

Traumatic incident support



everyone fit
for the future

Unfortunately some of our employees are working in an environment which could expose them to or involve them in a potential traumatic incident. This could range from dealing with a fatality on the rail to a threat or violence from a member of the public.

Following an event such as this, around 85% of people will find their initial feelings and thoughts about the event disappear in 3–4 weeks, however some people may not recover normally and could be at increased risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

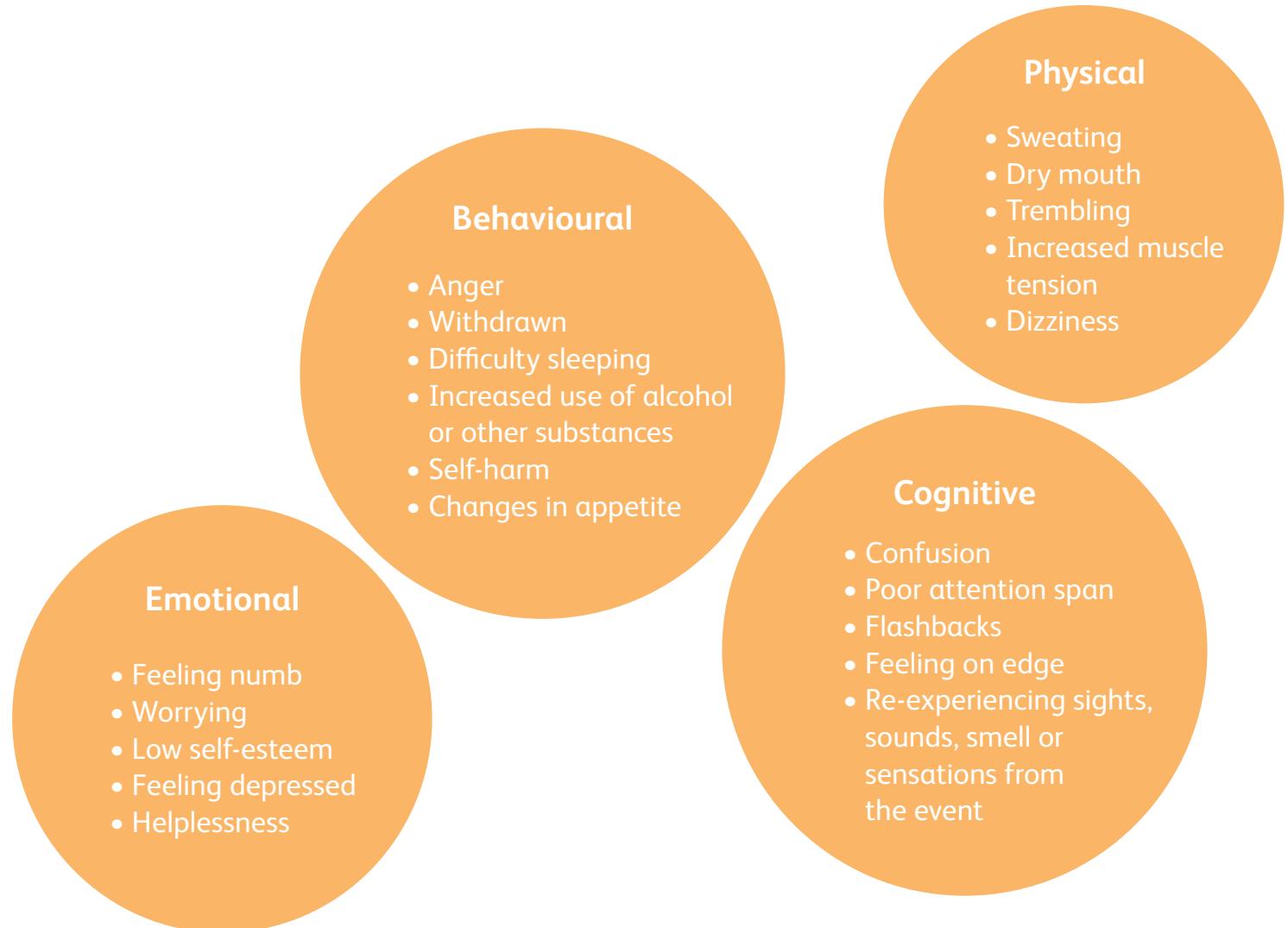
There are some basic principles that can help minimise the potential long term impact on people which are outlined below.

In most cases these reactions will often subside and disappear within 3-4 weeks. However for some people these feelings continue or amplify and they can struggle to cope. This can happen to anyone and is not a sign of weakness.

Recognising signs of distress

Being able to recognise common signs of mental distress is one of the most important factors. That way it's easier to spot people who are not themselves and can be offered further support.

Below are some examples of how individuals may respond to a traumatic incident.



What is ‘Watchful Waiting’?

‘Watchful Waiting’ can be used to judge who might need further support following a traumatic incident. For a period of time following a traumatic incident people who were exposed / involved should self-monitor or someone who was not involved should keep in contact with them to check how they are feeling. Normally most people lose the initial emotions following the incident after around 3-4 weeks, and ‘Watchful Waiting’ is used over this time period to identify those who may need further support.

Finding appropriate support for those who need it early on gives the best chance of recovering to normal function. However clinical support is most often only needed for those people who are not recovering well and if brought in for those who don’t need it, it could actually prevent people from recovering normally.

Useful coping strategies following exposure to an event

If you have been through a traumatic experience there are some useful strategies you can use which may make things easier for you:

- Keep yourself busy and maintain a routine
- Talk to trusted friends, colleagues or family members
- Don’t expect your symptoms to resolve immediately, it can take 3-4 weeks for these initial emotions to subside
- Don’t drink excessive amounts of alcohol or use drugs
- Start an exercise programme to reduce physical tension

Helpful tips for family, friends and colleagues

If someone you know has been involved with a traumatic incident there are some things you can do to support them following the event:

- Listen carefully and without judgement when they are talking to you about their experience
- Spend time with them and find something fun to do
- Help them with everyday tasks without being overly interfering or controlling
- Allow them some private time
- Try not to take their anger or other emotions they may display personally, however don’t be afraid to have a conversation about their behaviour if it is becoming unreasonable
- Do not tell them they are “lucky it was not worse” or “you will get over it”, instead tell them you want to understand and support them

Where to find help and support

At Network Rail there are various resources and support mechanisms available to you if you are concerned about your mental wellbeing.

1. Health and Wellbeing Portal:
[http://safety.networkrail.co.uk/
healthandwellbeing](http://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing)
2. Employee Assistance Programme:
Call: **0800 358 4858** or **0330 332 9980**
www.validium.com/vclub
3. Occupational Health:
[https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/
healthandwellbeing/HelpingOthers/
Supporting-wellbeing-at-work/
Occupational-Health](https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/HelpingOthers/
Supporting-wellbeing-at-work/
Occupational-Health)
4. You can contact your GP