



Understanding Stress & Wellness

Through the Lens of Personality Type

Stress And Wellness

Navigating this Document

We have all experienced that side of us which is ‘unlike’ us, our ‘other’. This is the side of ourselves which bewilders us when it emerges from time to time as strange, unusual thoughts, feelings and behaviours which are almost totally out of character for us. We are also surprised to see others act in ways which may be out-of-character for them.

Often we can be quite at a loss to explain what this might mean.

This document charts the out-of-character selves we might encounter from time to time. These episodes are known as being ‘in the grip’. We usually encounter these episodes in response to fatigue or stress. The experience may alarm us because of its ‘Jekyll and Hyde’ nature. However, understanding that

these ‘grip’ experiences are healthy and adaptable enables us to see them as temporary episodes from which we can benefit. We should not worry that our classmates, friends or teachers are ‘coming apart at the seams’ or going crazy. Instead, we may appreciate and use the new and unique information we gain about ourselves and others when we or they are in the grip of the other side.¹

You will get the most from this document if you

- Are familiar with the psychological type approach to understanding personality
- Know your own four letter personality type from having taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® instrument and from receiving feedback that helped you verify your type. The subse-

quent pages of this document provide a series of infographics to explain the following:

- What stressors may lead us into a ‘grip’ experience
- What may trigger a grip experience
- What the typical grip reaction for that personality type may look like
- The different forms that grip experience may take
- The resources and remedies we draw on to bring us back to a ‘normal’ state
- The different ways in which we can return to equilibrium
- The new knowledge we may gain from being ‘in the grip’
- What energises us and keeps us in equilibrium

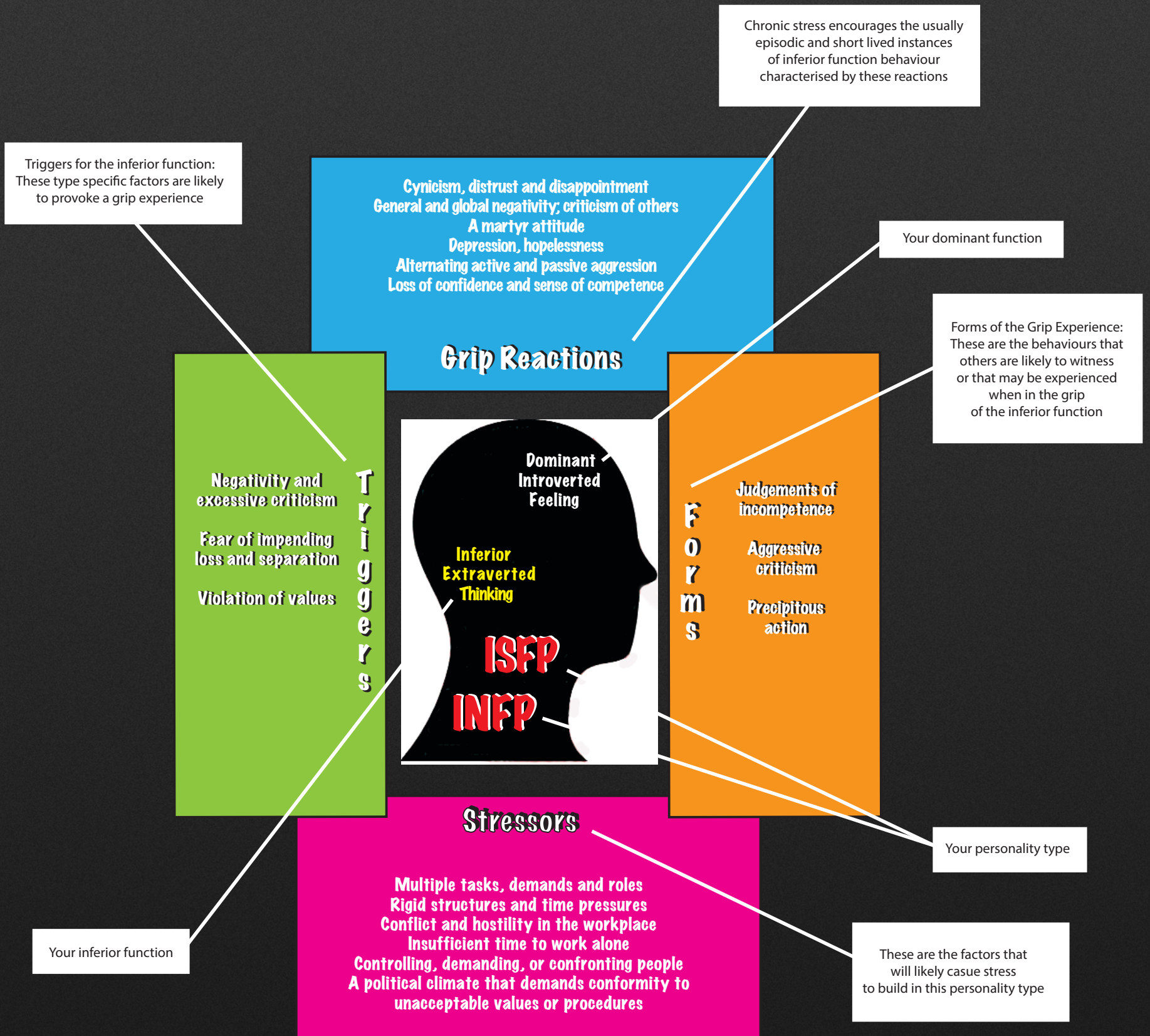
If you are unfamiliar with Type Dynamics you can refer to the short video in [Appendix A](#) that briefly explains how the letters of your personality type interact in a very dynamic way to reveal a multi-dimensional view of personality type.

