

NAVIGATING STRESS

INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this discussion is to sensitize and educate spouses about the stresses experienced by service members as well as the families who support them. Additionally, it will introduce the Stress Continuum Model; identify the effects of stress on the body; identify personal and operational stressors; and differences in stress responses and individual coping mechanisms will be discussed. Resources to help our command families become more resilient and better equipped to successfully navigate their personal and operational stress will also be referenced.

GOAL:

The goal of this module is for you to:

- understand the concept of stress
- appreciate the emotional and behavioral adaptations to stress
- recognize the warning signs of poor stress responses
- identify healthy stress navigation techniques
- become knowledgeable about resources available to assist service members and families

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Fleet and Family Support Programs
www.ffsp.navy.mil
- Military OneSource 1-800-342-9647
www.militaryonesource.mil
- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center
www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc
- After Deployment/Military Pathways
www.afterdeployment.dcoe.mil
- Navy Operational Stress Control
www.navstress.wordpress.com

“Take a rest; a field that has rested gives a beautiful crop.”

Ovid

TOPIC OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Video: *Effects of Stress on the Body*
3. Stress Continuum Model
4. Personal and Operational Stressors
5. Stress Activity: *Holmes and Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale."*
6. Resources

Stress Breaks

10 minutes	1 hour	½ Day	Extended
-Daydream	-Get a massage	-Take a drive	-Be a tourist in your own town
-Power Nap	-Call a friend	-Shopping	-Ride on a train
-Breathing exercise	-Watch a favorite movie	-Explore a new area	-Canoeing
-Doodle	-Go for a walk	-Pull weeds	-Camping
-Draw	-Nap	-Plant a flower	-Snow Skiing
-Read an old favorite	-Write a letter		-Visit Family

What Are the Changes in Your Life?

The following social Readjustment Scale has been used extensively to help people become aware of one type of stressor. This scale measures the amount of stress due to change that an individual has experienced in the past 12 months. Note that a happy event, like marriage, can have a stress value as great as or even greater than a negative change, like the death of a close friend. Research has shown that the higher the score, the greater the chance of experiencing a stress-related illness within the next two years. For example, individuals who totaled more than 200 points in the previous year had a 50 percent chance of developing an illness. A score of more than 300 indicated an 80 percent chance of becoming ill. Over the past 12 months, I have experienced the following changes in my life:

Social Readjustment Scale		Social Readjustment Scale	
Life Events	Holmes Points	Life Events	Holmes Points
1. Death of spouse	100	23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
2. Divorce	73	24. Trouble with in-laws	29
3. Marital separation	65	25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
4. Jail term	63	26. Spouse begins or stops work	26
5. Death of close family member	63	27. Begin or end school	26
6. Personal injury or illness	53	28. Change in living conditions	25
7. Marriage	50	29. Change in personal habits	24
8. Fired from job	47	30. Trouble with boss	23
9. Marital reconciliation	45	31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
10. Retirement	45	32. Change in residence	20
11. Change in health of family member	44	33. Change in schools	20
12. Pregnancy	40	34. Change in church activities	19
13. Sex difficulties	39	35. Change in recreation	19
14. Having a baby	39	36. Change in social activities	18
15. Business readjustment	39	37. Small mortgage in relation to income	17
16. Change in financial state	38	38. Change in sleeping habits	16
17. Death of close friend	37	39. Change in number of family gatherings	15
18. Change to different line of work	36	40. Change in eating habits	13
19. Change in number of arguments	35	41. Vacation	13
20. Mortgage large in relation to income	31	42. Christmas	12
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	43. Minor violations of the law	11
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29		

Reprinted with permission from the *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, II: Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale," 1967, Pergamon Press.

The Sixteen Types and Stress

Let's start with the basics: stress is inevitable, and not all of it is bad. In fact, certain kinds of stress keep us on our toes, motivated, and ready for action. Stress has been likened to a bell curve – we are at our best when we're moving toward the top.

At its peak, stress gives us a sense of being out of control. At its ebb, lack of stress creates an apathy that can render us defenseless and paralyzed. So a certain amount of stress is inevitable and healthy.

Another basic fact is that what stresses one personality type may be relaxing to another. "Easy listening" (read: elevator) music may make some workers relaxed and productive, while for others, it is the musical equivalent of fingernails on a chalkboard. So, too, for classical, country-western, opera, or jazz. What seems harmless – indeed beneficial – to us may send others in the office over to the windowsill to contemplate jumping.

