



Welcome to the next installment of Plaid To-Go, our Birkman follow-up series for student leaders. In our last message we reviewed the stress behaviors of all four colors, provided examples of what that stress might look and sound like, and directed you to your How You Handle Other People and Motivating You reports.

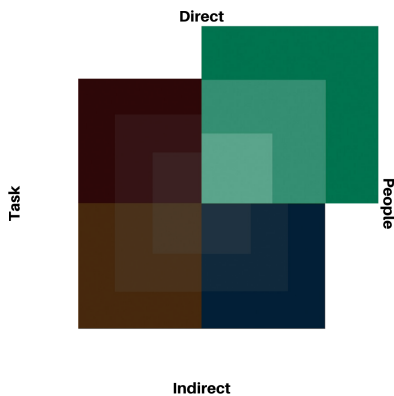
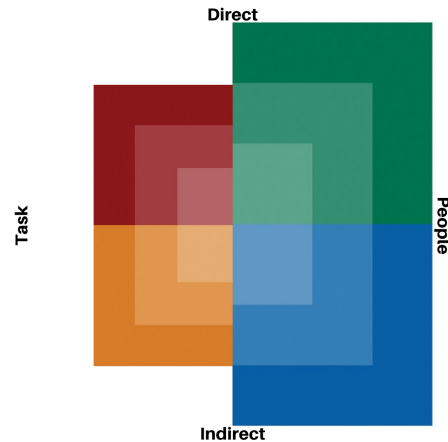
This week, we'll highlight fraternity-specific data related to behavior, stress, and conflict you may have already noticed within your chapter. Scroll down to learn more about the most common personality types within fraternities, how to manage stress on a group-level, and access this week's Birkman reports.

BIRKMAN HIGHLIGHTS

Plaid Data

Fraternities (and sororities) are filled primarily with members who have Green and Blue Needs and Stress symbols. This behavioral makeup is very different from what we see in an otherwise random sampling of the world. We know this because Plaid leads research on specific Birkman personalities found within fraternities.

Such high concentrations of just one or two behavioral styles can have a major impact on how the group functions because the needs and reactive behaviors of the group's members are not evenly balanced. If a majority of your group falls into just one or two quadrants, you'll have to pay extra attention to the specific needs of that quadrant and how to balance it out.



Green Majority

Green needs and stress often hold the majority within fraternities. It makes sense if you think about what fraternities provide: camaraderie, a social outlet, a sense of belonging, teamwork and leadership opportunities—everything Greens need. When Greens are satisfied, they make fraternities highly social, engaging, and competitive places to be. When groups of Greens are dissatisfied, however, they display very specific behavior.

Groups of Greens can be:

- Talkative, loud, and argumentative
- Easily distracted or dismissive
- Domineering or controlling
- Likely to politic for personal benefit

Green Stress may Manifest in:

- Public arguments or debates
- Rogue or separate factions within the fraternity
- Refusal to abide by rules they view as unjust
- Direct and vocal stubbornness

Managing a Green Majority

Managing Greens may feel like moving with the current in order to use it for your benefit. Greens can be charming social allies and positive competitors for your team if they feel appreciated and heard. In order to benefit from the best aspects of Green behavior, consider:

- Providing opportunities for safe, civil, debate
- Setting clear, fair rules and boundaries
- Directly communicating those rules and boundaries
- Publicly acknowledging the ways in which Greens help the chapter
- Tying personal incentives to chapter goals to encourage Green participation

Blue Majority

Blue needs and stress are a close second to the Green majority. Fraternities are organizations built on ideals, values, and the moral betterment of individual members—all things Blues love to ponder, discuss, and theorize. When Blues are satisfied, they make fraternities beacons of hope, ideas, and the quest for self-improvement. When dissatisfied, however, groups of Blues act very differently.