We wish you the very best in understanding your own personalities through this document. Remember that this document should be used as a platform for understanding yourself, what you are like under stress and what it takes for you to be in balance and ‘well’. You can use it as a framework for self exploration and for understanding your friends, peers and family. What this document presents are typical patterns of behaviour. Remember that your own experiences will be highly personal and contextual.

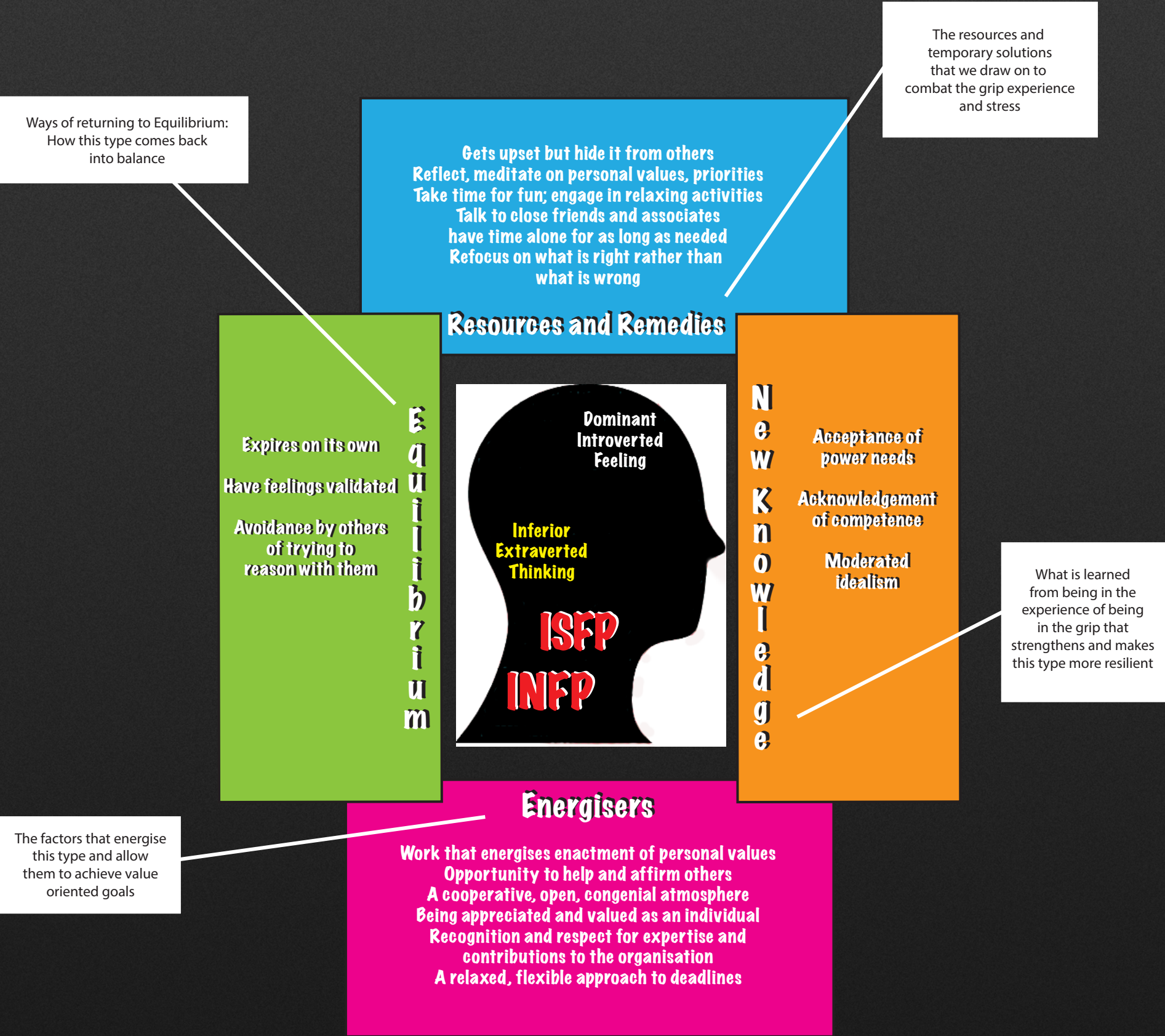
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1. Quenk, N. (2000) *In the grip: Understanding type, stress and the inferior function*, 2nd Edition, CPP Inc, Mountain View, CA