But music is only the beginning. From personal habits (foot tapping, nail biting, pacing) to personal style (dress, mannerisms, speech patterns) to the manifestations of different preferences (thinking out loud, chronic tardiness, rigidity) there's something in each of us that can potentially drive someone else up a wall.

Of course we haven't even mentioned the big-picture stressors – relationships, personal finances, world crises, the stock market, and deadlines, to name just a few. To varying degrees these touch each of us over the course of the day – and on into the sleepless night.

It's important to note that severe stress rarely results from just one or two factors. In most cases, distress has a building-block effect: personal issues piled on top of work issues combined with concern for the state of the world, all feeding each other. It may be one additional, perhaps trivial, matter that puts you over the top – the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

Just as different types create stress differently, so, too, does each type interpret and deal with stress in different ways. Some talk their way through it – to friends, neighbors, and veritable strangers – while others work it out, inside themselves. Some types tackle their stressors and hit them head-on while others prefer to imagine them out of existence. Some interpret stress as a personal attack by a specific individual (or even by the entire universe), while others interpret it as one of the laws of life, as sure as death and taxes.

Before describing how each of the sixteen types reacts to stress, let's first point out a few dynamics that often accompany stress for most personality types. The first is illustrated in the old adage, "When you're knee-deep in alligators, it's hard to remember that your original mission was to drain the swamp." In other words, stress

often sneaks up on us, and it's not until we are "knee deep" that we suddenly realize how stressful a situation is. It then acts like a snowball rolling down a hill, enlarging rapidly unless we find a way to stop the momentum. It can soon be out of control.

We have a great deal of control over some parts of our lives and little or no control over other parts. The difference between being stressed and being relaxed is the wisdom to know which things we can change and which things we can't.

In dealing with a stressful relationship with a co-worker, it makes sense to try to control your own behavior, your own work habits, and your own job responsibilities. It would be futile – and a recipe for stress – to project your anger onto your co-workers, to try to change them or to modify your own work habits to accommodate a situation that may be impossible to ameliorate.

You can be in charge of yourself, which can help to keep your stress in bounds, but you can't control theirs. By the way, this same rule applies to other parts of life – everything from traffic jams to shoppers having more than the requisite number of items in the express check-out lane. You can control the route you drive or the way you respond to the traffic – you can turn on the radio or simply take a deep breath – but your anger and stress won't budge grid locked rush-hour traffic an inch.

Often what is happening is that life has moved us, or we perceive it has moved us, to operate primarily from our non-preferences and not from our preferences. If as a Sensor, you are forced to spend an inordinate amount of time creating a visionary strategic plan rather than producing some tangible results, you may indeed be on a nonstop bus to Stressville. If you must rely largely on your non-preferences to cope with a situation, you are already starting off on the wrong foot. You may act responsibly and successfully in the situation, but that won't necessarily ward off stress.

Stress attacks us when: a) we're not paying attention to it; b) we feel we're losing control; c) we're trying to control the wrong or inappropriate areas of our – or others' – lives; and d) we're forced to use our non-preferences more than our preferences.

Given all this, a fundamental part of dealing with stress is to understand how each of the preferences interprets and deals with stressful situations.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ENFJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Low self-esteem and sullen rejection of others:

Stressed ENFJs believe that people are no damn good, totally untrustworthy. That's because the ENFJ is no damn good and totally untrustworthy. The ENFJ's theme song becomes "Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me, Guess I'll Go eat Worms..."

An almost blind denial of negative reality:

ENFJs would almost rather martyr themselves than accept a negative truth about anyone – especially a trusted friend or relative. "Sucker" tends to be written all over them; and when someone else acts in a negative way, withdrawal, sulkiness, bitterness, unforgiveness, absolutism all command the ENFJ's behaviors.

Fatigue, anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness take center stage:

When the ENFJ is caught in too much stress, there are not many negotiables. The positive quickly turns toxic and is easily spewed on or towards others. Then the ENFJ makes a hasty retreat into non-communication that ranges from bitterness to "I'll not forget today and I'll get even."

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ENFP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Extreme mood swings with no warning:

Under stress, ENFPs can move from sullenness, marked with extreme pessimism and self-abatement, to an almost manic bubblyness that overwhelms others.

A higher than usual need to control people and things:

Imposing guilt on others, feeling guilty themselves, punishing others and self indiscriminately, and making unreal demands are all indications that stress is near.

