



CESHIRE & WIRRAL NHS
FOUNDATION TRUST:
A CASE STUDY IN
DEVELOPING RESILIENCE &
MENTAL TOUGHNESS TO
IMPROVE PERFORMANCE,
POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AND
WELL-BEING

BACKGROUND – WHY WAS IT THOUGHT NECESSARY?

Like most NHS Trusts, Cheshire & Wirral NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) has been concerned about performance and the ability of the organisation to manage change. Specific issues ranged from high absence levels apparently due to stress through to a failure to embrace essential change. One approach is to examine systems and processes to reduce or eliminate their negative impact. However, it is also the case that the way people respond to stress, pressure and change has a big impact on performance and well-being.

Together, AQR and CWP NHS Foundation Trust developed and introduced the Resilience Plus Programme to tackle staff health, work and wellbeing with a view to bringing real benefits to staff and the organisation. In particular, the programme focused on helping to improve absenteeism, helping staff cope with the changes that were occurring within the Trust and improve their morale. In turn this would lead better productivity and patient care.

THE AIM OF THE PROGRAMME – WHAT WAS TO CHANGE?

The key goals for the Resilience Plus programme were to improve performance, wellbeing and delegates' work-life balance. The emphasis of the programme was to equip delegates to learn how to approach challenge, stress & pressure with a positive 'can do' attitude.

A higher and equally valuable goal was to equip staff with a skills and knowledge where they could develop their resilience and mental toughness to respond positively to the never-ending programmes of change.

THE ROLE OF MENTAL TOUGHNESS AND MTQ48

Mental Toughness is a concept which explains in part how individuals cope with stress, pressure and challenge and was the cornerstone for this programme. The programme was substantially based on the use of this model and the mental toughness questionnaire MTQ48. The latter introduced the ability to measure staff and managerial mindset.

An in-depth explanatory note is available at www.aqr.co.uk.

THE PROGRAMME – WHAT WAS INTRODUCED

Before the start of the programme, all delegates complete the MTQ48 measure to help identify their strengths and their development areas – and to increase their own self-awareness around this.

All delegates attend a 2-day facilitated workshop which firstly focused on creating self-awareness around dealing with stressors, pressure and challenges. Next, participants are introduced to tools and techniques to help them deal effectively with these challenges and gave them the opportunity to practice them.

Finally, delegates are asked to create personal action plans and identify how they will sustain these. Three months later delegates are asked to complete MTQ48 again to evaluate change in mindset

Outputs are incorporated into the coaching framework introduced at CWP to support staff health and wellbeing. Mental toughness is a key model here too.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME – WHAT DIFFERENCE DID IT MAKE?

More than 500 managers and staff have completed the programme. Impact emerged in two related ways

KEY OUTCOMES AND KEY OUTPUTS

♣ A 23% reduction in staff attending work feeling they are unable to offer 100%. This indicates that staff now feel more able to cope with stressors and anxieties

IMPACT ON MINDSET AND ATTITUDE

- ♣ 94.73% of delegates showed an increased score in their overall mental toughness.
- ♣ 84.21% of delegates showed an increase in their challenge score, indicating that staff feel they have

an increased ability to view challenge as an opportunity rather than a threat
- ♣ 73.68% of delegates have shown an increase in their commitment scores proving that on completion of attending the Resilience plus workshop staff are having improved responses when working towards specific goals/targets.
- ♣ 94.73% of delegates scored an increase in their control score signifying an increased personal belief that they can shape what happens to them and are able to regulate their own emotions.
- ♣ 94.73% of staff demonstrated an increased life control score, revealing a more positive attitude towards multi-tasking and managing their workload better.
- ♣ 49.44% reduction in absenteeism at the end of phase 2 and a reduction of 31.8% in the length of absences from 30.7 to 20.9 days.
- ♣ 31.4% reduction in mental health related absences.

SUMMARY- WHAT DID EVERYONE LEARN AND WAS IT WORTH IT?

The programme shows that attending to the development of a positive mindset using a mental toughness approach does produce significant and valuable outcomes for individuals and the organisation

Using the MTQ48 measure in the programme proved to be powerful diagnostic tool providing essential information the individual and collectively to the organisation. It was especially useful for evaluation of change and in correlating this to achievement of key goals and objectives.

It was also discovered that many staff members appeared to be computer illiterate. Knowing the low level of computer literacy of some staff helped the OD Team to understand how they should direct any future developments.

This programme is linked to the development of a Coaching Culture at the CWP NHS Trust. Internal coaches are now trained in Coaching for Mental Toughness as part of an on-going strategy for staff development. This is used to support staff members who have completed 2 day Resilience Plus workshop.

CWP has achieved the specific goals for the Resilience Plus programme and have done so within accepted cost and resource parameters. The programme and the approach has produced a reliable ROI which is expected to be realised year upon year. It has helped to develop a new more proactive and more confident culture.

The success of the Resilience Plus Programme has led to numerous enquiries from other NHS Trusts and to enquiries from other organisations looking at improving their staff performance and wellbeing.