



THE APPLICATION OF
MENTAL TOUGHNESS WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE
- ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC
CENTRE FOR LEARNING

All Saints Catholic Centre for Learning –Using Mental Toughness and the MTQ48 in the Deep Support Pilot Programme

Background

The All Saints Catholic Centre for learning is a larger than average, mixed secondary school in Northern England, accommodating 1300 learners aged 11-18. The number of students at this school who were economically disadvantaged was above the national average – behavior and ability levels were both lower than would be expected for their respective ages.

It had been accepted that it is no longer feasible to ignore emotions in the classroom, as they can act as a barrier for learning. The 'Deep Support' Pilot Programme was an initiative introduced to the Knowsley area, based on the principles of greater support for learners. All Saints was successful securing the Deep Support Pilot Programme as they were already demonstrating care, mentoring, support and guidance.

Through the introduction of the MTQ48 in the Deep Support Pilot Programme, All Saints were able to take their work on emotional literacy and mentoring to another level. The MTQ48 provided staff with a quick and reliable assessment and evaluation tool, which was used to identify learners most in need of support, and measure the impact of that intervention.

180 Year 7 learners, form tutors and the deputy principal, with responsibility for Key Stage 3 and Learning Mentors, completed the questionnaire. The aim was to identify learners who had not received prior mentoring, with low self-confidence (Scores of 3-4).

How did it Work?

Of the 180 learners assessed, 36 were identified as meeting the criteria for needing support. Children can learn to be more mentally tough if the significant adults around them model resilient behaviours, therefore adults, students, parents and carers were asked to complete the MTQ48 - 29 in total. The MTQ48 questionnaire engendered a wealth of information through its 4 reports, each of which followed the 4C's model: Confidence, Commitment, Challenge and Control. All Saints, with support from AQR International who developed the MTQ48 measure, then developed a two-tiered programme organised to enable personal growth and active experience. This included one-to-one sessions on a fortnightly basis where session content was based upon the 4C's Model:

- Confidence – motivational statements, relationships, trust, self-esteem.
- Challenge – positive thoughts, coping strategies, will power, tough decisions.

- Commitment – mental muscle, independent thinking, inner strength, well-being, resilience.
- Control – self management, school, home, peers, organisation.

The Learning Mentors produced progress reports for learners so that educational attainment remained a focus for all sessions. They also produced pupil profiles for teachers from the MTQ48 coaching reports to facilitate cohesive academic progress.

There were also motivational activities, all linked to the 4C's model, which culminated in a Personal Development Course. The course encouraged teamwork, promoted respect, provided motivation and improved confidence (See Appendix).

What Happened?

Although the programme was not able to provide evidence to show the impact of the pilot on examination results, programme leaders were able to say that, throughout the duration, behaviour of the more challenging student's improved. The group was re-tested on MTQ48 at the end of the programme. Of the 27 of 29 students who attended, 70.5% of the group had improved in confidence.

Of the Year 7 learners assessed 47% scored 3 or 4 for confidence when they completed the MTQ48 following the transition from primary school. For these learners results from the MTQ48 were linked to day events, where form tutors set targets for the next term. They were also encouraged to participate in the 'All Saint's Pledge' which asked students to identify and commit to achieving '15 Things to do before you are 15'. The pledge allowed form tutors to explore a range of activities, which could all be linked to the 4C's model. These included:

- Attend an after school activity on a regular basis
- Take part in a psychically challenging event
- Represent the school in a sporting activity or event
- Read a book each term from the pledge list
- Visit a (Liverpool) landmark or museum

What Next?

Ongoing mental toughness development was delivered to 17 young people in Year 11, all of whom were entitled to free school meals. Parental support of this group was of vital importance. Group members were allocated to a learning mentor who facilitated a motivational interview in the first session. Next they discussed feedback generated by the MTQ48. Feedback from departments that tracked learner's progress was also linked to MTQ48 output.

All of the mentors worked on empowering young people with information about their learning styles, and focused on revision. Mentors also encouraged parents to take a more active role in their learner's revision through the booklet 'Shared Learning', which was written by the learning mentors about a more emotionally literate approach.

Throughout the duration of the programme learning mentors also delivered workshops each week to the target group.

Appendix.

Activities used within the programme included:

The Puzzle Park: *Solving Riddles, human scales, team work, Challenge, Control.*

The Climbing Wall: *'anchor men', about the individual relying on their team. Challenge, Confidence.*

High Ropes Course: *assault course in the air, individual and the team, challenge, confidence.*

Archery: *Challenge, commitment and control.*

Zip Wire: *Over a river, team work exercise, challenge, control, commitment and confidence.*