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Mental health, wellbeing and transport accessibility

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Mental health conditions

These include:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Agoraphobia
- Schizophrenia

Their effects include:

- Lack of self-confidence
- Difficulty making decisions
- Panic attacks

How widespread are mental health conditions?

According to the Health Survey of England 2014:

- 26% of all adults in England have been diagnosed with one or more mental illnesses;

- A further 18% say they have experienced a mental illness without being diagnosed.

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 a mental health condition to ameliorate some of the symptoms of the 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
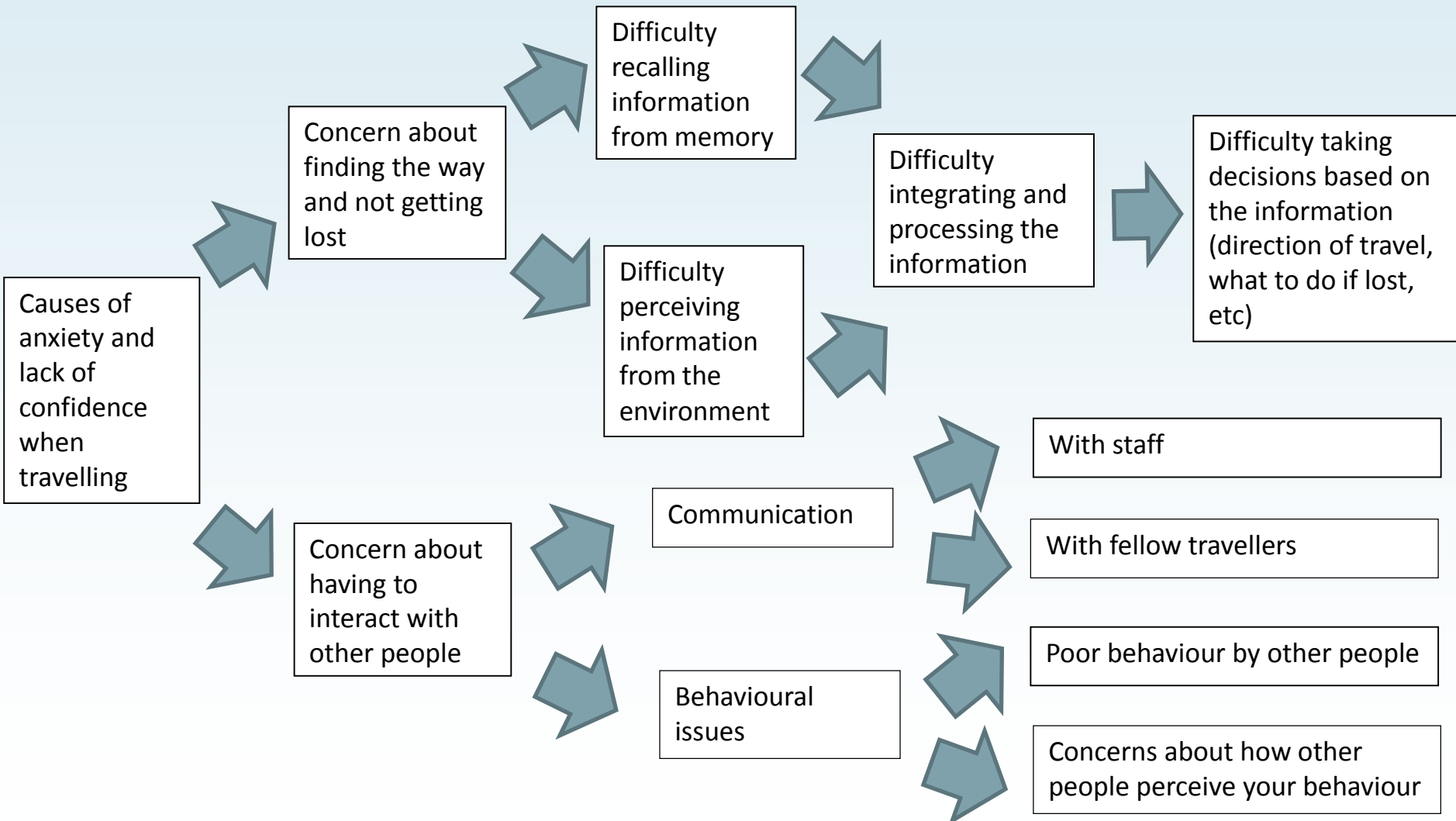3. Other reasons

(Source: Life Opportunities Survey)

People with mental health conditions

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

Anxiety and lack of confidence when travelling

Causes of anxiety and lack of confidence when travelling

Concern about finding the way and not getting lost

Difficulty recalling information from memory

Difficulty perceiving information from the environment

Difficulty integrating and processing the information

Difficulty taking decisions based on the information (direction of travel, what to do if lost, etc)

Concern about having to interact with other people

Communication

Behavioural issues

With staff

With fellow travellers

Poor behaviour by other people

Concerns about how other people perceive your behaviour

% of people buying rail tickets on the day

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?

