



“Be There, Be Yourself”

Country: United Kingdom

Organisation: See Me – www.seemescotland.org

Contact: Johannes Parkkonen – johannes.parkkonen@seemescotland.org

Partners involved: N/A

Target Group: General public

Programme Description:

One in four people in Scotland will experience a mental health problem at some point during their lives. Research has shown that 80% of these people will suffer from discrimination; alarmingly this will often come from their close family and friends. Support from one's closest friends and family is one of the most important factors in recovery. To combat this problem See Me decided to develop a campaign to show people how simple it is to give support to a friend experiencing a mental health problem.

The “Be there, Be yourself” campaign focused on common humanity, showing people that their friends who experience mental health problems are still the same people, who still need their help and support. So as to have both sides of the story, focus groups with people living with mental health problems were conducted to ensure the campaign addressed the discrimination they face.

The campaign utilised broadcast and print media. TV spots were produced and broadcast on two of the main commercial channels in Scotland, STV and Channel 4.

Radio and outdoor advertising was used for more rural areas as well as the urban central belt of Scotland.

To support the message of the publicity campaign See Me launched a new website (www.seemescotland.org), which includes information and practical advice on how to support a friend or relative who is experiencing mental health problems. There is also a media centre section that gives journalists links and research to use so that they can accurately portray people experiencing mental ill-health and produce accurate reports.

“Positive reporting isn’t about putting a ‘spin’ on mental ill-health, but it is about reporting the facts in a way which is accurate and fair, while avoiding the use of stigmatising and inaccurate language.” See Me website

“You don’t have to have all the right answers; simply talking and listening shows you care.” Suzie Vestri, Campaign Director, See Me

Challenge: Ensuring the maximum impact of the campaign with limited funds.

Solution: With the support of the Scottish government and carrying out extensive research the most effective way of implementing the project has been found. Feedback will be an important part of the campaign going forward, particularly when planning for the second phase begins.

Impact and Success Stories:

- A 2007 survey showed that since the launch of See Me 85% of people in Scotland with mental health issues feel more able to talk openly about their experiences of mental ill-health.
- See Me has become an internationally recognised organisation in its area of work.