



Everything DiSC[®] MANUAL

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WILEY

Everything DiSC[®] Manual

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Preface

The DISC model was first proposed by William Marston in 1928, but it wasn't until the 1970s when the first explicit measure of this model was made widely available for general use. Although elements of Marston's original model have been retained in the current manifestation of DiSC® (i.e., *Everything DiSC®*), many aspects of the theory have evolved to better reflect contemporary psychological measurement and theory. Today, *Everything DiSC* is used in a wide range of industries to address needs such as leadership development, management training, sales training, conflict management, and team building.

The *Everything DiSC* offering includes, but is not limited to, assessments, profiles, and facilitation kits. *Assessment* refers to the measurement of the DiSC model, which is available only in an online format. *Profile* refers to the PDF report that is generated for the respondent so that he or she can view the results of the assessment. *Facilitation kit* refers to a collection of materials (e.g., videos, PowerPoint® slides, scripts) available to help practitioners conduct classroom training. This *Manual* is chiefly designed to discuss the assessment portion of the *Everything DiSC* offering.

The *Everything DiSC* offering is separated into seven application areas, each of which addresses a different topic. These applications are *Workplace*, *Management*, *Sales*, *Productive Conflict*, *Agile EQ*, *Work of Leaders*, and *363 for Leaders*. Sections of the assessment do vary across these applications, but the core assessment of DiSC style is the same in all seven. This *Manual* discusses the research behind the assessment of DiSC style as well as the research associated with each of the specific applications.

DiSC Overview and Theory

The Purpose of Everything DiSC

Everything DiSC® is a personal development assessment that measures an individual's tendencies and priorities. It is designed to support an individual's understanding of his or her work-related behaviors, the behaviors of others, and how to apply this knowledge in work situations.

Unlike many other personality assessments, the *Everything DiSC* assessment is written for a nontechnical, general audience, rather than for a clinical, industrial-organizational, or academic audience. The assessment does not assume any previous training in psychological theory. Although it is possible for a respondent to understand his or her profile without the assistance of a trained professional, experience suggests that the instrument is far more engaging and impactful if the respondent has the insight and support of such a professional. The feedback in the profile is written to be neutral in tone, and although there are sections that explore the respondent's potential shortcomings, efforts were made to eliminate feedback that might be psychologically sensitive or threatening in nature.

The ultimate goal of *Everything DiSC* is to take wisdom about interpersonal dynamics that has been developed through psychological research and theory and help people use this knowledge to improve their relationships and performance in a variety of diverse contexts.

The DiSC Model

The foundation of DiSC® was first described by William Moulton Marston in his 1928 book, *Emotions of Normal People*. Marston identified what he called four “primary emotions” and associated behavioral responses, which today we know as Dominance (D), Influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). Since Marston's time, the theoretical understanding of this model has grown to include developments in contemporary psychology. As well, the measurement of this model has evolved substantially since the

earliest attempts to assess DISC over 40 years ago. The *Everything DiSC* assessment uses the circle, or circumplex, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, as an intuitive way to represent this model. Although all points around the circle are equally meaningful and interpretable, the basic DiSC model describes four specific styles.

Dominance: direct, strong-willed, and forceful

Influence: sociable, talkative, and lively

Steadiness: gentle, accommodating, and soft-hearted

Conscientiousness: private, analytical, and logical

The Two Dimensions Behind DiSC

Although DiSC describes four styles, the model is at its core two-dimensional. These two dimensions reflect fundamental aspects of human nature and can be viewed as independent constructs, as shown in Figure 1.2. The first dimension is visualized with a vertical axis that runs from fast-paced at the top to moderate-paced at the bottom. This dimension is conceptually similar to the constructs of surgency (Norman, 1963) and potency

