



## Jockeys champion campaign encouraging men to look out for their mates

Leading Jump Jockeys Richard Johnson and Aidan Coleman have thrown their weight behind a new campaign encouraging men to be in their mate's corner.

With 1 in 4 people fighting a mental health problem in any given year<sup>1</sup>, Johnson and Coleman are calling on men to step in if their mate is acting differently as part of Time to Change's newly launched, '[In your Corner](#)' campaign. The campaign, which has also received backing from sports stars Clarke Carlisle, Frank Bruno, Justin Rose and Ricky Hatton, highlights that you don't need to be an expert to be there to support a friend with a mental health problem.

Appearing in a photoshoot to support the campaign, Johnson and Coleman talk about life as a jockey having many highs. However, given the lifestyle of a jockey – restricted diet, self-employed with no guaranteed income, risk of injury and long hours – it can also be very demanding. This is backed up by research into elite athletes and mental health which shows that depression can be connected to sport-related factors such as injuries, overtraining, stress<sup>2</sup> and performance failure.<sup>3</sup> Other relevant research found that athletes competing in individual sports were more prone to depressive symptoms than athletes competing in team sports.<sup>4</sup>

Similar photoshoots have taken place with Rugby League players and former England cricketers, showing the sportsmen sat on Time to Change's 'In Your Corner stool' – a prominent feature of the campaign's [film](#) which symbolises being there for a friend.

The Professional Jockeys Association (PJA), JETS (Jockeys Education & Training Scheme), the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) and Racing Welfare are among organisations taking strides to help make an industry-wide difference to tackling mental health stigma and promoting mental wellbeing and resilience through their commitment to the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation.

### **Champion jockey, Richard Johnson has got behind Time to Change's In Your Corner campaign. He said:**

"I'm supporting Time to Change's 'In Your Corner' campaign because I know how important it is to be there for each other when things get tough.

<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, D. & Huxley, P. 1992, Common mental disorders a bio-social model, Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> (Frank et al., 2013; Wolanin et al., 2015)

<sup>3</sup> (Leddy et al., 1994)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4911498/>

“Especially in our job you get patches when things just aren’t clicking, you can get down and it can be frustrating. We notice if someone isn’t as chatty and often use car journeys to pick each other up.

“We’re all self-employed but in a weird way we’re one big team and we do look out for each other. It’s often little things you notice which make you realise someone’s not at their strongest.

“We all know that we’re 30 minutes away from another fall so we never get too big for our boots and we’re good at being there for each other.

“We’re not a team sport but in some ways we are, in the weighing room we have other jockeys and even the valets who are there to notice if someone’s having a hard time. We might have a quiet word and say, “I was feeling like that last week, I know how you’re feeling” and that can really help. Ups and downs are part of our job and everyone knows that.”

**Jockey Aidan Coleman is also backing the campaign. He said:**

“I’m backing Time to Change’s ‘In Your Corner’ campaign because we all need to do our bit to change how people think about mental health. It’s not about grand gestures, it’s just about being there.

“There’s always going to be tough times for jockeys. It’s the nature of the game, even if you’re doing well, 15% of your rides may be winners so that means 85% are losers. It’s a tough, tiring sport but we love it and it is a rollercoaster of emotions we go through.

“On the track we’re very, very competitive but we’re fair and in the weighing room there’s a great camaraderie and if you have a fall, there’s always someone there looking out for you.

“We know each other so well, we’re in each other’s company nearly every day. We’re all dealing with the same pressures and I’d like to think we would be able to recognise if someone else is struggling.

“In times gone past, men always were seen as having to be strong and macho and we didn’t talk about feelings but as time goes on we’re shaking off that persona and are being much more open but we’re not there yet and I hope that sportsmen supporting this campaign will help.

“As sportspeople we have to be mentally tough but we’re all human and everyone is vulnerable to mental health problems.”

**Director of Time to Change, Sue Baker OBE, said:**

“We’re delighted that jockeys Richard Johnson, Aidan Coleman are throwing their weight behind our campaign to improve attitudes towards mental health right across the horseracing community – jockeys, racing grooms and supporters. We want to encourage men to recognise that looking out for each other’s mental health is part of being a good mate. Doing this would mean fewer men facing mental health problems alone and fewer lives ruined. That’s why we have launched our In Your Corner campaign - if a friend’s acting differently, step in, find out why and be there to support.”

Time to Change is now urging men to recognise how their attitudes and behaviours can influence others’ experiences of mental health problems – and that being in a friend’s corner can make all the difference. The campaign is relevant to everyone – men, women and young people – and shows straightforward ways that anyone can be there for someone.

There are three steps people can take if they think a friend is struggling:

1. Text, call, reach out to your mate
2. Ask how they are, listen without judging
3. Be yourself, do everyday things.

To find out more information about the campaign and how you can get involved, visit: [www.time-to-change.org.uk/inyourcorner](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/inyourcorner)

**Notes to Editor:**

For more information please contact Emma Warren, Senior Media Officer at Time to Change at [e.warren@time-to-change.org.uk](mailto:e.warren@time-to-change.org.uk) or call 07894 915 689.

You can watch the new campaign film 'Be in your mate's corner', here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l8LpDitZvY>

**Time to Change**

Time to Change is a growing movement of people changing how we all think and act about mental health problems. Our voice is stronger and louder thanks to funding by the Department of Health, Comic Relief and the Big Lottery Fund. Our campaign is run by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, and thousands more organisations have joined us to make change happen.

For more information go to: [www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk).