

# Thriving in Challenging Times

A guide to help coaches and mentors support clients through pressure

# Objectives

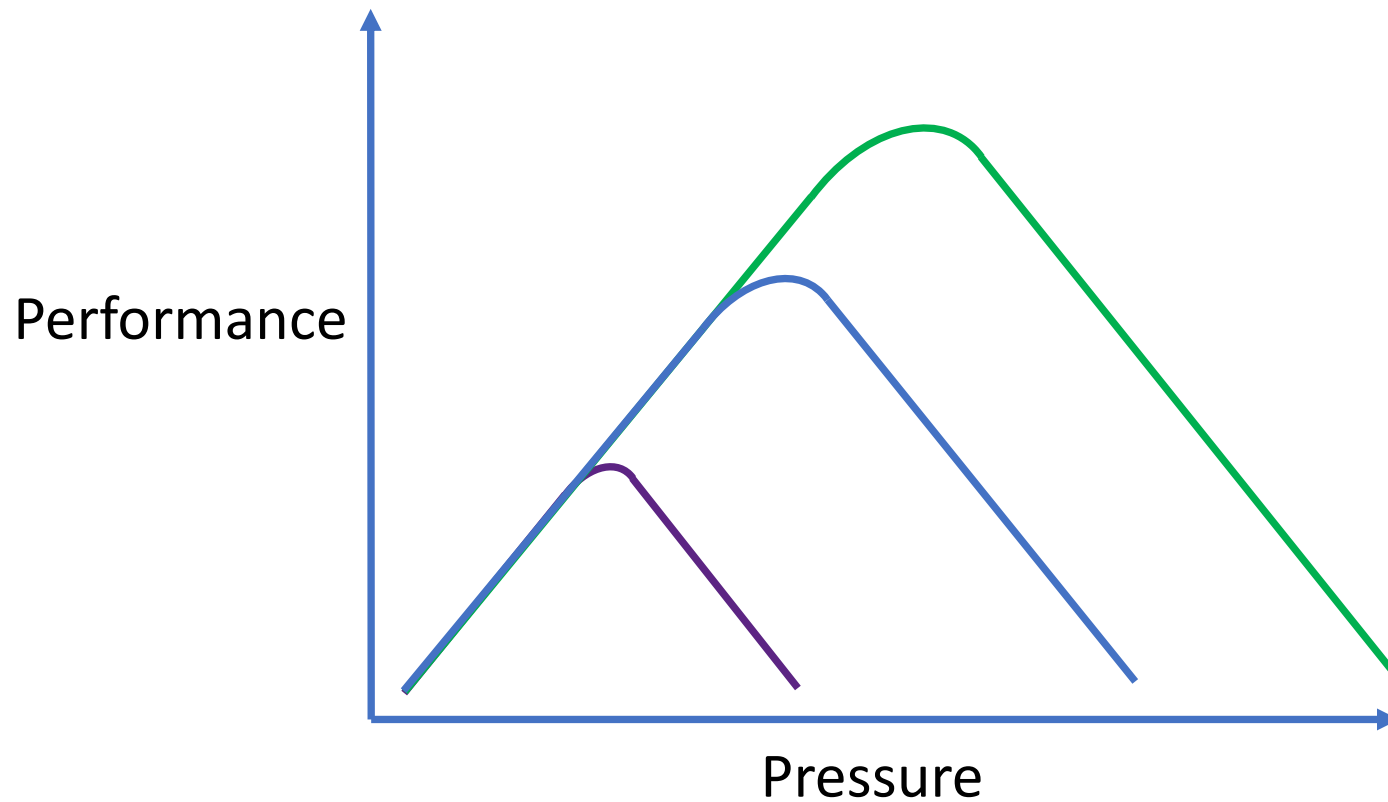
To enable participants to:

- Understand the relationship between environmental stressors and performance
- Understand current thinking and knowledge about mental toughness and emotional resilience
- Use the model and theory to support yourself with those you interact with.