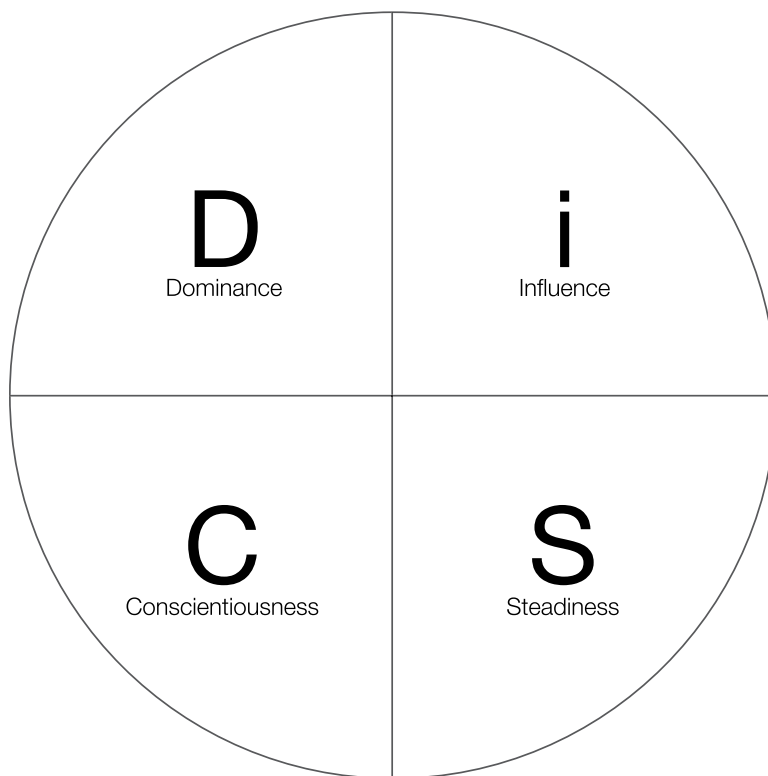


Figure 1.1 The Basic Everything DiSC Model

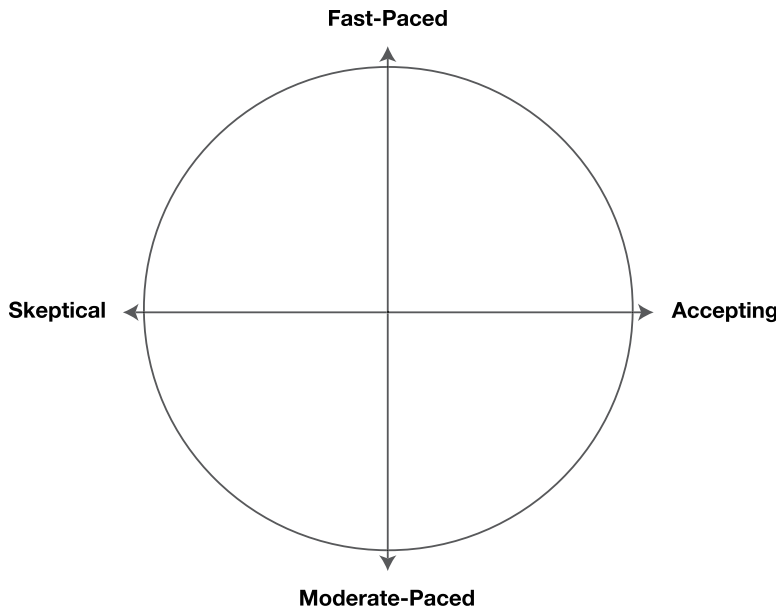


Figure 1.2 The Two Dimensions of DiSC

(Goldberg, 1981). It describes a person's outward activity level, where a person scoring toward the top of this dimension is expected to display a high level of outward energy/activity and to be outspoken and assertive. This construct has conceptual overlap with Gray's (1987) postulation of a neurobiological system referred to as the *behavioral activation system*, in which influencing or assertive behavior is activated in response to perceived rewards.

In contrast, a person scoring toward the bottom of this dimension is expected to demonstrate a lower level of outward energy/activity (i.e., more internal, reflective behavior), and show less assertiveness. He or she is also expected to be thoughtful and careful and less comfortable taking risks. There are people who are quick and assertive in their reactions to the environment, but people whose dots are located on the lower half of the DiSC map tend to be slower and more contemplative in their reactions. This construct has some, although not complete, conceptual overlap with Gray's (1987) *behavioral inhibition system*, in which avoidant behavior is activated in response to perceived threats.

The second dimension, the horizontal axis, ranges from skeptical on the left to accepting on the right. People who fall toward the left side of this continuum are expected to be more questioning and cynical in nature. They are more likely to be outwardly or inwardly challenging of others. People who fall toward the right side of this continuum are expected to be more trusting and receptive to others. They are more likely to show outward signs of friendliness and empathy. This dimension is conceptually similar to the construct of agreeableness (McCrae & Costa, 2010). Those who are highly agreeable place a priority on cooperation and social harmony, whereas those who are less agreeable show less concern for cooperation and social harmony.