SECTION 1: A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE INFO-GRAPHICS- STRESS



SECTION 2: A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE INFO-GRAPHICS - WELLNESS



Introverted Feeling Types: ISFP and INFP

Under Stress

Cynicism, distrust and disappointment
General and global negativity; criticism of others
A martyr attitude
Depression, hopelessness
Alternating active and passive aggression
Loss of confidence and sense of competence

Grip Reactions

Negativity and excessive criticism

Fear of impending loss and separation

Violation of values

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Judgements of incompetence

Aggressive criticism

Precipitous action

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Stressors

Multiple tasks, demands and roles
Rigid structures and time pressures
Conflict and hostility in the workplace
Insufficient time to work alone
Controlling, demanding, or confronting people
A political climate that demands conformity to unacceptable values or procedures

Returning to Wellness

Gets upset but hide it from others
Reflect, meditate on personal values, priorities
Take time for fun; engage in relaxing activities
Talk to close friends and associates
have time alone for as long as needed
Refocus on what is right rather than what is wrong

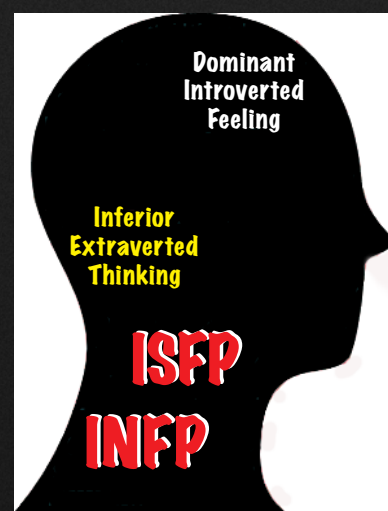
Resources and Remedies

Expires on its own

Have feelings validated

Avoidance by others of trying to reason with them

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Acceptance of power needs

Acknowledgement of competence

Moderated idealism

Energisers

Work that energises enactment of personal values
Opportunity to help and affirm others
A cooperative, open, congenial atmosphere
Being appreciated and valued as an individual
Recognition and respect for expertise and contributions to the organisation
A relaxed, flexible approach to deadlines