Increased physical maladies, scattered behavioral patterns:

Hyperventilation, upper shoulder and neck aches, and headaches can reduce the ENFP to near immobility – to which this type responds with severely intense "starts" that go nowhere, leaving them more scattered and frustrated than ever.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ENTJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

A loud, arrogant, impersonal “my way or the highway” stance:

It is difficult for this type to fathom being wrong. As stress mounts so does the conviction of the ENTJ's rightness coupled with an intense need to argue loudly and angrily any point to maintain control.

An impatient, insensitive, repressive need to take charge of everything:

ENTJs project a know-it-all persona and are at the throat of anyone who suggests either a new idea or a shortcoming on their part.

A detached, disinterested rejection of everything:

Depending upon the stress level, ENTJs can go from a command voice to total disinterest and near refusal to communicate. Such detachment, couched in intellectual superiority debilitates and depersonalizes others. Rarely can or will ENTJs admit to failure. Such non-speak leaves others nowhere to go and keeps ENTJs fighting for control.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ENTP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Loud, controlling, scattered redundancies:

Almost as if only to hear themselves talk, ENTPs try to control all the “airways.” Saying anything, talking out of both sides of their mouth, increasing volume, and repeating, repeating, repeating are characteristics of ENTPs under stress.

Pushing anything or anyone to and over the limit:

Marked with great insensitivity, ENTPs can try anyone's patience in an unending effort to stay the center of attention. Regard for anyone else's needs is subjugated to a relentless grab for the spotlight.

Efforts to control are blocked by scatteredness:

As with almost any perceiving type, as the stress mounts, so does the effort to stay focused. It manifests itself as swings between extremely controlling, repressing behaviors and totally “off the wall” flights of fancy bordering on the absurd.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ESFJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

A sweep under the rug; denial buried in sweetness:

More than other types, harmony is central to this type. When it is absent, ESFJs feed someone chicken soup, cookies and milk or something to make the stress go away. They question its seriousness and believe that hugs and kisses will reduce the stress and produce normalcy again.

A heavy surge for control and order:

ESFJs believe that if they just busy themselves – tidy things up, organize, involve oneself in honest work, or help someone – the stress will go away.

An over personalization of everything:

ESFJs experience extremes of both inward guilt and projected guilt. They assume that they are a central part of the cause of whatever. If someone else is wrong, he/she should be punished. If the ESFJ is wrong, though hard to believe, then extreme martyrdom and worthlessness is on the way.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ESFP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Total denial of anything and everything:

More than any other, the ESFP is the “whistle while walking by a graveyard” type. They stay happy, busy, loose, and ready, and as stress increases, the ESFP can be in a high state of denial about what is happening around them.

Fatigue marked by despair, distrust, doom and gloom:

Under stress, ESFPs can easily overextend. Being out of control can lead to one failure after another – or at least perceived failures. ESFPs can make themselves miserable by their failure to pace themselves.

A wide swing between scatteredness and rigidity:

As stress mounts, the ESFP swings from an effort to control everything to an inability to control anything. Such behaviors are marked with extremes between loudness and silence.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ESTJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Extreme rigidity marked with an inability to admit failure:

For ESTJs, someone else is always at fault. As stress mounts, it is incomprehensible that this type had anything to do with creating the stress. They cannot admit that they are wrong.

A frantic effort to be in control of everything:

A poor decision is better than no decision at all for the stressed ESTJ. They will decide for themselves as well as anyone else around them. They will also be loud, adamant, and controlling, never second-guessing and never looking back.

A wide swing between domineering loudness and sullen withdrawal:

Somewhere between bitterness and pouting, almost always in anger, this type can experience a tirade or total withdrawal or any combination. These behaviors signal that the ESTJ is impervious to anything. Even if no door exists, ESTJs slam things shut. Everyone and everything are closed out of the ESTJ's reference.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ESTP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Very fidgety and scattered:

ESTPs may exhibit a flighty restlessness, focusing on nothing. They may be loud and obnoxious.

Pensive and distorting of the facts:

While others might call it lying, under stress this type can distort facts or present them with a negative spin. They can blurt something out and then be very quiet. They can also be controlling.

A clumsiness with resentment to routine:

Resistance, rebellion, passive aggressive behavior, and outright disrespect can be evidence that suggests extreme stress for ESTPs. The tried and true tend to be disregarded and avoided.

TOO MUCH STRESS FOR AN INFJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Blurts of badly handled facts:

Not concerned with accuracy, when stress mounts, INFJs will quote, badger, and explode with a firm, even righteous, display of facts that may or may not be related to what's happening.

A sullen, wounded martyrdom:

All of the rich imaginative inspiration of this type turns quickly to a bitter sense of rejection as fatigue and other stressors manifest themselves.