Unlike the more common representation of traits as a one-dimensional continuum, the DiSC model examines the interaction of two independent continua. As such, style descriptions include traits associated with two continua and the resulting interaction between those two traits. As a point of comparison, the interpretation of a one-dimensional trait may describe someone who scores high on the moderate—fast-paced dimension (i.e., faster pace) as “assertive, adventurous, and bold.” In the DiSC model, this person is simultaneously measured on a second dimension, and this is also included in the interpretation. Therefore, if the individual scores high on the moderate—fast-paced dimension but also low on the skeptical—accepting dimension (i.e., more skeptical), the individual may read an interpretation that looks like “direct, outspoken, and forceful.”

The DiSC Quadrants

These two dimensions create four quadrants, as shown in Figure 1.3. Each of these four quadrants has been labeled to describe the typical characteristics of people who have the corresponding placement on both axes. For example, people who fall toward the top of the vertical axis (fast-paced) and the left of the horizontal axis (skeptical), tend to be forceful, direct, and demanding. As a consequence, this quadrant has been labeled Dominance (D). The remaining three quadrants are labeled Influence (i), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C).

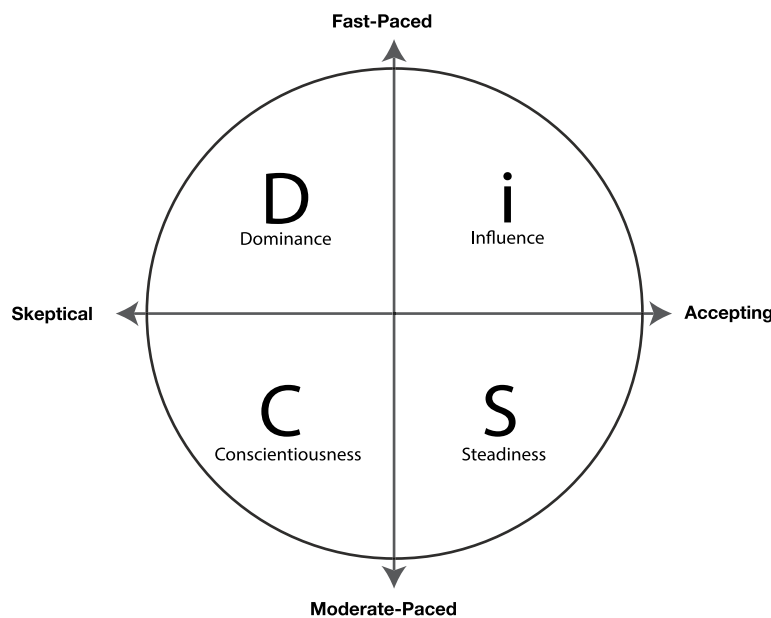


Figure 1.3 The Four Quadrants

In the same way that any individual can be measured on any two independent dimensions, a person can be placed within the two-dimensional *Everything DiSC* map. This placement represents a *style*. A style is a set of typical response patterns that are expected from a person. However, that doesn't mean that a person can only exhibit that pattern. For instance, an individual who has been assessed and located in the D quadrant will demonstrate more dominant behaviors and preferences than the average person, but will also, from time to time, show behaviors and preferences that are associated with the other three quadrants.

The Twelve Everything DiSC Styles

The two-dimensional *Everything DiSC* map can also be split into twelve segments rather than four quadrants, as shown in Figure 1.4. This allows for finer differentiation among the different locations with the map. In the *Everything DiSC* reports, these segments are referred to as styles.

Some of the styles (i.e., segments) have a single letter designation and others have a double letter designation. The single letters simply refer to the traditional D, i, S, and C

