

Understanding Key Differences in Introverts & Extroverts

Kali Jackson, LMSW-C, CAADC-DP | *Wedgwood's Manasseh Project Trauma Recovery Center Therapist*

INTROVERTS VS. EXTROVERTS

- Introverts and extroverts both need connection and enjoy feeling connected with others.
- Introversion and extroversion describe differences in how we each recharge, process information, and engage with others.
 - They differ mainly in how they recharge their personal batteries.
- Introverts typically prefer to recharge alone, in solitude, and personal reflection.
- Extroverts typically prefer to recharge from social interactions.
- An **Ambivert** is someone who holds strong traits of both introverts and extroverts—enjoying a balance of alone and social time.
- Understanding where we fall helps us better meet our own emotional and cognitive needs.
 - This also allows for cultivating more inclusive environments in relationships, work, and community.
 - Introverts and extroverts handle mental health differently.

INTROVERTS

- Typically work best alone.
- Enjoy being home or having quiet time.
- Prefer social settings that are small.
 - Including just a few close friends.
- Can get overwhelmed by social settings and crowds.
 - Socializing can feel like it's draining your battery.

EXTROVERTS

- Feels the most energized around others.
- Enjoys a full schedule.
- Tend to be outgoing and have higher energy.
- Enjoys social settings.

TIPS FOR INTROVERTS

- Be intentional about your schedule.
 - Do not overfill yourself.
- Foster a few quality human interactions that fuel you.
- Purposefully schedule self-care time.
 - Consider activities that can be done in solitude.
 - e.g. yoga and mindfulness
- Own your personal identity
 - It's okay to be reserved.
 - It's okay to not love social interactions.
 - It's okay to feel different.
- Know your limits.
 - Set realistic social goals for yourself.
 - Challenge yourself to step out of your comfort zone but never into a zone of danger or panic.

TIPS FOR EXTROVERTS

- Prioritize finding opportunities to connect and be around people.
 - This can simply be things like reading at a coffee shop or library rather than at home or considering group fitness classes or clubs.
- Embrace your personality.
 - Your friendliness and communication is a strength and can be used to make others feel comfortable and increase connection.
- Hold on to your personal values and identity.
 - It can be overwhelming to be surrounded by others compromising values and morals—remain firm to yourself.
 - You must be mindful to not derive all of your self-worth and fulfillment from others.
- Learn to not over commit.
 - Being around people may recharge your battery, but be sure not to overcommit and end up draining your battery.
 - Balance is key!

HOW TO WORK TOGETHER

- Commit to honoring individuals' needs for either stimulation or solitude.
- Show appreciation to the complementary strengths that both introverts and extroverts bring to relationships and communities.
- Develop strategies to work with rather than against our personality traits.
- Create environments that accommodate diversity.

HOW TO BUILD A COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE FOR EVERYONE

- You must first work to understand the differing personalities and preferences within your workplace, community, group, etc.
 - The first draws awareness to whom is within the group and what needs might need to be accommodated.
- Balance an offering of both individual and group activities.
 - Provide options for both social outings and also quieter, more intimate opportunities for connection and engagement.
 - The key to success in building an inclusive community lies within offering a variety of activities and outlets that allow both personality types to participate comfortably.
- Look at furniture and placement in your current setting—*can it be more accommodating?*
 - You should offer a variety of options for comfortability.
 - Look for both options for quieter corners where introverts can recharge like private offices or work booths. While also provided options such as larger communal tables, conference spaces, etc.
- Show genuine interest in others.
 - Explore shared hobbies, facilitated open discussions regarding interests, strengths, weaknesses, etc.
 - A balanced and inclusive encouragement will acknowledge everyone's different needs and interests.
- Seek feedback and encourage boundary setting.
 - Normalize checking in and asking if individuals feel comfortable.
 - Encourage collaborative problem solving to increase inclusivity and sense of comfortability for all individuals.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Personality types exist in a continuum.
- You can have traits of both introversion and extroversion.
- Introverts and extroverts both need connection and enjoy feeling connected with others.
 - We all need social interactions and relationships—it is about finding the kind of relationships that work best for you!