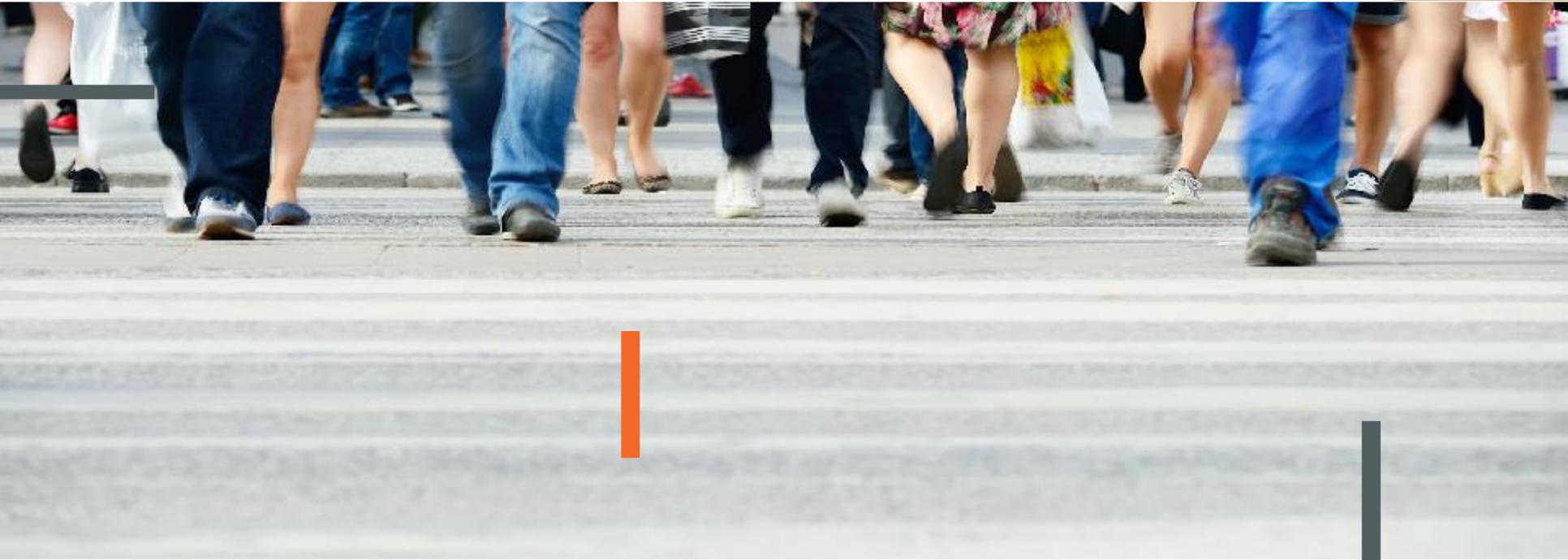


Mental health and accessibility

Roger Mackett

Centre for Transport Studies

University College London



Mental illness



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Mental health conditions include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Agoraphobia (fear of feeling trapped)
- Schizophrenia

Effects include: panic attacks, loss of self-confidence, difficulty making decisions

Prevalence: 26% of all adults in England have been diagnosed with one or more mental illness; a further 18% say they have experienced a mental illness without being diagnosed (Health Survey of England 2014).

Positive aspects of travel



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There is evidence that travel can provide positive experiences for some people with mental health conditions:

- Penfold et al. found that positive interactions with transport staff and other travellers helped some people with mental health conditions.
- Whitley and Prince found that the Freedom Pass enabled some people in North London with mental health conditions to ameliorate some of the symptoms of their condition by enabling them to access services, facilities and social support.

Why don't people use buses as much as they would like?



People in general

1. Buses not available
2. Cost
3. Other reasons

(Source: Life Opportunities Survey)



People with mental health conditions

1. Anxiety and lack of confidence
2. Cost
3. Buses not available



What about taxis?

People in general

1. Cost
2. Taxis unavailable
3. Other reasons

(Source: Life Opportunities Survey)



People with mental health conditions

1. Cost
2. Anxiety/lack of confidence
3. Difficulties getting in and out of taxis

And local trains?

People in general

1. Cost
2. Trains unavailable
3. Other reasons

(Source: Life Opportunities Survey)



People with mental health conditions

1. Cost
2. Anxiety/lack of confidence
3. Overcrowding



What causes anxiety and lack of confidence during a journey?