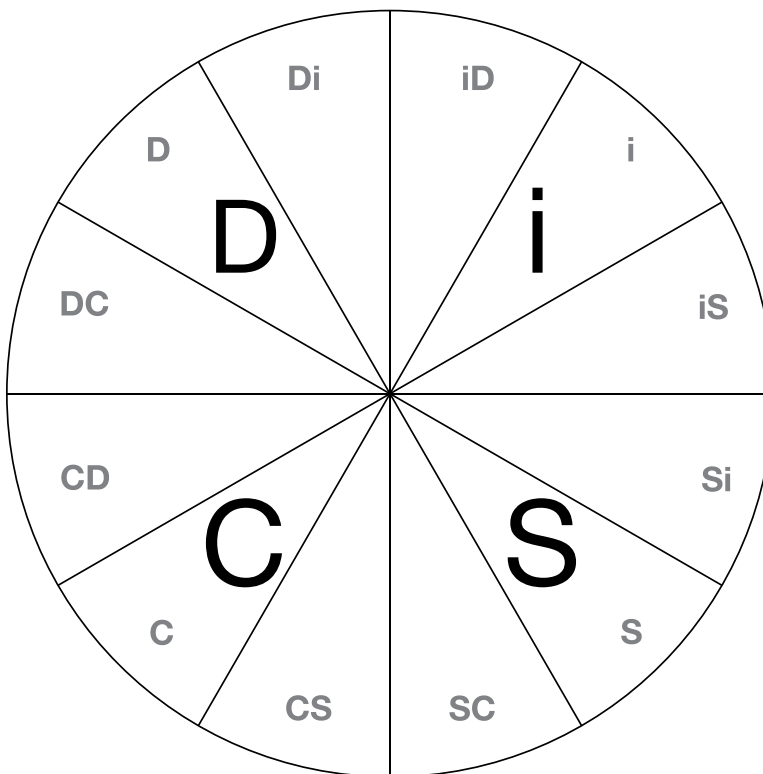


Figure 1.4 The Twelve DiSC Styles

locations on the circular map. Those styles with two letters fall between the single letter styles but are no less “pure” or inherently meaningful than the single letter styles. The Di style is often described as a combination of the D and i styles, but it is equally true (and false) that the D style is the combination of the DC and Di styles. The Di style does share characteristics with the D style, but each contains characteristics that the other does not. DiSC styles that are adjacent to each other on the *Everything DiSC* map will have more in common, and those that are across from each other on the map will be theoretically opposite.

Note that in the *Everything DiSC* assessment, there is a difference between the twelve styles (used for interpretation of results) and the eight scales (used for measurement). When respondents take the assessment, they are scored on eight scales that form a circle around the DiSC model. These scales are Di, i, iS, S, SC, C, CD, and D. These scales are used to calculate placement within the model, but are not reported to respondents in the profile (although they are presented for review in the *Supplement for Facilitators*). When respondents receive their profile, they are told the one style (out of twelve) that is the most descriptive of them. The twelve styles are described below. Because styles are often confused, styles that share two letters are grouped together and contrasted. The conceptual descriptions below can also be applied to the eight scales of *Everything DiSC*.

Dominance/Influence (Di or iD) Styles: Fast-Paced. The Di and iD styles are positioned in the middle of the skeptical—accepting dimension, but toward the top of the moderate—fast-paced dimension. One of the adjectives that best captures the nature of this style is *dynamic*. The qualities that are captured in these styles point to an individual who has a bias toward action. People who fall in this location on the map describe themselves as adventurous and bold. They are also more likely than the average person to identify themselves as enterprising or entrepreneurial. They typically have a combination of self-confidence and social poise that can be described as magnetic or inspiring. The Di style is accurately described as convincing and daring, while the iD style is accurately described as animated and inspiring. Overall, these styles both contain two major conceptual elements: (1) being bold and (2) having a bias toward action.

Influence (i) Style: Fast-Paced/Accepting. In the top right of the *Everything DiSC* map is the i style. Statistically speaking, the two items that best capture the nature of this style are, “I am lively” and “I am extremely outgoing.” Conceptually, this style describes people who both have high energy and are very interpersonally positive. Consequently, they are frequently described as enthusiastic and high-spirited. Behaviorally, they are quicker than the average person to seek out new social opportunities and are generally highly talkative. Overall, this style contains two major conceptual elements: (1) being highly sociable and (2) being lively.

Influence/Steadiness (iS or Si) Style: Accepting. The iS and Si styles are positioned in the middle of the moderate—fast-paced dimension, but to the right of the skeptical—accepting dimension. This suggests that people who fall in this location of the map are

positive, but not to the extremes of being highly enthusiastic, or, on the other hand, being extremely gentle. One of the adjectives that statistically best captures the essence of these styles is *cheerful*. In general, people who fall in these segments of the map tend to be trusting and to see the best in others. They are more likely than the average person to rate themselves as compassionate and welcoming. The iS style is accurately described as upbeat and lighthearted, while the Si style is accurately described as supportive and agreeable. Overall, these styles contain two major conceptual elements: (1) being positive and (2) showing empathy.