Introverted Thinking Types: ISTP and INTP

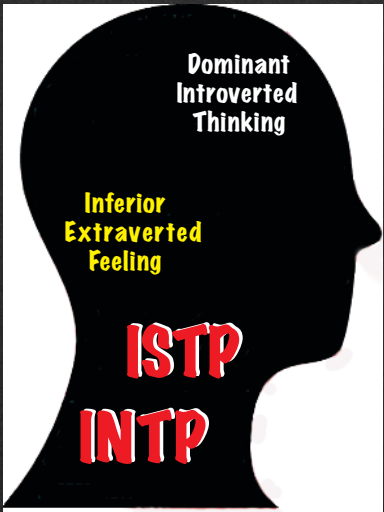
Under Stress

Becoming upset, expressed or unexpressed
A profound sense of alienation and psychological distance from others
Fear of permanently losing control of feelings and emotions
Passive-aggressiveness
A complaining, pouting tone
Hypersensitivity to signs that they are ignored, disregarded or disliked

Grip Reactions

Strong emotional expressions
Disconfirmation of Feeling values
Insensitivity to Introversion needs

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Logic emphasised to an extreme
Hypersensitivity to relationships
Emotionalism

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Stressors

Working under strict rules and regulations
Working with, being supervised by, or supervising incompetent people
Being responsible for or dependent upon others' work results
Anything illogical, unjust or unfair
Too little time alone, too many people, being required to extravert
Being confronted with strong emotions

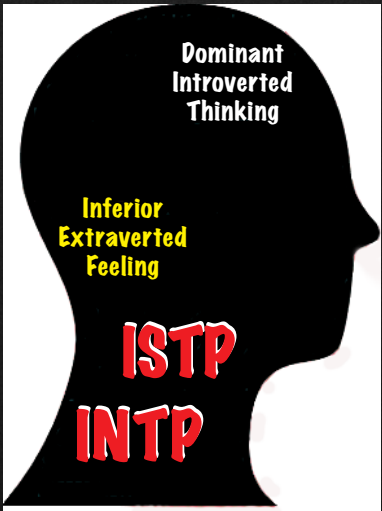
Returning to Wellness

Avoid confiding in others as long as possible
Deny and resist pervasive inner fears
Temporarily adopt behaviours that meet others' expectations
Ignore or disengage from the situation
Take time alone to recover and regroup energies
Receive (unsolicited) validation and confirmation from others that the situation is indeed stressful

Resources and Remedies

Respect of their physical and psychological space by others
Excusing them from responsibilities
Avoidance by others of asking them how they feel

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Acceptance of the illogical
Acknowledgement of vulnerability
Ability to express depth of feeling

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Energisers

Freedom to work as long and intensively on a project as desired
Working on concrete projects with tangible results
Having work contributions genuinely appreciated
Being respected for their special expertise
Being included and heard in important discussions and decisions
Autonomy and independence

Extraverted Feeling Types: ESFJ and ENFJ

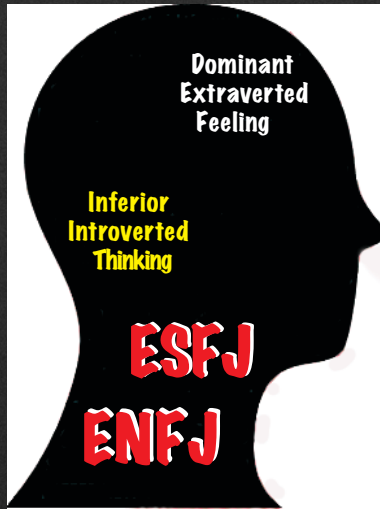
Under Stress

Negativity and pessimism
An overcontrolling, rigid approach
Insensitivity, coldness, short temper
Withdrawal, depression
Self-doubt, conviction of own incompetence
Inefficiency, scatteredness

Grip Reactions

Absence of trust
Pressure to conform
Interpersonal conflict

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Excessive criticism
Convoluting logic
Compulsive search for truth

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Stressors

Uncooperative, undermining co-workers
Confrontational, divisive relationships
Having to deal with sudden change
Personal criticism and being required to treat others impersonally
Insufficient time to do a good job
Work that violates personal integrity and values