A combination of strengths and weaknesses maximized:

Under stress, introversion becomes non-speak; inspiration and theory become convoluted complexity; and structure and closure become insensitive stubbornness.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN INFP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Wide mood swings:

At the early stages of stress, INFPs can become really scattered, extremely extraverted and switch to sullen rigidity.

A disproportionate angry non-negotiability:

INFPs are normally easygoing and fairly pliable with a low need to influence. Suddenly that disappears, and it's a sort of "everybody lookout; and above all, don't tread on me."

Marked restlessness and avoidance:

Whether it's a confrontation or just finishing a project, as the stress mounts so does the avoidance, yet the restlessness can keep the INFP focusing on all the wrong things.

TOO MUCH STRESS FOR AN INTJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Edgy, arrogant, argumentative, impatient:

If bombarded with too many demands, details, and interpersonal needs, INTJs move to an apparent impatience and disdain for the events and people in their immediate presence.

A seduction about capabilities and failures:

As stress mounts and the INTJs' competencies are tested, they seduce themselves into believing that the situation is nothing serious and all that's required is for them to exercise greater control. This mental state is interspersed with flashes of self-doubt and assumed failure marked with extreme self-criticism.

A marked increase in distrusting others:

Distrust can be projected outward as disbelief. (The issue is so clear to the INTJ, how can anyone disagree?) They believe that others are out to get them or to undermine their work.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN INTP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Extremely out of touch with reality:

Great ideas and enthusiastic sharing, even defensive arguing can characterize the INTP under stress. However, their ideas have little basis in fact and are not implementable.

Quite loud and very rigid:

When pushed, the rather quiet, easygoing and accepting INTP can become loud, demanding, and rigid. The sudden and dramatic behavioral change is so removed from usual, that others recognized it quickly.

Impatience marked with arrogance:

The high need for internal consistency coupled with the inner clarity with which INTPs can move to a mental conclusion can make them seem short, rude, or condescending toward others.

TOO MUCH STRESS FOR AN ISFJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Ill-timed "blow ups" disproportionate to the event:

The supportive and obligatory nature of ISFJs allows others to take advantage of them. As the stress mounts, they may unload a backlog of similar moments that they have carried for a long time. No one, including the ISFJ, knows when such "dumps" will occur.

Self-effacement:

Notwithstanding the loyalty and dependability of this type, under stress, ISFJs can become very self-punishing and even somewhat verbal about how useless they are.

A wide mood swing:

From a negative and anxious fear of the unknown to a martyristic self-suffering in the name of duty, ISFJ behaviors can range from terror to tears in a matter of seconds – all of which are somewhat easily read by others, which in itself is stressful to this type.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ISFP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Extreme self-effacement and depression:

Between over personalizing and underestimating, ISFPs can turn inward and in no time at all convince themselves (and others too) of their meaninglessness and uselessness in any situation, leaving them very isolated and depressed.

A closed, rigid sense of martyrdom:

No matter the feedback, ISFPs quickly use it to prove how unappreciated and unrespected they are. They believe that regardless of how hard they try, their efforts will be rejected.

An emotional dump totally disproportionate to the event:

Once the ISFP opens up, out comes a whole series of things that have been welled up inside for who knows how long.

TOO MUCH STRESS FOR AN ISTJ CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Extreme efforts to control:

Under great stress, ISTJs may try to control everything around them – both people and objects. They may be super-rigid, making unswerving demands on themselves and others.

A very negative and pessimistic outlook:

Stressed ISTJs may show a high distrust of the unknown – in people, things, future planning and strategizing. Any show of concern or emotion is intolerable.

High unpredictability:

This type may swing from high rigidity and loudness to scatteredness and zero communication and back again to the rigid. It is the ‘swing’ – with no apparent pattern – that is so unnerving to this very predictable and dependable ISTJ and to others observing it.

TOO MUCH STRESS IN AN ISTP CAN EXPRESS ITSELF BEHAVIORALLY AS:

Wide mood swings with “blurts” and denials:

It will be obvious from the ISTP’s body language to blurted words that something is wrong. However, when questioned, they persist in denial. “I said nothing is wrong!”

A sudden lack of precision and high disinterest:

Normally ISTPs are accurate, precise and quite proud and confident about their capabilities. As stress undermines confidence, the work becomes sloppy; and the ISTP loses interest.

A higher need to control coupled with scatteredness:

It’s a bad version of the adage, “the faster I go, the behinder I get.” ISTPs commonly exhibit very bad self, time, and project management with a low capability to respond to external stimuli.