Steadiness (S) Style: Moderate-Paced/Accepting. In the bottom right of the *Everything DiSC* map is the S style. The adjective *gentle* represents one of the most unifying themes of this style. People fall in this region of the map because they are both interpersonally warm and have a lower level of outward energy. As a consequence, they frequently describe themselves as calm, peaceful, or even-tempered. Likewise, because of a slower pace and a more accepting nature, people who fall in this region of the map measure as more patient and accommodating than the average person. They show a great deal of concern for the feelings of the people around them. Overall, this style contains two major conceptual elements: (1) being pleasantly calm and (2) being accommodating of others.

Steadiness/Conscientiousness (SC or CS) Style: Moderate-Paced. The SC and CS styles are positioned in the middle of the skeptical—accepting dimension, but toward the bottom of the moderate—fast-paced dimension. As such, people who fall in this location on the *Everything DiSC* map tend to be less prone to action and more likely to deliberate on their options. They tend to be careful in their decision making and describe their pace as steady and step-by-step. Compared to the average person, they show less outward energy. This style is also associated with a degree of passivity. Statistically, the item that measures most centrally to this region of the map is, “I am soft-spoken.” People in this location often prefer to work behind the scenes or let others take control. The SC style is accurately described as modest and unassuming, while the CS style is accurately described as quiet and self-controlled. Overall, these styles contain two major conceptual elements: (1) being cautious and (2) showing passivity.

Conscientiousness (C) Style: Moderate-Paced/Skeptical. In the bottom left of the *Everything DiSC* map is the C style. The overarching theme in this style is best captured by the adjective *analytical*. Statistically, the item that measures most centrally to this style is, “I prefer a quiet, analytical environment.” People who fall in this location on the map are more reserved than the average person and are more likely to keep to themselves. Because people who measure in this style are both cautious and skeptical, they often come across as interpersonally restrained. They are also more likely to be skeptical of emotional displays in favor of a reflective, logical approach to decision making. Likewise, they describe themselves as being systematic and having a strong focus on accuracy. Overall, this style contains three major conceptual elements: (1) being analytical, (2) being precise, and (3) being private.

Conscientiousness/Dominance (CD or DC) Style: Skeptical. The CD style is positioned in the middle of the moderate—fast-paced dimension, but to the left of the skeptical—accepting dimension. This indicates that people who fall in this location of the map are more skeptical than the average person, but not to the extremes of being either highly aggressive or highly withdrawn. The word *challenging* is frequently used to describe these individuals, as they commonly challenge both ideas and other people. People in this location tend to describe themselves as highly logical and as strong critical thinkers. To this point, the item that is statistically most central to the measurement of this style is, “I quickly get irritated by illogical people.” As this item suggests, they are prone to show little sympathy or patience for people who do not meet up to their standards. Likewise, because they may not engage in social niceties, they are frequently perceived as being cynical or interpersonally guarded. The CD style is accurately described as unsentimental and matter-of-fact, while the DC style is accurately described as resolute and strong-willed. Overall, these styles contain two major conceptual elements: (1) being skeptical and (2) being irritable or prone to frustration.

Dominance (D) Style: Fast-Paced/Skeptical. As the label suggests, the most concise way to describe people who fall in this style is dominant. Individuals with the D style are typically described as direct, result-oriented, firm, strong-willed, and forceful. They are more likely than others to display aggressive behavior and push vigorously for their opinions and goals. Likewise, people with this style are likely to seek control over situations and other people through force, showing less concern for the preferences of others. Because they are both skeptical and fast-paced, they typically demonstrate a high amount of drive and less patience for people and situations that do not conform to their goals, beliefs, or preferences. As a consequence, they are quicker than the average person to show irritation or become argumentative. Similarly, they tend to be direct, if not blunt, with their opinions. Finally, people who fall in this style are more likely to describe themselves as strong-willed, tough-minded, and competitive. Overall, this style contains two major conceptual elements: (1) being forceful and (2) being direct.