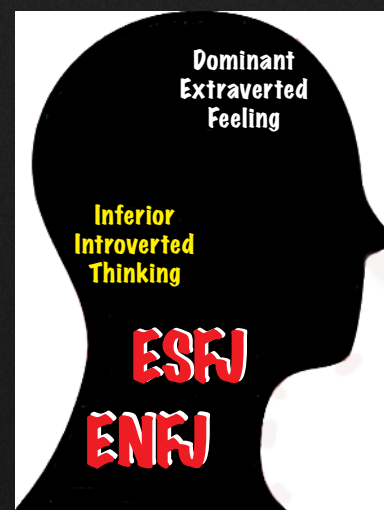
Returning to Wellness

Talk it through with an uninvolved person
Withdraw, spending time alone
Rely on spiritual values and meanings
Join a support group
Help in transforming the stressful situation into a rewarding experience
Take breaks; time off to nurture self

Resources and Remedies

Solitude and journal writing
Taking on a new project
Honouring by others of their need to be left alone

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Less need for harmony
Trust in own logical thinking
Tempered response to adversity

Energisers

Ability to control workload and schedule
Sociable, supportive environments
Being valued for individual contributions
Feeling connected to and in tune with others
Honest and open communication
Genuine and frequent expressions of appreciation

Extraverted Thinking Types: ESTJ and ENTJ

Under Stress



Extraverted Sensing Types: ESTP and ESFP

Under Stress

Reading negative implications between the lines
Withdrawal, distancing from others
Looking for meaning in trivial events or comments;
seeming 'slightly paranoid'
Sense of incompetence at work and at home
Distractability, 'spinning one's wheels'
Chronic anxiety and sense of impending doom

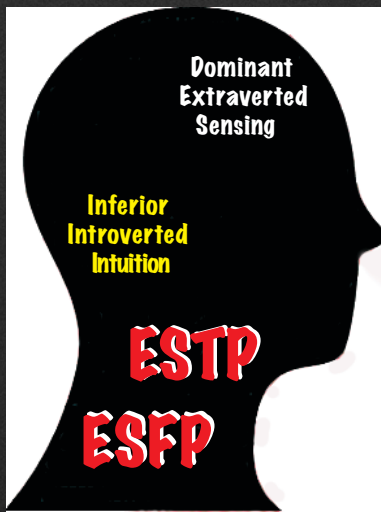
Grip Reactions

Excessive focus
on the future

Closing off of
options

Excessive
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activity

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Internal confusion

Inappropriate
attribution of
meaning

Grandiose
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Stressors

Deadlines
Having to conform to a rigid routine with little free time
Long term planning
Inability to control circumstances
Vague directions and unclear guidelines
Binding commitments with no allowance for contingencies

Returning to Wellness

Change of focus by reading or engaging in other
distracting activities
Consciously ignoring or avoiding distractions
while working
Asking others for help with tasks
Being reassured about their own mental stability
Help in identifying possibilities and options
Help in identifying organising and delimiting overwhelming
information

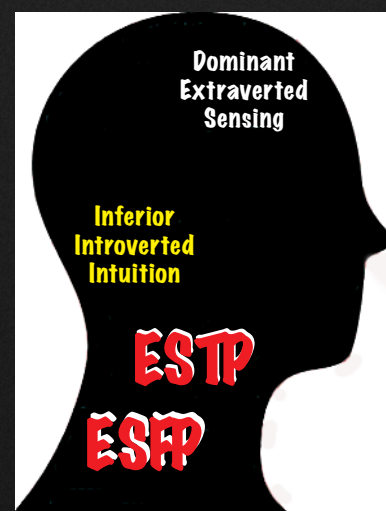
Resources and Remedies

Making contingency
plans

Reassurance by
others regarding
'dire' consequences

Help by others in
setting priorities

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Less fear of
possibilities

Appreciation of
the unknown

Access to their
own intuition

Energisers

Variety and flexibility in tasks required and use of
available time
Freedom to interact with people
Being able to make good use of their memory for specifics
Having options in the ways tasks are accomplished
Clear structures, specific tasks and goals
Working as part of a team

