

Thriving in Challenging Times

A guide to help coaches and mentors support clients through pressure

Objectives

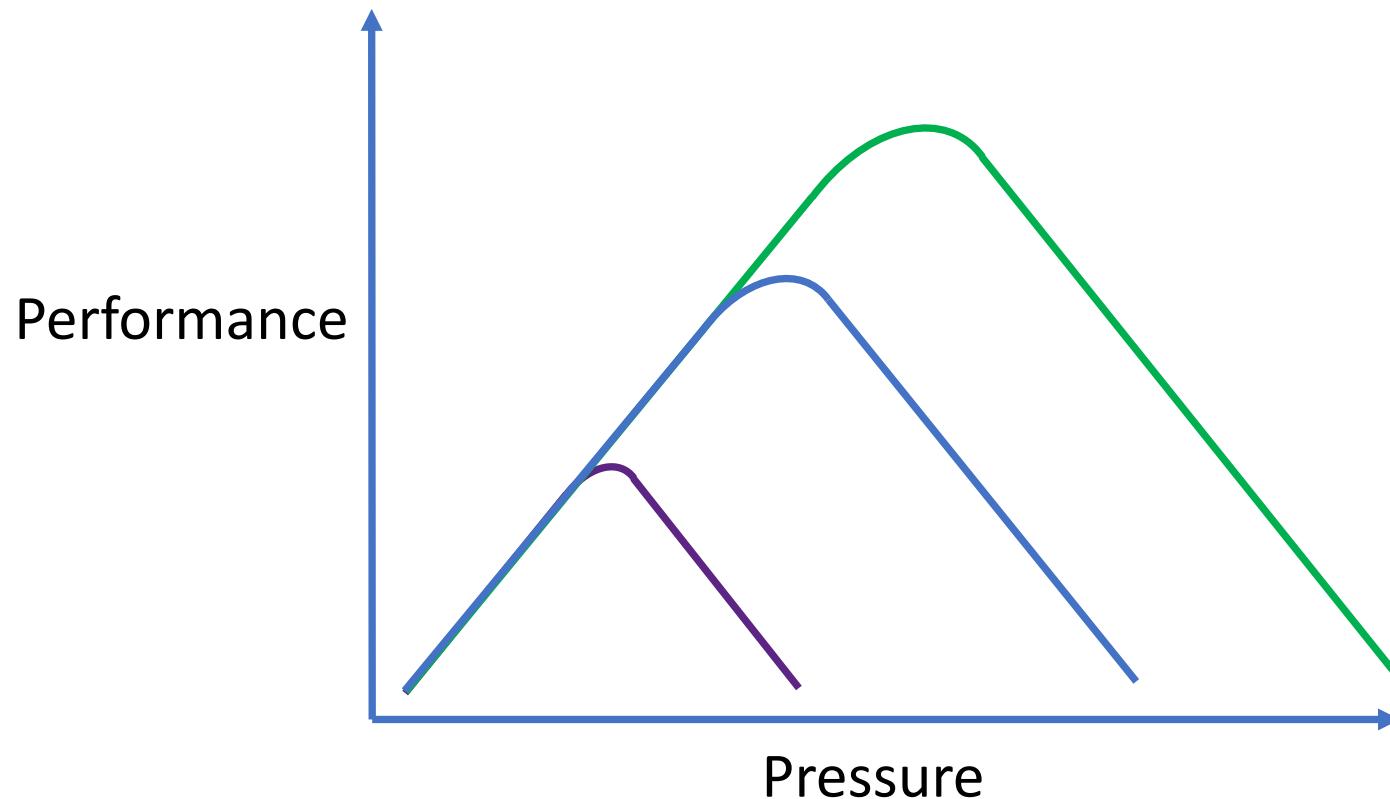
To enable participants to:

- 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

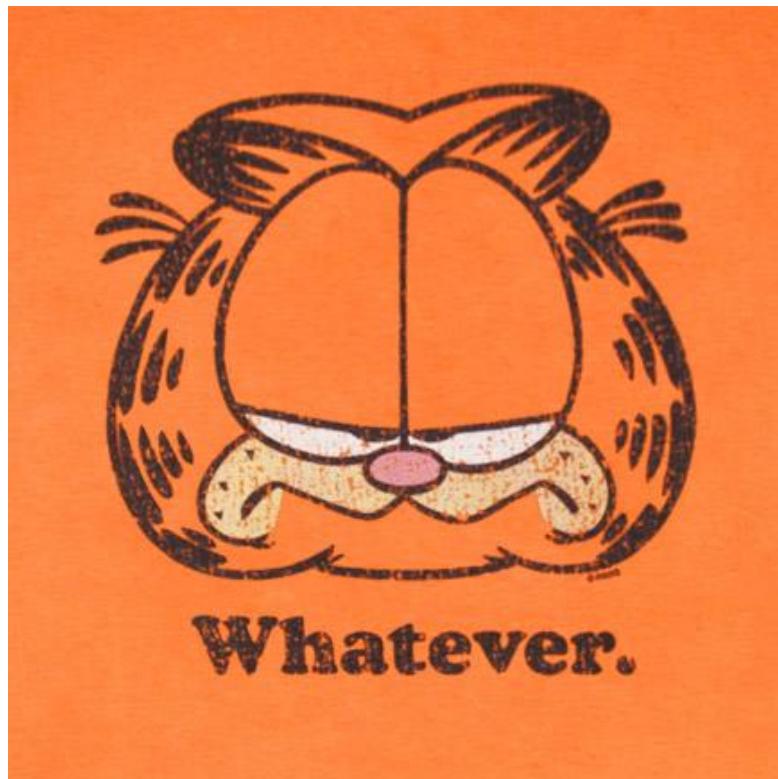
Sensitive

- 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

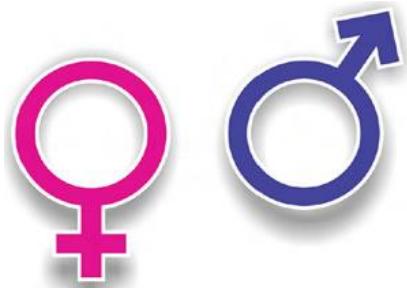
- Through questioning, draw out of coaches what they have done well and are 'proud' of
- Encourage them to seek and listen to positive feedback (and say thank you for it)
- Build routines of positive self reflection

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

Get in touch:

Pete.wortley@associationofbusinessmentors.org

Thank

You