Connection to Other Models and Psychometric Theory

Interpersonal Circumplex

Interpersonal psychology started with Neo-Freudian therapist Harry Stack Sullivan, who believed that a person’s behavior is not simply driven by situational demands or by internal motivations; rather, it is driven by the bi-directional influence that exists between the person and another individual within the context of a relationship (Sullivan, 2013). Behavior is almost always bi-directional (reflecting the mutual influence two individuals have on one another) rather than unidirectional. Thus, Sullivan believed that to understand human behavior fully, one also had to understand the interpersonal context in

which it was manifested. Like Marston, Sullivan never operationalized his concepts by creating an assessment. Timothy Leary (1957) and his colleagues, interested in operationalizing Sullivan's concepts, started by observing the interaction patterns that occurred among individuals in group psychotherapy.

Leary discovered that the two dimensions of power and affiliation could explain most of the interaction patterns he observed. In other words, the dynamics of the interpersonal interaction was primarily one of negotiating power—"you are more (or less) powerful than me"—and affiliation—"this is going to be a close (or distant) relationship." Furthermore, Leary and his colleagues discovered that if they mapped all the interpersonal variables they observed on these two dimensions, the interpersonal variables formed a continuous circle around these two dimensions. Stated another way, each of the interpersonal variables represented a unique combination of power and affiliation, the two underlying dimensions. In the example shown in Figure 1.5, Variable 1 (for example, Aggressive) would represent equal combinations of a high need for control with a low need for affiliation, and Variable 2 (for example, Talkative) would represent equal combinations of a high need for control with a high need for affiliation.

Figure 1.5 is a highly simplified version of the actual Interpersonal Circumplex. A circumplex is built from two orthogonal (i.e., perpendicular) underlying dimensions, or axes, that together define a set of variables with a very specific ordering along the circumference (Guttman, 1954). The circumplex is not the same as a four-quadrant model, nor is it necessarily implied when variables are represented within a circle.

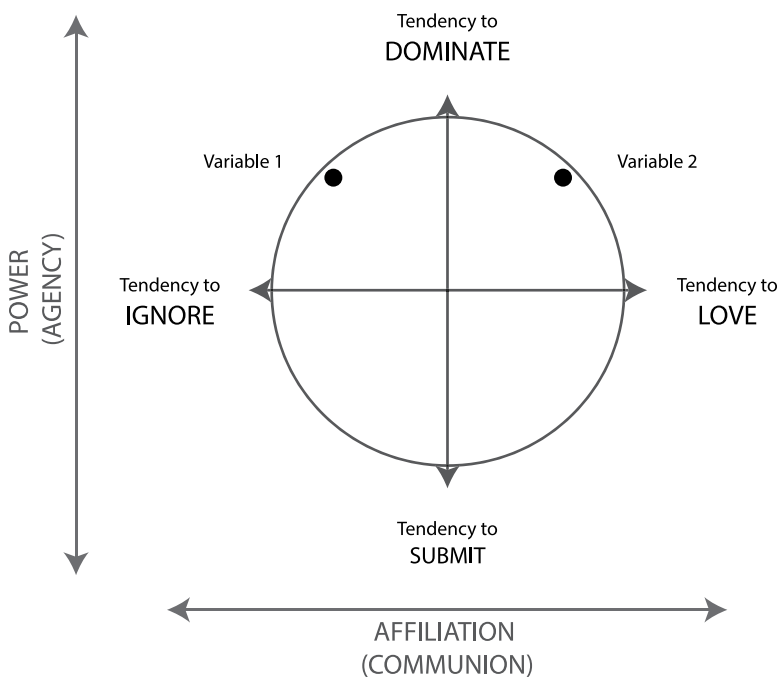


Figure 1.5 An Example of the Interpersonal Circumplex

Leary and his associates created the first measure of the Interpersonal Circumplex, the *Interpersonal Check List* (Laforge & Suczek, 1955). Since then, many more circumplex-based instruments have been built for the assessment of interpersonal behavior: *Structural Analysis of Social Behavior* (Benjamin, 1996), *Check List of Interpersonal Transactions* (Kiesler, 1987), *Impact Measure Inventory: IIA* (Kiesler & Schmidt, 1991), and *Interpersonal Adjective Scales* (Wiggins, 1995). The Interpersonal Circumplex has proven itself over time to be a very robust model of personality.