Introverted Intuitive Types: INTJ and INFJ

Under Stress

Intense anger, agitation, irritability, fatigue
Overdoing sensory activities – eating, cleaning, repairing, exercising
Physical stress symptoms such as muscle tension
Seeing external details as major obstacles that impede progress
Obsessive attention to perceived sources of stress, difficulty refocusing attention
Sleeplessness due to persistently reviewing problems

Grip Reactions

Dealing with details
Unexpected events
Excessive extraverting

Triggers



Forms

Obsessive focus on data
Overindulgence in sensual pleasure
Adversarial attitude toward the outer world

Stressors

Dealing with details, especially things in the outer world
Working under ignorant, irrational, or illogical people
Too much extraverting
A noisy, disorganised work environment
Being asked to violate standards and principles or to tolerate deceit
Lack of follow-through and poor performance by co-workers

Returning to Wellness

Withdraw; find quiet time to re-energise; walk or exercise
Focus on hobbies and recreation
Schedule in unscheduled time; take time off
Engage in simple, non-pressured Sensing activities
Change the work schedule; accept help with overwhelming activities
Receiving non-intrusive, forthright concern from others

Resources and Remedies

Time alone to recharge
Lightening of usual schedule
Avoidance by others of giving advice or suggestions

Equilibrium



New Knowledge

Adaptability to outer details
Pleasure in temperate sensuality
More realistic goals

Energisers

A flexible schedule with control over work methods and results
Maximum autonomy
Clarity in role definition and limits of responsibilities and expectations
An organised, structured, and predictable environment
Co-workers who communicate directly and honestly
Ability to achieve closure on tasks and projects

Introverted Sensing Types: ISTJ and ISFJ

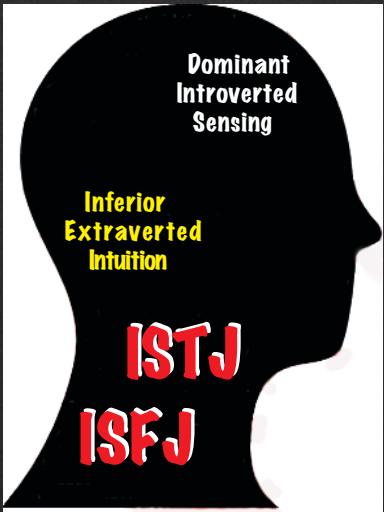
Under Stress

Global negativity and pessimism
Alternation between accommodating others' requests and withdrawing or resisting
Blaming, accusing others
Decreased efficiency and productivity
Sleepless nights; obsessive thinking about problems
Shut down, do no work for extended periods; then become depressed

Grip Reactions

Issues of reality
Anything unknown
Overdoing their own type

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Loss of control over facts
Impulsiveness
Catastrophising

Stressors

Deadlines
Others' incomplete or sloppy work that affects the quality of their own work
Being asked to change something with no good rationale provided; dealing with sudden change
Requirement to do things in an inefficient, ineffective way
Being asked to 'wing it', brainstorm, or imagine outcomes

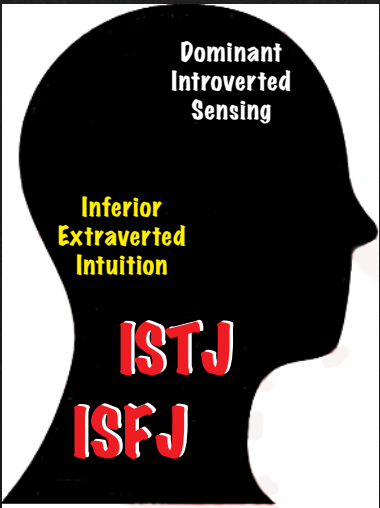
Returning to Wellness

Getting away; time alone in a pleasant Sensing environment
Concrete and specific validation of competence, worth and previous positive outcomes
Not being offered advice and help from others
Organising and accomplishing small projects
Help with priorities
Others' concrete support to accomplish required goals

Resources and Remedies

Need to hit rock bottom
Being taken seriously by others
Being helped with overwhelming details

