DEFINING SUPPORT AROUND CARE

"Support around care" means enabling, coordinating and normalising a player's engagement with professional clinical and medical support, without assessing, treating or informally substituting for that care.

It refers to the non-clinical, enabling, relational and coordination activities that surround a player's engagement with formal clinical or medical treatment.

It is about helping care happen well - not *being* the care.

PDM staff support the player's engagement with professional care, but do not assess, treat, interpret or manage clinical conditions.

Practical Examples of "Support Around Care"

Facilitating Access to Care (Without Assessing)

What this looks like:

- Helping a player navigate *how* to get support
- Normalising help-seeking
- Reducing practical barriers

Examples

- Supporting scheduling of appointments around training, travel, competitions
- Explaining *process*, not content:
    - "What usually happens in a first appointment"
    - "What confidentiality generally looks like"

✅ Appropriate

❌ Not diagnosing, triaging severity, or recommending treatment types

Supporting Engagement and Adherence

What this looks like:

- Helping the player stay engaged *with* their treatment plan
- Reinforcing consistency and follow-through

Examples

- Checking whether appointments are happening (attendance, not content)
- Encouraging players to raise issues directly with clinicians
- Helping coordinate around:
    - training loads
    - travel
    - recovery planning

✅ "How can the system support you staying consistent with care?"

❌ "Let's talk through what you discussed in therapy"

Being a Stable, Non-Therapeutic Relationship

What this looks like:

- Emotional presence without therapeutic intent
- Listening for connection, not intervention

Examples

- Being someone a player can talk *to* about how hard it is to be in treatment
- Sitting with discomfort *without trying to fix it*
- Reflecting effort and courage ("This looks tough, and you're showing up nonetheless")

✅ Containment

❌ Processing trauma, emotions, or cognitions

Practical Life Support Linked to Care

Examples

- Supporting logistics:
    - relocation linked to treatment
    - family involvement (with consent)
- Helping manage:
    - media obligations
    - performance expectations during treatment
- Coordinating conversations with coaches or HP staff *as guided by clinicians*

✅ Enabling the environment to support treatment
❌ Modifying treatment goals or returns timelines independently

"Support Around Care" in Eating Disorders

Appropriate PDM Role

- Observing behaviour changes and raising concerns early
- Supporting attendance at:
    - medical appointments
    - dietetic consults
    - psychology sessions
- Reinforcing:
    - fuel availability plans (without policing food intake)
    - rest environments
- Coordinating training modifications *as prescribed*

✅ Support compliance and safety
❌ Discuss food rules, weight, body image, or "health strategies"

Rule of Thumb - PDM staff support the care team's plan - they do not interpret or adapt it.

What "Support Around Care" Is *Not*

This is just as important.

Not Therapy

- Not unpacking emotions
- Not challenging thoughts
- Not exploring history
- Not holding distress over time

Not Risk Assessment

- Not determining suicide risk
- Not deciding whether someone is “clinical enough”
- Not acting as the buffer to escalation

Not “Informal Counselling”

- No regular, emotionally focused sessions
- No confidentiality promises beyond scope
- No “I’ll just check in with you instead of seeing the psych”

Side-by-Side Comparison

Situation	Support Around Care ✅	Drifting Into Clinical ❌
Player anxious	Help them connect with their psychologist	Exploring anxiety triggers
Player in ED treatment	Coordinate training modifications	Discussing eating behaviour
Player disengaging	Encourage reconnection with care	Providing alternative support
Player distressed	Be present and listen	Processing trauma/emotions
Appointments missed	Problem-solve logistics	“Let’s just talk here instead”

Language PDM Staff Can Safely Use

✅ “How can I help make it easier for you to stay engaged with your support?”
✅ “Who else is involved in supporting you right now?”
✅ “Would it help if I checked in with [psychologist] to coordinate around training?”

🚫 “What did your psychologist say about that?”
🚫 “Let’s work through that together instead.”
🚫 “I’ll help you manage this without escalating.”

Why This Distinction Protects Everyone

For Players

- They get the right care at the right time
- They don’t unknowingly receive unqualified support

For PDM Staff

- Reduced moral distress
- Clear role identity
- Legal and professional protection

For the System

- Stronger clinical safety
- Better trust across disciplines
- Alignment with the Player Wellbeing Strategy