The Interpersonal Circumplex model has substantial conceptual overlap with the *Everything DiSC* model, with most differences springing from the intended audience for the model. Users of the Interpersonal Circumplex usually come from an academic or clinical background. End-users (e.g., classroom participants) of the DiSC model are typically members of the broader workforce and usually do not have a background in psychology. As such, the DiSC model deliberately begins by describing each location within the circle in neutral terms. For instance, the far left location on the circle is described as skeptical, questioning, and matter-of-fact. All of these adjectives statistically map to this space. Within Interpersonal Circumplex models, this same location is often described as contrary, resentful, stubborn, and suspicious (Conte & Plutchik, 1981), adjectives that also statistically map to this space. Research on a variant of the Interpersonal Circumplex, called the Interpersonal Problems Circumplex, suggests that all locations within the circle can be linked with distinct interpersonal problems. For instance, assuming the top of the circle is 0 degrees, the far right location of the circle (at 90 degrees) can be associated with behavior that is “overly nurturant.” The very top, right location on the circle (at 45 degrees) can be associated with behavior that is intrusive or exhibitionistic (Alden, Wiggins, & Pincus, 1990). Likewise, each location on the map can be associated with behavior that is adaptive or healthy. When presenting information in the *Everything DiSC Profile*, most descriptions are designed to be neutral in tone, but certain sections report the less adaptive behavior associated with a given location, and other sections report the more adaptive behavior.

Another noticeable difference between the Interpersonal Circumplex model and the *Everything DiSC* model is the location of the dominance—submissiveness axis. Within the Interpersonal model, the axis is completely vertical. Within the *Everything DiSC* model, the axis is shifted 45 degrees counterclockwise, running from the top left corner to the lower right. This difference, however, is more an issue of terminology than it is of conceptual disagreement. For instance, within the Interpersonal model, the top of the vertical axis is described as assured, assuming control, and assertive. This is conceptually very similar to how the top of the circle is described in the *Everything DiSC* model. The term “dominance” in the *Everything DiSC* model is reserved for behavior that is more forceful and demanding. Within the Interpersonal model, this same location is often described as “dictating,” “dominating,” “competing,” or “aggressive” (Myllyniemi, 1997; Strong et al., 1988).

The California Psychological Inventory

The *California Psychological Inventory*[™] (CPI[™]) is a measure of personality that has a long history in academic and clinical psychology (Gough & Bradley, 1996). It contains 20 primary scales that measure a diverse range of interpersonal and intrapersonal differences. In an attempt to provide a broad overview of respondents' personalities, the 434 items of the CPI were factor analyzed (Gough & Bradley, 1996). These analyses ultimately produced three dimensions, two of which have conceptual overlap with the two dimensions in the *Everything DiSC* model.

The first dimension (v1) is labeled Externality versus Internality and measures a construct that covers such traits as expressiveness, self-confidence, participative inclinations, extraversion, assertiveness, and vigorous entry into the interpersonal world (Gough & Bradley, 1996). Conceptually, therefore, this dimension is very similar to the vertical moderate—fast-paced dimension in the DiSC model.

The second CPI dimension (v2) is labeled Norm-favoring versus Norm-doubting and measures a construct that covers such traits as rule questioning, unconventional behavior, lack of conformity, self-indulgence, rebelliousness, lack of trust in others, adventurousness, and cynicism. This dimension does have meaningful conceptual overlap with the horizontal skeptical—accepting dimension of DiSC, with some exceptions. Most notably, the skeptical—accepting dimension of DiSC does not measure reckless or self-indulgent behavior, nor does it measure adventurous behavior. On the other hand, the skeptical—accepting dimension does measure a cynical, nonconforming attitude.

The CPI uses v1 and v2 to create a 2x2 grid on which respondents are located with a dot, which is very similar to the method used to present a respondent's DiSC style. As well, each quadrant is labeled (alpha, beta, delta, and gamma) and described in a manner that is similar to the style descriptions in the *Everything DiSC Profile*.

The Five-Factor Model of Personality

The Five-Factor Model of Personality (FFM; also known as The Big Five) represents an attempt to describe individual differences in a manner that is simultaneously as comprehensive as possible and as succinct as possible. Research from a variety of sources (largely factor analytical) repeatedly suggests that five main factors can capture much of the diversity that is typically observed in personality (McCrae & Costa, 2010). These factors are Extraversion (E), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Openness to Experience (O), and Neuroticism (N).

Conceptually, the *Everything DiSC* model is expected to be meaningfully correlated with two of the FFM factors: Extraversion and Agreeableness. Despite the similarity in name, “Conscientiousness” in the DiSC model is not expected to have a strong relationship with “Conscientiousness” in the FFM. In DiSC, Conscientiousness is discussed and measured as a disposition that is analytical and reserved. In the FFM, Conscientiousness is discussed