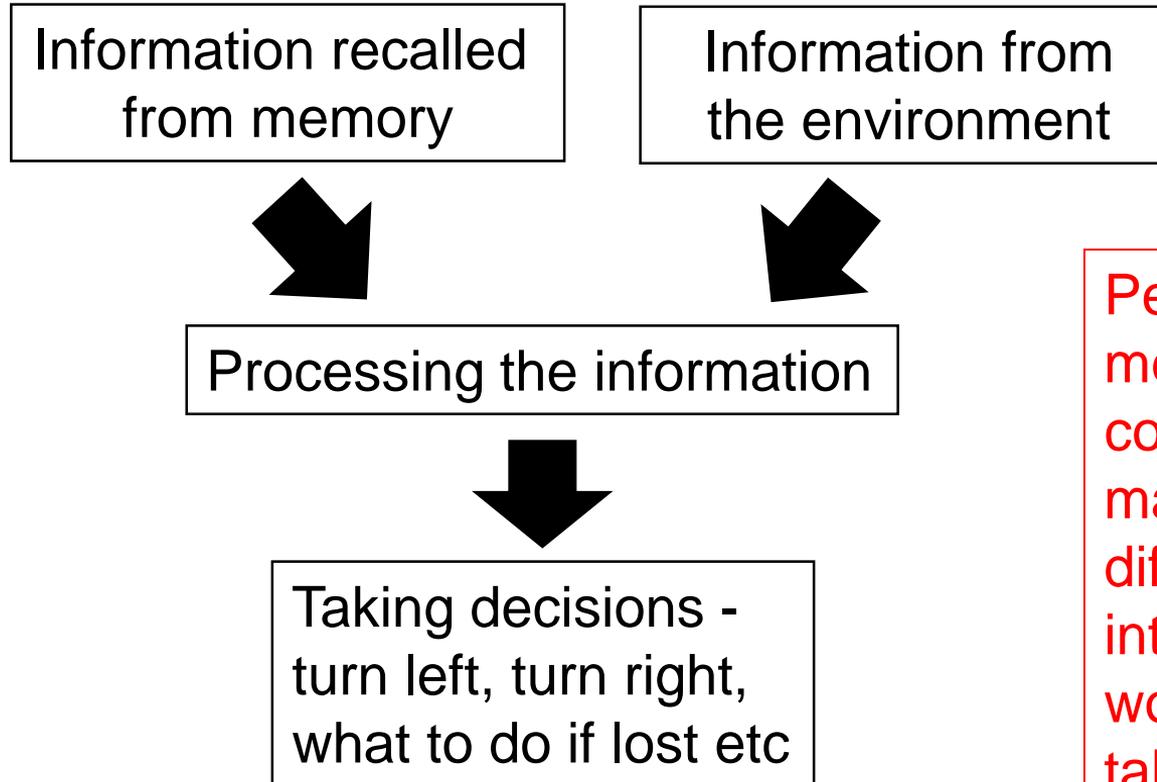
Causes of anxiety and lack of confidence

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graph TD; A[Causes of anxiety and lack of confidence] --> B[Finding the way (and not getting lost)]; A --> C[Interacting with other people];
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Finding the way
(and not getting lost)