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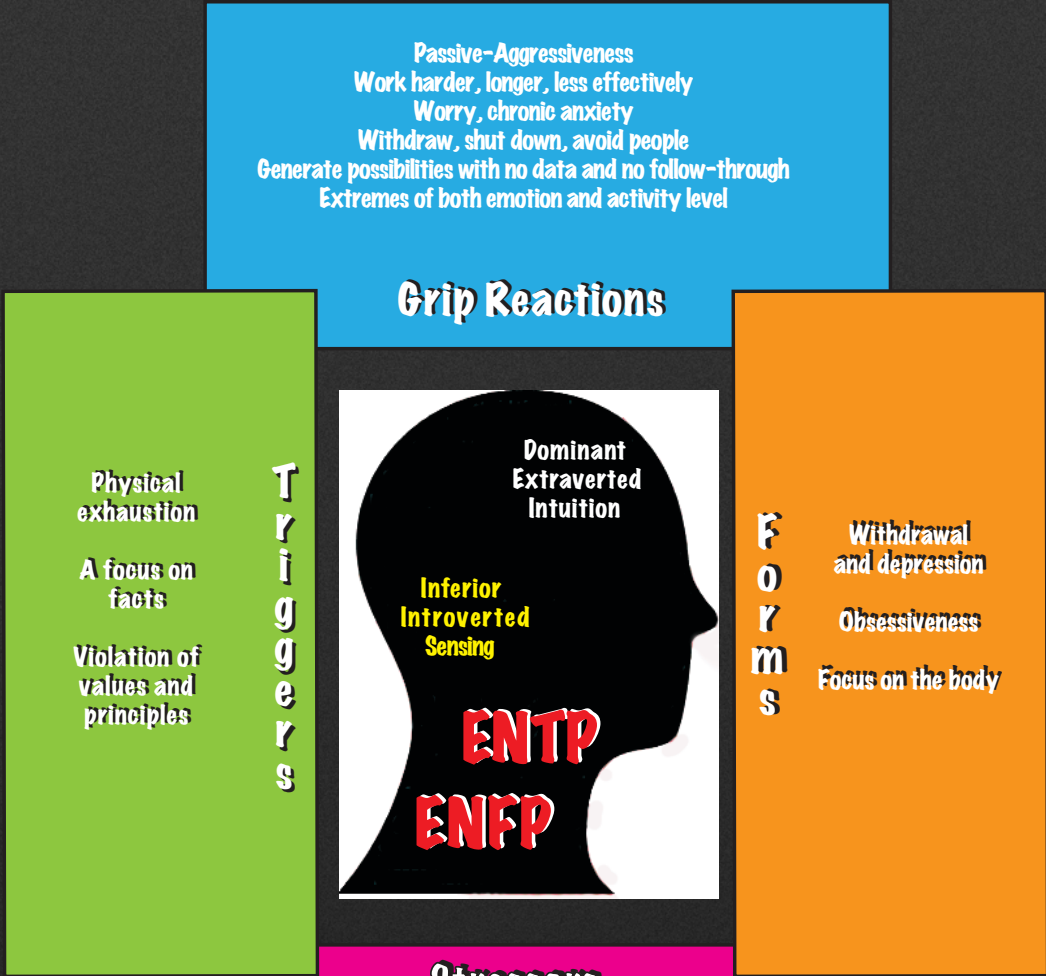
Broadened perspective
Clarified values
Flexibility in relationships

