

TIACS foundation offers free on-going professional Mental-Health Support for tradies, truckies and blue-collar workers

This is a Conversation Starter: Bold shirts encourage mental health conversation amongst tradies, and support line offers free professional conversations over phone or text chats.

Trademutt, an Australian social enterprise which creates bold and bright workwear for tradies with the overall goal of tackling mental health head on.

In 2016, one of Trademutt's co-founder, Dan Allen, lost a close friend to suicide.

Dan Allen states: "His name was also Dan and he was one of the first mates I had made when I moved to Brisbane. He quickly became like a Brother who had an infectious personality that was impossible to ignore. This was the first time in my life that I had been affected by suicide. As hard as I remember it being to accept, and the confusion that came with it, it must have been unmeasurable compared to what was felt by his mum, dad and brother. This was truly a life changer.

"Our loud and vibrant shirts act as a catalyst to starting the conversation around mental health in men, a topic that has been hard to approach in the past for blokes, mostly due to the attached stigmas and perceived weakness. However, seeing the emptiness in the eyes of a family who have lost a loved one to suicide make it blatantly obvious, that the courage that us blokes pride ourselves on, is the very thing required to address this silent killer. I believe that true happiness can never be appreciated until we have experienced what it feels like to be at the lowest of lows. Mum always said to me and my brothers "the harder the climb the better the view" and it is only now that I can fully appreciate how wise her words were."

At the back of every Trademutt product, sits the powerful words 'This is a Conversation Starter.'

In June 2018 celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain took his own life. Co-Founders of TradeMutt Dan Allen and Ed Ross were meeting with a mate Russell (Russ) who mentioned he had seen a post on Facebook by a prominent Australian mental health charity about the tragic loss of Anthony Bourdain and how that mental health doesn't discriminate. Reading the comments Russ noticed a young man had commented, 'This is where I am headed'. A direct call for HELP!

Instinctively Russ directly reached out to this young man and asked if he could help. This young man had a relationship breakdown, he had also lost his job and was at a wits end. Through a generous donation from Bretts Timber and Hardware, he was put in touch with a mental health professional and got the assistance he needed.

After the dust settled, Russ enquired about the comments or messages of support that this young man received from the mental health charity where he initially reached out for help. He said no one had contacted him. Russ messaged Dan and Ed. Dan and Ed took the step to do something different and give people the access and help they need. Support from a mental health professional isn't cheap, and it's not always accessible.

This is a Conversation Starter Foundation was born. Australia. Dan and Ed knew that they wanted to further their work from driving a cultural shift around the mental health conversation to actually providing a solution for anyone seeking help.

Ed states: "TIACS Foundation facilitates access to mental health professionals, by removing the physical and financial barriers to help. We provide early intervention and mental health education, helping individuals to understand their own mental health and equip them with the tools to practice mental wellness and be the best versions of themselves. We use technology at the fingertips of everyday Australians allowing access to psychological therapy services as simple as pushing a button."

Marc Ahmelman, CEO, TIACS Foundation, concludes: "There are many blue collar workers who don't have the time, means or ability to access psychological services. For example, TIACS handles calls from Truckies who are working up to 80 hours a week, they can call TIACS if they need to

talk through issues, for truckies making an appointment to see a psychologist is very difficult.”

“If you need support, we’re a phone call or a text away (powered by Twilio) - 0488 846 988 (9.30 -5pm weekdays) will put you in touch with a mental health professional without charge. The support line is manned by professional volunteers. It’s early days and we’re building capacity to extend the hours we’re available. Check the website www.tiacs.org for operating hours. Quick chat or text – great; longer chat – cool; need a follow up – no problem. We’re here for as long as you need support.”

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