# How does pressure affect an individual?



# Performance and Pressure



# Fallacies about Mental Toughness

- MT is a macho, male dominated concept
- MT people are uncaring and self centred
- MT is only about success in work or sport
- Everyone should be mentally tough
- It is the only important aspect of psychology



# Why Is Mental Toughness Important?

Studies show a strong link between Mental Toughness and:

- Performance
- Wellbeing
- Adoption of positive behaviours

These translate into a number of positive outcomes and effects

# The 4 C's

- Challenge
- Commitment
- Control
  - Life Control
  - Emotional Control
- Confidence
  - Confidence in Abilities
  - Interpersonal Confidence



# Challenge

*Usual  
Routine*





# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Challenge spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual become more comfortable with facing uncertainty?

# Challenge – the downsides

- Biased towards change – even when it isn't needed.
- Can take on more risk than appropriate
- Can become bored and 'light fires'
- Can create stress and overload for their team



# Coaching Interventions - Challenge

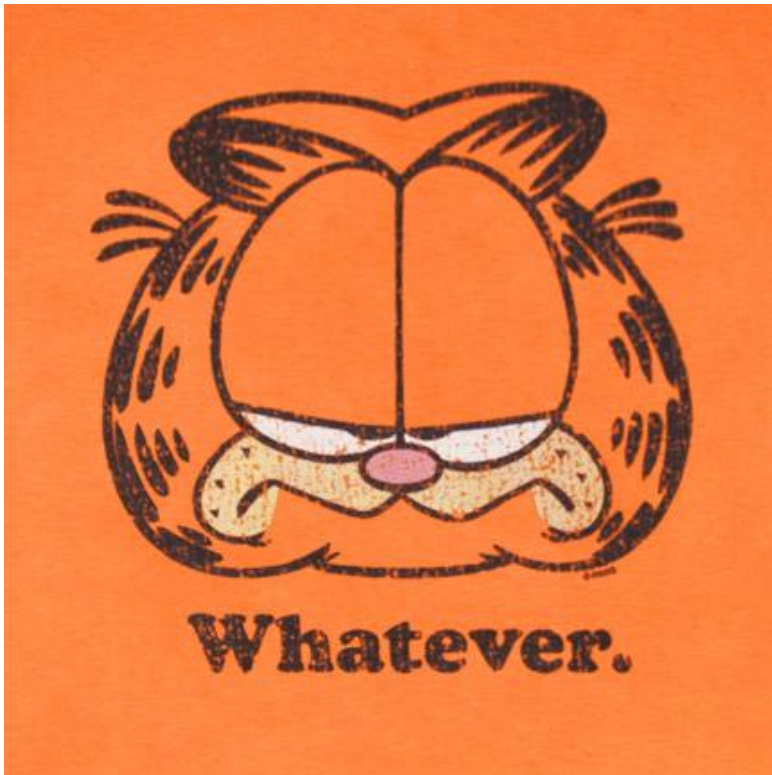
## **Sensitive**

- Encourage Coachees to stretch outside comfort zone
- Create positive reflection through questioning and encourage positive self reflection

## **Mentally Tough**

- Challenge the need for change
- Use questioning to ensure that risks and downsides are considered
- Ensure that impact of changes on others is considered

# Commitment



# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Commitment spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual become more committed or more willing to commit?

# Commitment – the downsides

- Can say yes to too many things
- Can be biased towards managing by targets and numbers
- Can be guilty of focussing on task and not stepping back to see bigger picture
- Can fail to see links between information streams/trends



# Coaching Interventions - Commitment

## **Sensitive**

- Encourage Coachees to become aware of their values and drivers and reflect on them regularly
- Create a positive association between the outcomes of activities and what the coachee cares about

## **Mentally Tough**

- Use questioning to enable coachees to step back and see the bigger picture
- Ensure that coaches spend time to understand what motivates those around them.

# Life Control



***"I am not a  
product of  
Circumstances  
I am a product of  
my Decisions"***

Stephen Covey



# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Life Control spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual feel more in control?

# Life Control – the downsides

- Can appear daunting to others
- Fail to identify global or environmental factors that can 'change the game'
- Fail to understand why others are distracted or waste energy on things they can't change

***"I am not a product  
of Circumstances  
I am a product of  
my Decisions"***

Stephen Covey

# Coaching Interventions - Life Control

## **Sensitive**

- Encourage Coachees to focus on things they can affect
- Ensure that discussions lead to action and that actions are followed up on.

## **Mentally Tough**

- Support Coachees to step back from actions and reflect on bigger picture and trends
- Encourage Coachees to understand what motivates those around them.

