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## **Introverts: Managing stress in an extroverted workplace**

**By Toni Bowers**

*Takeaway: For introverts, being around people for long periods of time is draining. Here are some tips for making the best of a work situation in which you're surrounded by extroverts.*

Despite my propensity to spew the written word at people at what seems like a constant pace, I consider myself an introvert.

This is because I am introspective and energized by being alone. It's not that I'm shy or unsocial; it's just that being around people for long periods of time kind of drains me.

Many people in IT tend to be introverts. They chose that profession because it gives them the ability to explore their thoughts. But those same people realize that it takes a little more effort, or at least a different kind of effort, to succeed in a place where extroverts seem to shine the most.

Sherrie Haynie, a consultant for CPP, Inc., the folks who publish the Myers-Briggs personality assessment tests, offers these tips, or "strategies," for an introvert who is performing an extraverted role:

- Don't assume extroverts know how best to communicate with you — teach them. For example, explain why you need time to process before responding to a question.
- Leverage your natural talent for depth by identifying the goal as far in advance as possible, so you're prepared ahead of time when pressed in a meeting for input.
- Acknowledge the additional energy required to interact with others for long periods of time and allow yourself to tap into your energy reserve.
- Pay attention to the activities that require more of your energy, such as insufficient time to work alone, brainstorming meetings, and noisy environments.
- Depleting too much energy will lead to a stressful reaction, so look for early warning signs, such as withdrawal.
- If a stressful situation is unresolved, your unconscious functions will take over. We typically act out of character under extreme stress, and for introverts, this reaction may show up as an outburst or other outward expression — opposite to their normal calm and reserved demeanor.
- Restore your energy level by finding time alone to reflect and direct your focus on thoughts, ideas, and internal feelings. Schedule regular breaks throughout the day to recharge your batteries.