

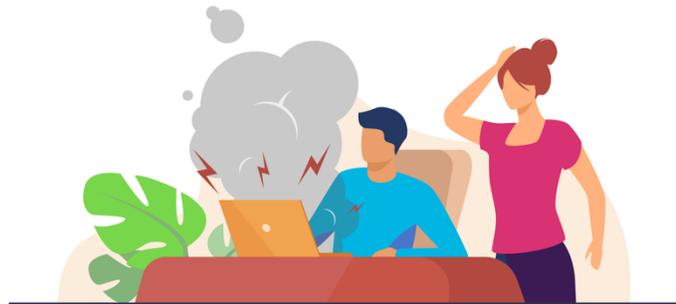
# How to Support Different Stress Styles at Work

## Practical guidance for managers, leaders, and teammates

Stress is part of work.

Deadlines, competing priorities, change, and uncertainty all create pressure. What's often overlooked is that people don't experience or respond to that pressure in the same way.

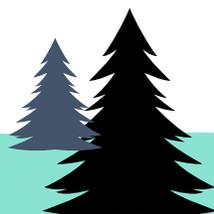
Stress styles describe the common patterns people use to cope when demands increase. These patterns are shaped by nervous system responses, past experiences, and individual strengths. They are not personality labels or diagnoses. They are simply tendencies that show up more clearly when stress is high.



Understanding stress styles helps teams move away from misinterpretation. What looks like overthinking, shutdown, emotional reactions, or urgency is often a stress response rather than a lack of motivation or capability. When leaders and teammates recognize these patterns, they can respond with more clarity, empathy, and effectiveness.

This guide is designed to support everyday work interactions. It focuses on practical ways to communicate, set expectations, and offer support during stressful moments. The goal is not to change how people are wired, but to create work environments where different stress responses are understood and supported.

When stress styles are acknowledged, teams collaborate more smoothly, trust increases, and work feels more manageable even during busy or challenging periods.



# Supporting the Analyzer

*Overthinks for clarity*

## What this can look like at work

Analyzers often respond to stress by seeking more information. They may ask detailed questions, want to understand the “why” behind decisions, or hesitate to move forward until things feel clear. Under stress, this can show up as overthinking, delayed decisions, or mental overload.

## How to support them

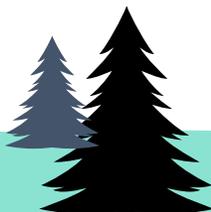
- Provide context, not just tasks. Sharing background information helps Analyzers feel grounded.
- Clarify priorities and decision criteria so they know what matters most.
- Allow time to think before asking for a final decision, especially on complex issues.
- Put expectations in writing when possible.

## What can increase stress

- Rushed decisions with little explanation
- Vague instructions like “just figure it out”
- Frequent last-minute changes without context

## Helpful language

- “Here’s the background so you can see the full picture.”
- “You don’t need a perfect answer right now. Let’s start with a first step.”



# Supporting the Bottler

*Holds stress inside*

## What this can look like at work

Bottlers often appear calm, capable, and composed, even when they're under a lot of stress. They tend to minimize their own needs and keep pushing forward. Over time, stress may show up as fatigue, disengagement, or sudden burnout.

## How to support them

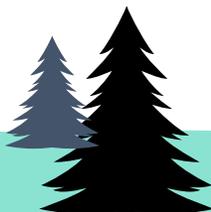
- Check in consistently, not only when performance slips.
- Normalize stress by acknowledging that work can be demanding.
- Create space for honest conversations without pressure to “open up.”
- Encourage small expressions of stress before it builds up.

## What can increase stress

- Assuming silence means everything is fine
- Only addressing stress once it becomes a crisis
- Rewarding constant pushing-through behavior

## Helpful language

- “You don’t have to carry everything on your own.”
- “How are things feeling for you lately, really?”



# Supporting the Fixer

*Acts quickly to solve*

## What this can look like at work

Fixers respond to stress by jumping into action. They want to solve the problem immediately and may take on extra responsibility without being asked. While this can be incredibly helpful, it can also lead to overload or burnout.

## How to support them

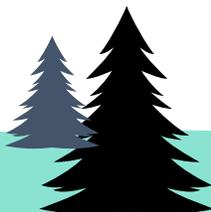
- Help them slow down enough to prioritize what actually needs fixing.
- Encourage delegation and shared ownership.
- Recognize effort, not just outcomes, so they don't feel pressure to always "save the day."
- Remind them it's okay to pause before acting.

## What can increase stress

- Letting them take on everything by default
- Expecting immediate solutions to every issue
- Confusing speed with effectiveness

## Helpful language

- "What needs action right now, and what can wait?"
- "Who else could support this with you?"



# Supporting the Freezer

*Shuts down when overwhelmed*

## What this can look like at work

Freezers experience stress as overwhelm. When tasks feel too big, unclear, or urgent, they may shut down, avoid tasks, or struggle to get started. This is often misinterpreted as disengagement, but it's a nervous system response.

## How to support them

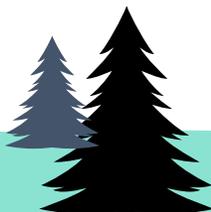
- Break work into very small, concrete steps.
- Be clear and specific about expectations.
- Offer reassurance and patience rather than pressure.
- Provide structure to help them regain momentum.

## What can increase stress

- Urgency-based language
- Large, undefined tasks
- Public pressure or criticism

## Helpful language

- “Let’s focus on just the first step.”
- “We can take this one piece at a time.”



# Supporting the Reactor

*Feels stress intensely*

## What this can look like at work

Reactors feel stress quickly and emotionally. They may express frustration, urgency, or concern openly. While this can feel intense, Reactors are often highly empathetic and deeply invested in their work.

## How to support them

- Maintain a calm, steady presence during stressful moments.
- Give space to process emotions before asking for decisions or solutions.
- Acknowledge feelings without amplifying them.
- Follow up once emotions have settled to move forward productively.

## What can increase stress

- Dismissing or minimizing emotions
- Pushing for immediate responses
- Responding with heightened emotion

## Helpful language

- “I can see this is important to you.”
- “Let’s pause for a moment and come back to this.”

# A Final Perspective

Supporting different stress styles is not about walking on eggshells.

It’s about creating clarity, safety, and trust.

When people feel understood and supported during stressful moments, they are more engaged, more resilient, and better able to collaborate. Stress styles give teams a shared language that turns tension into understanding.