# Emotional Control



# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Emotional Control spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual become more calm and less reactive?

# Emotional Control – the downsides

- Can appear cold and unemotional to others
- Can struggle to form close relationships with others
- Can appear uncaring or unresponsive
- May struggle to lead or engage others



# Coaching Interventions - Emotional Control

## **Sensitive**

- Encourage 'mindful' activities, both in order to calm down and as part of a routine to maintain calm
- Create positive association between being calm and positive outcomes

## **Mentally Tough**

- Encourage coaches to project what they care about and show their passion to help them engage others
- Ensure that they understand the mechanisms which maintain their calm, so that they build a toolkit.

# Interpersonal Confidence

***“Quiet People have  
the loudest minds”***

Stephen Hawking





# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Interpersonal Confidence spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual become more comfortable with dealing with people?

# Coaching Interventions - Interpersonal Confidence

## Sensitive

- Encourage Coachees to stretch their comfort zone in talking to and dealing with others
- Create positive reflection through questioning and encourage positive self reflection

## Mentally Tough

- Encourage coaches to listen and involve others in conversations and discussions
- Use questioning to encourage a positive association between improved outcomes and listening to/involving others

# Interpersonal Confidence – the downsides

- Can talk over others and dominate the conversation
- Can sound like an expert even when they know little about a subject
- Could fail to include others in a discussion, even when they are the expert
- May lead a team to make a wrong decision, even if other members know better



# Confidence in Ability



# Small Group Discussion

Think of examples of individuals at the Tough and sensitive end of the Confidence spectrum:

- What words/phrases or common themes appear?
- How would you describe them?
- What are the potential downsides of someone at the tough end of the spectrum?

How would you help an individual become more confident?

# Confidence in Ability – the downsides

- May not reflect naturally and identify opportunities to learn
- May over estimate own ability and take on challenges outside their level of expertise
- May be perceived as bullying others around them
- May not see the areas where others could contribute, do something better or have more knowledge or experience



# Coaching Interventions - Confidence in ability

## **Sensitive**

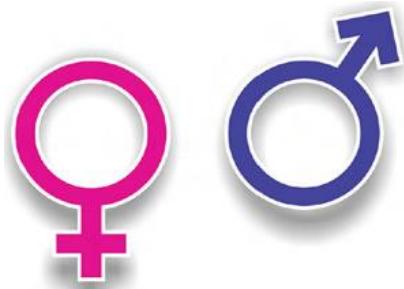
- Through questioning, draw out of coaches what they have done well and are 'proud' of
- Encourage them to seek and listen to positive feedback (and say thank you for it)
- Build routines of positive self reflection

## **Mentally Tough**

- Encourage coaches to reflect on what went wrong so that they can capture the learning from those events
- Encourage routines to enable learning to be captured and not dismissed

# Confidence - Gender

**Overall there is no significant difference between scores for males & females**



- Males score slightly higher on Confidence in Abilities than females – even though most ability tests show that females are more able at most intellectual activities than males!!
- Females score slightly more highly on Interpersonal Confidence than males – they will speak more freely than males.
- But they cancel each other out



# Summary of coaching Interventions

## **Sensitive**

- Encouragement and positive reflection
- Establish what they value/ what's important
- Help them focus on what they can control and influence
- Encourage “mindfulness” as part of maintenance
- Reflect on the positive, give praise

## **Resilient**

- Challenge the need for change (Death by Initiative)
- Help step back and see big picture
- Challenge desire to set goals and KPI's
- Help them to project passions
- Reflect on the learning from what went wrong
- Challenge them to listen

# Remember

- Low Mental Toughness equates to Mental Sensitivity (not Weakness).
- High Mental Toughness can equate to Mental Insensitivity! **Therefore high Mental Toughness may not always be a desired state.**
- People with high Mental Toughness can cause problems for people around them
- Individuals need the level of Mental Toughness to perform given the situation at hand but the awareness to adjust when they are too 'tough'

## Remember (cont.)

- Exposure to excess pressure doesn't toughen – it often weakens people! Exposure to sustained stress without recovery can diminish Mental Toughness.
- Exposure to slightly stretching challenge & stressors can build Mental Toughness – particularly in the short term, provided the appropriate tools to reflect and recover are applied

# Any Questions?



Thanks for listening

If you need any more info

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Thank

You