Energisers

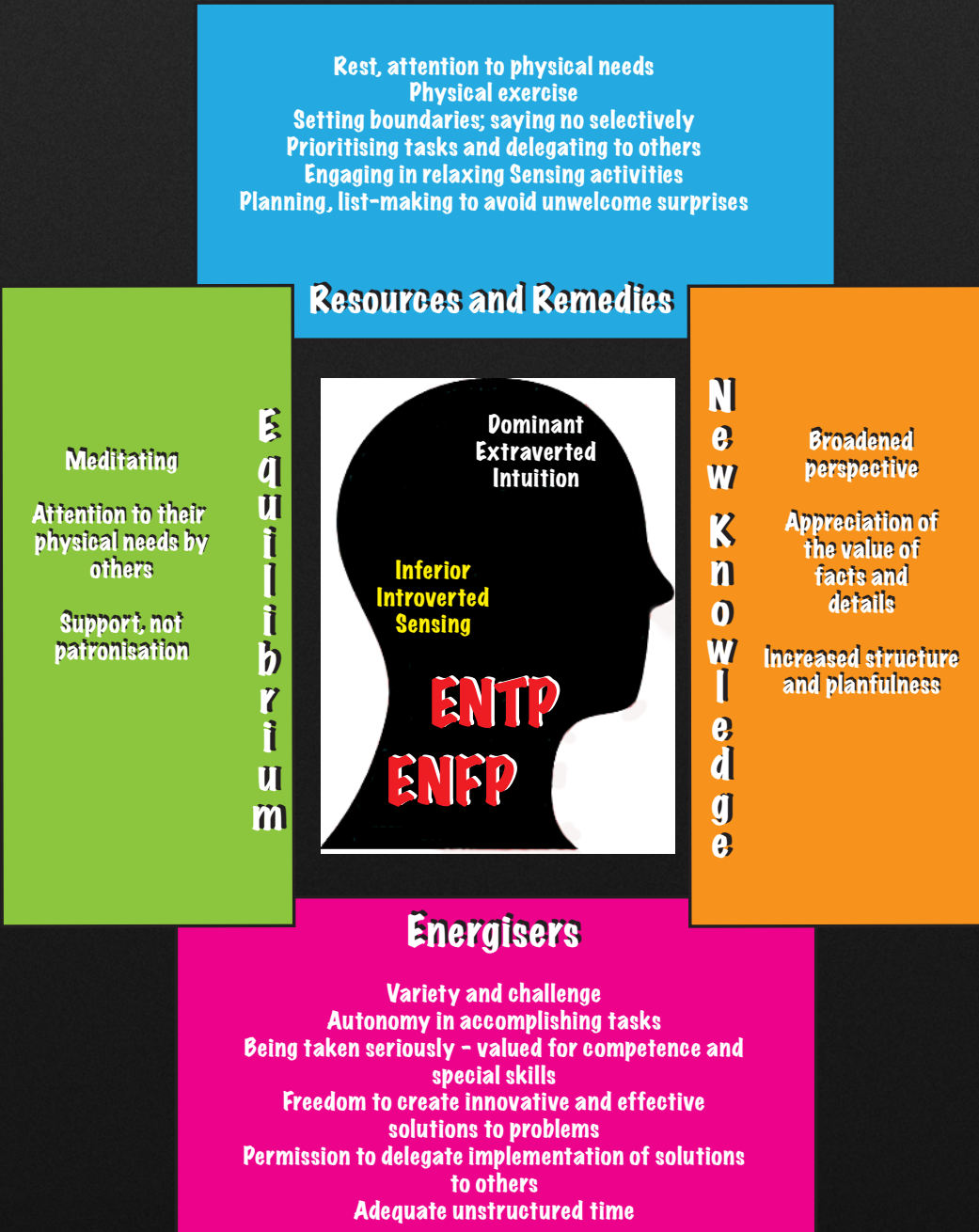
Organising facts and details to accomplish a goal
Reaching closure before moving on to another task or project
A quiet workspace with few interruptions
Clear and stable structures, procedures and expectations
Adequate time and support to perform to their own standards
Being in control of work schedule

Extraverted Intuitive Types: ENTP and ENFP

Under Stress



Returning to Wellness



Appendix A

MOVIE 1.1 A Quick Introduction to Type Dynamics



This short video introduces you to the concept of Type Dynamics. This is designed to give those unfamiliar with the more complex ideas around personality type some grounding to use this document.

[Click here](#) to access this video on YouTube.

References And Copyright

Adapted from:

Quenk, N. (2000) In the grip: Understanding type, stress and the inferior function, 2nd Edition, CPP Inc, Mountain View, CA

Further Reading

Naomi Quenk, In The Grip: Understanding Type, Stress, and the Inferior Function, CPP, Inc, Mountain View, CA

Naomi Quenk, Was That Really Me, Davies Black Publishing, Mountain View, CA

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