Groups of Blues can be:

- Quiet, aloof, and disengaged
- Worrisome, pessimistic, and cynical
- Likely to procrastinate and stall, which may lead to...
- Hasty, last-minute decisions

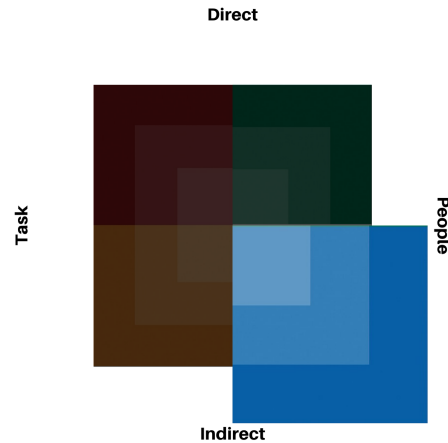
Blue Stress may Manifest in:

- Mental, emotional, or physical absence from meetings or events
- Refusal to engage linked to pessimism
- Procrastination that affects the end-result

Managing a Blue Majority

Managing Blues can feel like the ultimate role in nurturing. When given the time and space to thrive, Blues provide creativity, hope, and optimism in their organizations. To promote this Blue behavior, consider:

- Collaborating with Blues on timelines to ensure their needs are met
- Using Blues' creative talents in the beginning of a process
- Asking more questions than statements you make to them
- Treating them as you would a friend, putting the human element before the task or project



PRACTICE

When managing groups of stressed Greens and Blues, use some of the following techniques to consistently meet their needs and avoid stress.



Provide Opportunities to Debate

Greens have a need to talk, discuss, and even debate announcements and decisions. Schedule a designated time and place that allows them to debate what's happening in the chapter. That way, you can help meet their needs and also avoid disruption at chapter meetings.

Ex. → Open 30 minutes of your executive board meetings for chapter members to come discuss upcoming events or decisions.



Build a Habit of Expectation-Setting

Greens need to know the rules of the game. It helps them organize their thoughts, strategy, and approach to different situations. Create a practice of expectation-setting in your chapter so that Greens always feel as if they know the rules of the game and how to play. Clearly stating expectations will also make it easier to hold members accountable for breaking them.

Ex. → When introducing events, asking for volunteers, or even just making announcements, include a list of member expectations and rules to follow.



Make Time for Brainstorming

Blues are particularly good at brainstorming, thinking outside of the box, and being creative. Providing them this opportunity *before* executing a meeting, event, or program will make them feel valued and help your chapter be more thoughtful about your events.

Ex → Include a brainstorm session in the planning process for events and programs.



Use Meeting Agendas

We'll stray from the Green and Blue theme, here, to say that all personality types appreciate a good meeting agenda. Blues appreciate having the agenda sent out ahead of time so they can review it on their own deadline. Greens like to view an agenda to strategize and determine what they'd like to talk about. Reds want an agenda to tell them exactly what to cover and when it will be done. Yellows crave a good checklist and process for the meeting.

Ex → Create a chapter agenda the night before chapter and post it the day of the chapter meeting. Allow for comments directly on the agenda, or simply give members the opportunity to review it.



Express Gratitude & Appreciation

Most of us have a need to feel appreciated and thanked for our work, even if we don't ask for it. Greens prefer to be thanked publicly because it fulfills their need for social acceptance and approval. Blues prefer to be thanked privately, in a quiet, indirect way. Create a system of thanks within your chapter that doles out gratitude in the form it would be best received.

Ex. → Create a Member of the Week board or announcement so that Greens who win Member of the Week feel publicly appreciated. OR, make a habit of thanking Blues one-on-one so they know you noticed their good deed.

REPORTS TO VIEW



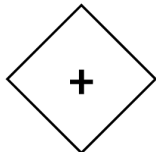
Handling Conflict & Your Possible Challenges

This week, access your **Handling Conflict** and **Your Possible Challenges** reports, located within the Plaid To-Go Personal Development report set.

First, review your most effective approach for handling conflict. Then, see some of your less effective tactics. Lastly, view some potential behavioral challenges you might face, and think about how your approach can be used or adjusted to work with Greens and Blues.

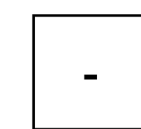
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Needs Met



**USUAL
BEHAVIOR**

**Needs NOT
Met**



**STRESS
BEHAVIOR**

When large groups of people stress in a similar way at a similar time, it can be overwhelming as a leader. Use what you know about the Birkman personalities to create chapter-wide incentives and policies that meet the needs of your largest personality groups. Meeting their needs keeps them in Usual Behavior, which helps balance the reactive behaviors seen within your chapter.

Look for our fourth installment next month, where we'll talk about using your team effectively and how to harness the strengths of Red and Yellow personalities.

The Plaid Team

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