

Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation

SPORT+
RECREATION
ALLIANCE

PPF
Professional
Players Federation

mind
for better mental health

Professional Cricketers' Association – You Do Matter

Project at a glance

- Professional cricketers can face huge pressures on and off the pitch that affect their mental health.
- The PCA used the powerful lived experience of player Kevin Saxelby around suicide to support a campaign that took mental health into changing rooms.
- The PCA harnessed practical tools like workshops, an app, and a confidential helpline to spread awareness about mental health and provide vital support to their members (players).

The challenge

Professional cricketers can face the same mental health problems as the rest of the population. And they also have to deal with serious work pressures, from staying at peak performance, to eventually transitioning out of the game.

In the past, cricket's macho image has put members off opening up about their mental health. The PCA knew this had to change.



The response

Former Nottinghamshire bowler Kevin Saxelby's brother Mark died of suicide in October 2000. In his memory, Kevin teamed up with the PCA to develop a powerful campaign supporting members' mental health.

“Sadly, when Mark died it was a different era – there just wasn't as much support or awareness around mental health,” says Ian Thomas, the PCA's Director of Development and Welfare.

“Kevin wanted to create a bit of a legacy from what had happened. So he spoke to us about the concept.”

The campaign, You Do Matter, was aimed directly at members, with posters put up in the dressing rooms of county cricket clubs. Members who wanted support could then use a QR code to get help, or phone the PCA Confidential Helpline.

“What it did is put the mental health agenda squarely in the dressing room,” says Ian.

“The message was clear: there is support available and you do matter. Kevin wanted members to speak up about how they were feeling.”

Harnessing lived experience


Ian says that two factors in particular made the campaign effective. That the message was coming from a member, and that it was backed up with practical support.

“I like the phrase ‘lived experience’,” he says.

“We're always trying to do different things to create mental health awareness among our members. We feel there's no stronger message than one that comes from the members themselves. That's what gives people confidence to speak out.




“Players are only human. They play at the level where there can be a lot of pressure. Mental health problems affect one in four people, so it's obvious some players are going to struggle. So we emphasise that there is support available, and you can get it through a phone call.”

The PCA has also invested in wider mental health awareness and support. As well as running workshops with Mind to educate academy members it offers a Stress Free app offering guidance and advice at a swipe.




YOU DO MATTER

SOMEONE YOU KNOW MAY BE IN CRISIS...
SCAN, TAP OR SURF TO SHARE AND CARE



<https://qr.ansatag.com/i29fdt>



YOU DO MATTER

Whatever you are going through
- you are not alone
Push a Button to Engage

EMAIL

HELP & ADVICE

CALL NOW

The results

Ian says that the helpline successfully supports around 75 members a year. He also believes that the You Do Matter campaign has helped change the game among players.

“Fifteen to twenty years ago it was a totally different atmosphere,” he says.

“Now more people are willing to access support. If they talk about their mental health there’s no judgement made and they’re often congratulated. Having said that, the confidentiality around the helpline is essential. It takes strength to get help, and players need to know it’s confidential.”

Ian adds that the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation has helped set the agenda across the sport.

“It allows people to set a standard for what they’re doing,” he says.

“Everyone’s trying to achieve similar things and we’ve all got different budgets. The Charter gives us an example to follow.”

