THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL TOUGHNESS, JOB LOSS AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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COVID-19 has created concerns about wellbeing and mental health leading to a growth in research assessing the consequences of the coronavirus on psychological well-being. This generally suggests that symptoms of anxiety and depression and self-reported stress were common psychological responses to the pandemic.

However, it is also the case that not everyone responds in the same way.

A research team led by Dr. Dara Mojtahedi of Huddersfield University looked at the relationship between Mental Toughness and self-reported levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

They used the MTQ48 to assess Mental Toughness. Mental Toughness is a personality trait describing mental responses to stress, pressure and challenge. These range from Mental Toughness at one end of a spectrum and Mental Sensitivity at the other. MTQ48 assesses overall level of Mental Toughness as well as level of Mental Toughness on 6 components of Mental Toughness.

The study indicates that although all can be generally anxious, stressed and depressed in response to the sustained pressure derived from the Covid 19 pandemic, the more Mentally Tough are better able to deal with this. The more Mentally Sensitive respond less well.

This is an important confirmation that our mental approach to events is a significant factor in determining our mental health or wellbeing. The study takes a snapshot at a point in time. Nevertheless, these findings are consistent with other research using the Mental Toughness concept and the MTQ measures which shows that the Mentally Sensitive can become more Mentally Sensitive under sustained stressful conditions.

This has significant implications for much of the population both during and after the pandemic. Without self awareness and without targeted intervention it may be that significant numbers will experience anxiety, depression and stress, with all of their consequences, for some time even when Covid 19 is dealt with.

A by product of the study was that it was also able to show a similar effect with respect to job loss. The Mentally Tough dealt better with that outcome when it occurred.

The study suggests that, given Mental Toughness can be developed, creating self awareness about ones Mental Toughness may be useful to help mitigate some of the effects of the pandemic.

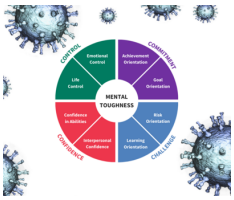
MTQ48 and MTQPlus are measures of Mental Toughness developed by Doug Strycharczyk, CEO, AQR International in collaboration with Professor Peter Clough and Dr John Perry.

For information about the MTQ measures and development programmes contact headoffice@aqr.co.uk

For information about the research, contact Dara Mojtahedi at d.mojtahedi@hud.ac.uk

The research was published in Frontiers in Psychology.
https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyt.2020.607246/abstract

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