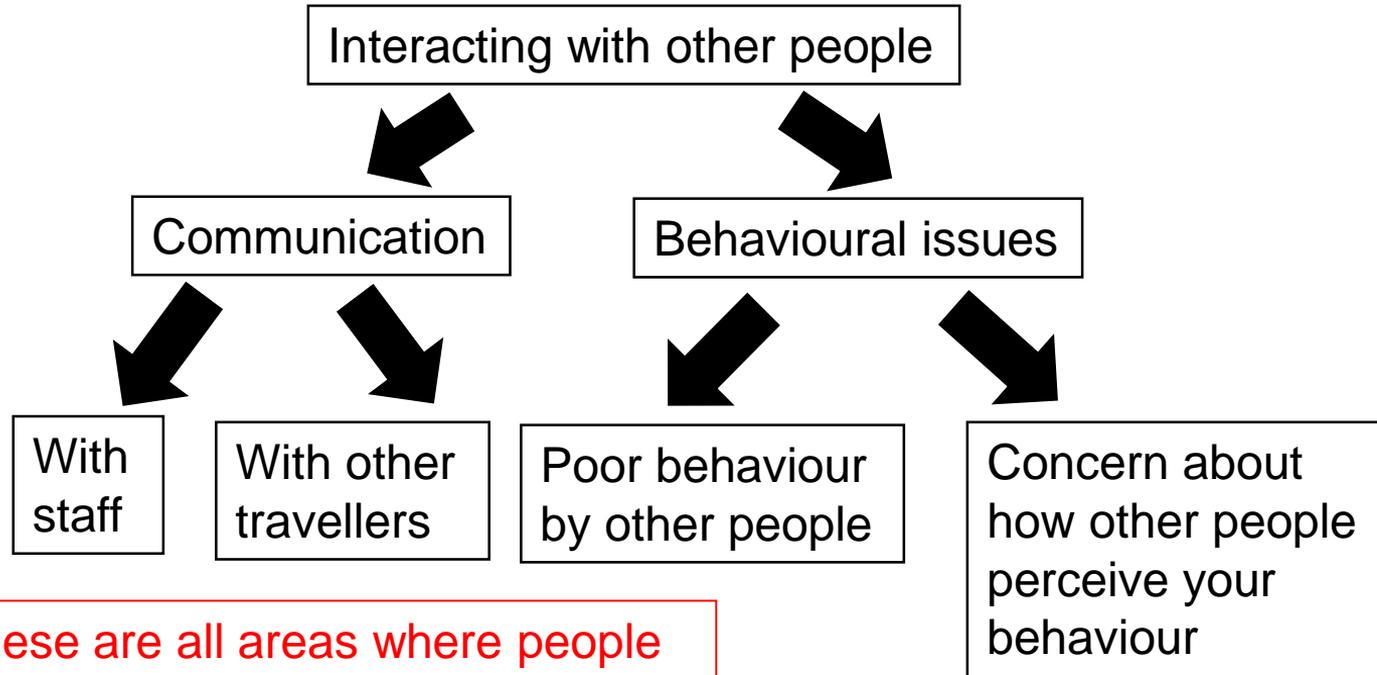
Interacting with
other people

How do people find the way (and not get lost)?



People with mental health conditions may have difficulty interpreting the world and taking decisions

Interacting with other people



These are all areas where people with mental health conditions may have difficulties

% of people buying rail tickets on the day



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| No impairment | All forms of impairment | People with mental health issues |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 12 | 12 | 23 |

Source: National Rail Passenger Survey, 2014

Euston to Manchester Piccadilly [Choose another journey](#)

| | |
|---|--|
| Book now One way from only £27.00* Standard | On the day One way from £82.90* Standard |
|---|--|

Source: Virgin Trains email sent 2 November 2017

How can things be improved?

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Finding the way and not getting lost

- Enhance the skills of the traveller
- Improve information for trip preparation
- Make the local area easier to understand
- Provide electronic information
- Provide support when lost

Improve communication with other people

- Staff
- Other travellers

Enhance the skills of travellers

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- Travel training
- Providing experience in travelling



Improve information for trip preparation

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- Clear timetables and maps
- Clear information on websites



Make the local area easier to understand

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- Less street clutter and less confusing environments
- Clear signposts



Two examples of confusing environments

Provide electronic information

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- AVI (audio-visual information) on buses and trains
- Mobile phone apps



Provide support when lost

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- Safe Places
- Herbert Protocol



Improving interactions with other people



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Staff

- Staff training
- Travel assistance cards

Other travellers

- Schemes like 'Please offer me a seat'
- Campaigns to educate the public



Source: Transport for London



Source: Transport for London

Summing up



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- The main barrier to travel by people with mental health conditions is anxiety and lack of confidence
- This comes from concerns about finding the way without getting lost and concerns about communicating with other people and behaviour issues
- There are many ways to increase confidence and reduce anxiety
- Most of these are not very expensive, but do need continuous effort

Further information



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- The information in this talk is based on the report '**Building confidence – Improving travel for people with mental impairments**', produced for DPTAC (The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee).
- Contact Roger Mackett by email on r.mackett@ucl.ac.uk

Building Confidence – Improving travel for people with mental impairments

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This report has been produced for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) which advises the UK Department for Transport (DfT) on accessibility issues relating to disabled people.