One workshop technique you can use is to ask participants to send in brief descriptions of recent conflicts (with their name changed) before the workshop. You then select some of these descriptions and, with the writers' permission, use them to give participants a chance to diagnose underlying concerns and then role-play collaborative behavior at the workshop. You can instruct one of the role-players to take a hard line, forcing another to use “firm flexibility.” A more complete description of collaborative skills can be found in *Introduction to Conflict Management* on pages 22–28.

5. Use *Introduction to Conflict and Teams* to help teams identify:

- + Their team conflict style
- + Challenges of that style in reaching collaborative decisions
- + Strategies to deal with those challenges on important issues

Introduction to Conflict and Teams contains more detailed descriptions of how to identify team conflict style based on team members' TKI scores, worksheets for identifying team style, and separate pages on the strengths and challenges of each team type, with strategies the team can take to address each challenge.

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