

# What's Your Interpersonal Style?

Understanding each individual's interpersonal style helps teams to work together effectively.

Once each team member has completed the interpersonal style 'colours exercise', share the results with each other. Consider discussing which aspects of your dominant colour resonate the most with you. Use the information to inform how you interact with one another, and to understand why team members react or respond the way they do in certain situations.

Remember – it's just an exercise that gives a general sense of interpersonal style, not an indepth analysis.

## Interpersonal Styles

**RED** styles are described as:

- ◆ Direct
- ◆ Demanding
- ◆ Adventurousome
- ◆ Decisive
- ◆ Enterprising
- ◆ Self-confident
- ◆ Forceful
- ◆ Quick to act
- ◆ Competitive
- ◆ Risk-taker

**BLUE** styles are described as:

- ◆ Persuasive
- ◆ Impulsive
- ◆ Self-promoting
- ◆ Trusting
- ◆ Helpful
- ◆ Emotional
- ◆ Idealistic
- ◆ Detail avoiding
- ◆ Achiever
- ◆ Caring

**SILVER** styles are described as:

- ◆ Loyal
- ◆ Predictable
- ◆ Team person
- ◆ Serene
- ◆ Possessive
- ◆ Supportive
- ◆ Accepting
- ◆ Compromising
- ◆ Indecisive
- ◆ Humble

**GREEN** styles are described as:

- ◆ Cautious
- ◆ Practical
- ◆ Analytical
- ◆ Orderly
- ◆ Persevering
- ◆ Methodical
- ◆ Conventional
- ◆ Conscientious
- ◆ Reserved
- ◆ Organizer

## Red or “Directive”

**Major Focus:** Red is focused on controlling the environment. Examples of red communication are: “Do it and do it now” or “I’m in charge”.

**Basic Needs:** A person with a red interpersonal style thrives when he or she has an opportunity to have authority, challenges, and prestige. People with a red style need varied activities, difficult assignments, logical approaches, and opportunities to advance.

**Fears/Concerns:** People with red interpersonal styles fear being taken advantage of. They hate losing control of the situation. Similarly, boredom and being tied to a routine are to be avoided at all costs. Reds dislike appearing ‘weak’ or ‘soft’.

**On a good day:** People with red interpersonal styles may be perceived as being independent, decisive, efficient and competitive.

**On a bad day:** People with a red style may be perceived as being dominating, abrasive, pushy, and touchy.

Words of advice to a person with a red interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Developing more patience with other people.
- Learning to negotiate with others.
- Developing a greater awareness of other people's needs.
- Participating more with others.

Words of advice to those working with a colleague with a red interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Being clear, specific, brief, and to the point.
- Sticking to business.
- Coming prepared: i.e., having requirements, objectives, and support material ready.
- Presenting material in a logical format.
- Providing alternatives/choices for making “their” decision.
- If disagreeing, take issue with facts, not people.
- Supporting rather than directing or ordering.
- Departing graciously.

## Blue or “Expressive”

**Major focus:** Blue focuses his or her energies on others.

**Basic needs:** A person with a blue interpersonal style thrives on social recognition; he or she wants to be popular and needs people to talk to. People with blue interpersonal styles like freedom from control and detail, and work best in favorable work conditions. A person with a blue style needs recognition of their abilities and wants to help others.

**Fears/concerns:** People with a blue style fear being blamed for things going wrong. They hate having people be upset with them and are afraid of not being liked or public humiliation.

**On a good day:** People with blue interpersonal styles may be perceived as being dramatic, enthusiastic and creative.

**On a bad day:** People with blue styles may be perceived as being impractical and excitable.

Words of advice to a person with a blue interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Being more objective in making decisions.
- Developing more organized, systematic approaches to tasks.
- Improving follow-through by attending to key details.
- Learning to be more direct.
- Having better control over use of time.

Words of advice to those working with a colleague with a blue interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Planning interactions with support interaction.
- Allowing time for relating or socializing.
- Talking about people and their goals.
- Tasks and/or assignments are followed up best when in writing.
- Asking for opinions and ideas.
- Providing approaches to implementing actions.
- Providing testimonials from people seen as important or prominent.
- Offer special, immediate, and extra incentives for willingness to participate.

## Silver or “Stabilizing”

**Major focus:** cooperating with others.

**Basic needs:** A person with a silver interpersonal style thrives on the status quo and security. They need time to adjust and be appreciated. Identification with the group or team is important to those with a silver style. They work better with established work patterns, limited territory, and areas of specialization.

**Fears/concerns:** People with a silver interpersonal style fear situations where nobody knows what is happening. Confusion and instability concern them greatly, as does lack of clarity on expectations.

**On a good day:** People with a silver interpersonal style may be perceived as being supportive, dependable, agreeable, and loyal.

**On a bad day:** People with a silver style may be perceived as dependent, subjective, pliable, and manipulative.

Words of advice to a person with a silver interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Learning how to handle change better.
- Becoming more assertive.
- Increasing comfort with open conflict.
- Varying routines occasionally.
- Speaking up when concerned or bothered.

Words of advice to those working with a colleague with a silver interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Starting, however briefly, with a personal comment.
- Patiently draw out personal goals.
- Listening; being responsive.
- Presenting information in a non-threatening manner.
- Watching for areas of possible disagreement – flight rather than fight.
- If disagreeing, watch for hurt feelings.
- Clearly defining individual contributions (preferably in writing).
- Providing guarantees that decisions will minimize risks.

## Green or “Analytical”

**Major focus:** What is the “right” or correct way?

**Basic needs:** A person with a green interpersonal style thrives on security. They need personal attention and no sudden changes. For this reason, people with a green style need exact job descriptions and controlled work environments.

**Fears/Concerns:** People with green interpersonal styles fear unwarranted personal criticism and criticism of what they have done. They are uncomfortable with spontaneous displays of feelings.

**On a good day:** People with a green interpersonal style may be perceived as being industrious, objective, orderly, and precise.

**On a bad day:** People with a green style may be perceived as being indecisive, rigid, picky, and stuffy.

Words of advice to a person with a green interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Developing more comfort with emotionally charged situations.
- Learning to value informal interactions with others.
- Adjusting standards to the needs of the environment.

Words of advice to those working with a colleague with a green interpersonal style:

Consider –

- Approaching in a straight-forward manner; stick to business.
- Building credibility by offering pros and cons to suggestions.
- Doing what you say you will do.
- Presenting an implementation plan with timetables.
- Assuring no surprises.
- If agreeing, provide follow-through.
- If disagreeing, make an organized presentation.
- Giving time to verify reliability of actions.