

Mental Toughness Programme



What is Mental Toughness?

The idea of mental toughness comes from the realm of sport psychology, with the ideas that it is a plastic skill which can be developed over time (McGeown et al., 2016). Mental Toughness looks at the way individuals think, which is a key driver in the development of behaviour and attributes. It comprises of four main elements, known as 'The Four C's' and is measured through the MTQ48 (Clough et al., 2002):

- **Control** – Life Control and Emotional Control – children who score highly in control will have the ability to shape their lives and futures, as well as being able to control their emotions
- **Commitment** – Goal Setting and Achieving – children who score highly on commitment will be able to set goals and work to achieve them, despite obstacles they will strive to achieve these goals
- **Challenge** – Risk Taking and Learning from Experiences – children who have high scores in challenge will see obstacles as new opportunities to learn and grow, and are more likely to seek out opportunities to develop
- **Confidence** – In ability and Interpersonal Confidence – children scoring highly in confidence will feel confident in tackling new tasks and challenges, as well as feeling confident and able in social situations

These four elements are known positive psychology traits which have the ability to be developed, dependent on environment, encouragement and support (McGeown et al., 2016). Not only has previous research seen a positive relationship between mental toughness and educational attainment, a relationship has also been seen between mental toughness and positive classroom behaviour, attendance and peer relationships (St Clair-Thompson et al., 2014).

What does our programme aim to improve?

Our six-week programme aims to improve skills that your students may need to develop. Its main focus is to advance:

- **Mental toughness, resilience and grit**
- **Performance and behaviour at school**
- **School attendance**
- **Overall wellbeing and mind-set**

Who will benefit from this programme?

We recommend that young people currently on the waiting list or those who may have just finishing working with CAMHS or the Primary/Secondary Jigsaw team will benefit from the programme the most.

Other young people who may benefit from the programme include those with:

- **Low self-esteem**
- **Lack of confidence and resilience**
- **Low attendance**
- **Students attending the schools wellbeing hub/wellbeing support often**
- **Bullying others or is being bullied**
- **Difficulties forming friendships**
- **Behavioural issues**
- **Issues regarding their mental health**

Structure and detail of current course.

Once a group of 6-10 young people have been chosen, and all paperwork received by facilitator, the group sessions will be put in place. A psychometric test is carried out in the first session to assess current overall mental toughness, this same test is completed at the end of the programme to see if any improvements.

Delivery is through classroom-based sessions lasting for one hour (may be extended to 1½ hours – 2 hours if needed you will be told in advance if this is needed). The current programme runs over a period of six weeks, the first week focusing on getting to know the children and filling out the MTQ48. Then four weeks of workshops focusing on 'The Four C's', delivered through fun and interactive games, paper-based craft, and mindfulness projects.



Alongside the group sessions, 1-2-1 work can take place with students who are already accessing the course but are struggling or who may benefit from extra attention on a specific element of the programme, these young people will be identified by the person facilitating the course.

The programme is not fixed and can be adapted and developed specifically for the needs of your school. This can be discussed between the facilitator and the school lead.

What is needed from schools – Service Level Agreement?

There are only a few things we need from you to begin the programme at your school. Alongside your commitment as a school, we also require:

- A designated school lead who is able to talk about any safeguarding issues which may come up during group or 1-2-1 sessions.
- The name and year group of each student you would like to attend the course – it is recommended that be children year 5 and above take part in the programme. Year 7 groups will be worked with after Easter half term, to give them time to settle into high school.
- A student overview form filled out for each individual, these will be sent to you separately and all parts of the form must be filled in. If these aren't received on the date agreed between the facilitator and school the sessions may not be able to go forward, therefore your 6 week spot may be passed on to the next school on the waiting list
- A short meeting before the programme to determine what it is schools are hoping to get out of the programme and quick overview of each child (reasons why they have been chosen, information on family – LAC etc. and attendance records)
- A short meeting after the programme to get feedback on the programme (the benefits to young people, quotes/case studies and any improvements)

What we provide to you?

- A fully funded programme for the young people at your school
- One session a week for 6-8 weeks, with possible 1-2-1 work for identified young people on the programme
- Access to a personalised student profile at the end of the course including MTQ48 results

Separate 1-2-1 Work

During the 6 weeks at your school, it is possible that other young people can access 1-2-1 sessions by the facilitator if it is not appropriate for them to be included in the group sessions. If the facilitator is able to do this, a separate form must be completed per young person.

For the young person to qualify for 1-2-1 work outside of group sessions, they must fall into three of the below categories:

- Stockport Homes Tenant
- Accessing benefits related free school meals
- Children assessed as being in need
- Looked-after children
- Children with an EHC plan (education, health and care)
- Children on the waiting list for CAMHS or Primary/Secondary Jigsaw but are yet to be seen
- Children who have previously been known to CAMHS and/or Primary/Secondary Jigsaw
- Children living in an area of high deprivation
- Children who's family are currently in Stockport seeking asylum

Quotes from Previous Students:

It really helped with my confidence when working in a group

It actually helped me come out of my shell and show more of my true self

It's really helped me be more secure in myself and my abilities

I now feel more confident than I was before I joined the group

It's helped with my mental health

Learning resources and psychometric test are provided by AQR who are a psychometric test publisher and consultancy. If you would like more information, please visit the AQR website: <https://aqrinternational.co.uk/>