

CIPR PRide Awards 2010 - Submission

Region: Scotland

Category No: Category 2

Category Name: Not-for-profit

Entry Title: Putting the stigma of mental ill-health back on the agenda

Entrant Organisation: Stripe Communications

Client Name: 'see me'

Strategy

One in four Scots will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lifetime.

'see me' - Scotland's national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination of mental ill-health - has broken down many barriers, meaning mental health is not the taboo it once was. However, *stigma* surrounding mental health problems is still prevalent among Scots with 58% of people living with mental ill-health experiencing stigma.

Stigma and discrimination blights the lives of ordinary people across Scotland and the reactions of family, friends, and colleagues can be harder to deal with than the illness itself.

Therefore the key challenges faced by 'see me', relate to how the public views mental health, and changing the way that the public thinks about, and behaves, towards people with mental health problems.

PR needed to reconnect with the public, re-energise the campaign and look for a fresh approach to communications. The role for PR then is to drive the issue of stigma back up the media agenda in a fresh, relevant, and meaningful way, making the public consider their own behaviour towards mental problems.

Our campaign targets stakeholders and general public to generate positive, powerful national and regional stories while communicating the importance of support and understanding, through:

- **Proactive and reactive media relations**, tracking the media agenda, issues hi-jacking and communicating personal testimony and experiences
- **Creating engaging platforms** that actively involve the Scottish public, building understanding and support and creating positive public attitudes and behaviours towards those with mental health problems

Implementation

1. Proactive and reactive media relations

- **‘Stigma Stopwatch’**
 - Daily monitor of news where stigma relating to mental ill-health was prevalent and responding on behalf of ‘see me’
 - Met with Press Complaints Commission to discuss fair reporting of mental health issues and identify future opportunities for collaborative working
- **Media Volunteer Programme**
 - Secured and briefed a bank of media volunteers to speak candidly about their personal experiences of mental health problems, providing a ‘real life’ element to news stories/features
 - Devised a calendar of key dates to proactively place media volunteer stories with national and regional media
 - Provided commentary from ‘see me’ media volunteers on a range of mental health problems
- **Local News Bureau**
 - Proactive regional PR activity supporting pledge signings and grant awards
 - Involved local politicians and stakeholders in activity to extend reach of campaign

2. Creating Engaging Platforms

- **National ‘see me’ Photography Competition**
 - An annual competition that aims to change minds about mental health problems through pictures
 - Adopted a new strategy for 2009 to raise nationwide awareness while empowering ‘local hosts’ (local ambassadors from mental health groups or local service providers) to encourage entries
 - Designed toolkit including posters, news releases and leaflets to empower the local host
 - Worked with local hosts on ongoing promotion - milestone news releases and competition deadline reminders
 - Hosted the ‘winners exhibition’ in Scottish Parliament to drive awareness among politicians and decision-makers
 - Secured opportunity for under 18s winner to meet their local MSP at the winners exhibition

Creativity

- Timely response to the media agenda through 'Stigma Stopwatch'
 - *Blue Monday* – Jan 18th – the most depressing day of the year. Took ownership of commentary around the day by launching new research and insights into the stigma experienced from friends and family
 - *Nick Clegg* – using the word 'nutter' during televised election debates. A letter from campaign director, Suzie Vestri appeared in The Herald/Third Force News
 - *The Beano* – launched a character 'Si Co' – a troubled youth who suffers violent mood swings. A letter to DC Thomson resulted in the character being withdrawn from the publication and ongoing dialogue about anti-stigma language with the publishers
- A creative photocall of the launch of the photography competition secured national media coverage including BBC Online Picture of the Day
- Scottish photographer Tony Marsh was secured as a judge as well as providing handy hints and tips for entrants and hosting the winners for a photography day
- To encourage support from Scottish Party leaders each politician was asked to complete a badge with the campaign theme 'see me, I'm...'

Evaluation & Measurement

The PR programme has to date exceeded all expectation, including:

- Overwhelming local, regional and national positive news coverage with strong inclusion of key messages. Total opportunities to see / hear in the last year totalled at more than six million, and the estimated PR value of the campaign was almost £396,000.
- Seven media volunteer interviews
- Entries in photo competition up by 500% on previous year
- 6,129 online votes were cast during the public voting period of the photography competition
- Semichem has been secured as sponsor for 2010 photography competition on back of activity success in 2009
- All four main Scottish Party leaders signed the 'see me' wall of support

Cost Effectiveness – Value for Money

- Partnerships with local hosts enabled us to exploit their local networks to secure free PR across 20 local health board areas
- Secured prizes 'in kind' for Photography Competition from John Lewis and photographer Tony Marsh
- Delivered online 'host toolkit' to reduce costs of printing and postage

Total Project Budget: £51,000 - £100,000

Final Results Against Objectives

- To drive the issue of stigma back up the public agenda and raise awareness of general public attitudes and behaviours towards those of us with mental health problems
 - Total opportunities to see / hear in the last year totalled at more than six million, and the estimated PR value of the campaign was almost £396,000 generated from 138 articles/media placements
- To keep the issue of stigma and discrimination against people with mental health problems current and relevant to see me's stakeholders as well as policy and decision-makers
 - Secured a number of thought leadership/editorial pieces in The Scotsman and Evening News – positioning Suzie Vestri as an expert in her field and the first point of call for comment surrounding the stigma of mental ill-health
 - Twenty-two politicians pledged their support for the 'see me' campaign by signing the wall of support
 - Engaged key stakeholders and politicians at regional meetings including Robert Brown MSP and Liam McArthur MSP
- To create a brand defining activity that generates positive powerful national and regional media coverage of the 'see me' campaign while communicating the importance of support and understanding
 - Photography competition entries were up by 500% on the previous year while the campaign totalled over 600,000 opportunities to see / hear and a PR value of £32,000