Mental health and accessibility
Roger Mackett
Centre for Transport Studies
University College London
Mental illness

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

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

Finding the way
(and not getting lost)

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

- Information recalled from memory
- Information from the environment

Processing the information

Taking decisions - turn left, turn right, what to do if lost etc

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

Communication
- With staff
- With other travellers

Behavioural issues
- Poor behaviour by other people
- Concern about how other people perceive your behaviour

These are all areas where people with mental health conditions may have difficulties
## % of people buying rail tickets on the day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No impairment</th>
<th>All forms of impairment</th>
<th>People with mental health issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Rail Passenger Survey, 2014

### Euston to Manchester Piccadilly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Book now</th>
<th>On the day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One way from only</td>
<td>One way from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£27.00* Standard</td>
<td>£82.90* Standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Virgin Trains email sent 2 November 2017
How can things be improved?

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

TRL Academy

- Travel training
- Providing experience in travelling
Improve information for trip preparation

TRL Academy

- Clear timetables and maps
- Clear information on websites
Make the local area easier to understand

TRL Academy

- Less street clutter and less confusing environments
- Clear signposts

Two examples of confusing environments
Provide electronic information

- AVI (audio-visual information) on buses and trains
- Mobile phone apps
Provide support when lost

TRL Academy

- Safe Places
- Herbert Protocol
Improving interactions with other people

Staff
- Staff training
- Travel assistance cards

Other travellers
- Schemes like ‘Please offer me a seat’
- Campaigns to educate the public

Source: Transport for London
Summing up

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

TRLAcademy

- 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