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
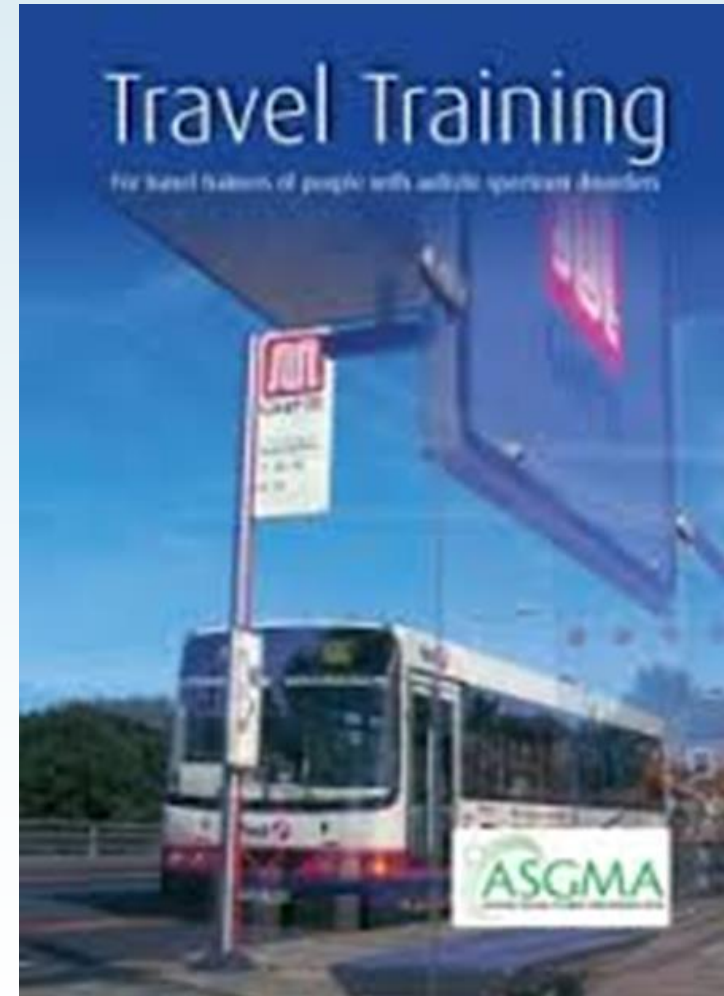- Provide support when lost

Improve communication with other people

- Staff
- Other travellers

Enhance the skills of travellers

- Travel training
- Providing experience in travelling

Source: Alzheimer's Society

Source: Autistic Society Greater Manchester Area

Improve information for trip preparation

- Clear timetables and maps
- Clear information on websites

Make the local area easier to understand

- Less street clutter and less confusing environments
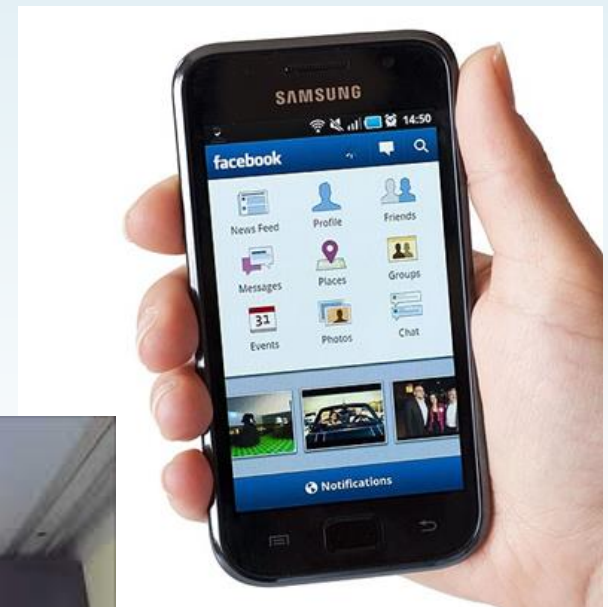- Clear signposts

Provide electronic information

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

Sources: Alzheimer's Society

Provide support when lost

- Safe Places

- Herbert Protocol

- Mobile phone apps

Improve communications with other people

Staff

- Staff training
- Travel assistance cards

Other travellers

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

Source: Alzheimer's Society

Source: Transport for London

Effects of interventions

Having improved travel skills:
•Travel training
•Travel experiences

Having good travel planning information:
•On paper: understandable maps, timetables
•On-line: understandable websites

Being able to comprehend the local area:
•Streetscape easy to interpret
•Little or no street clutter

Receiving understandable information during journey:
•Clear signposting
•Electronic information: mobile phone apps, AVI

Having access to 'safe places'

Having carer able to provide support:
•Phone apps
•Herbert Protocol

Improved communication with staff:
•Staff training
•Travel assistance cards

Improve communication with fellow travellers:
•Schemes like 'Please offer me a seat'
•Campaigns to educate the public

Being better prepared for travel
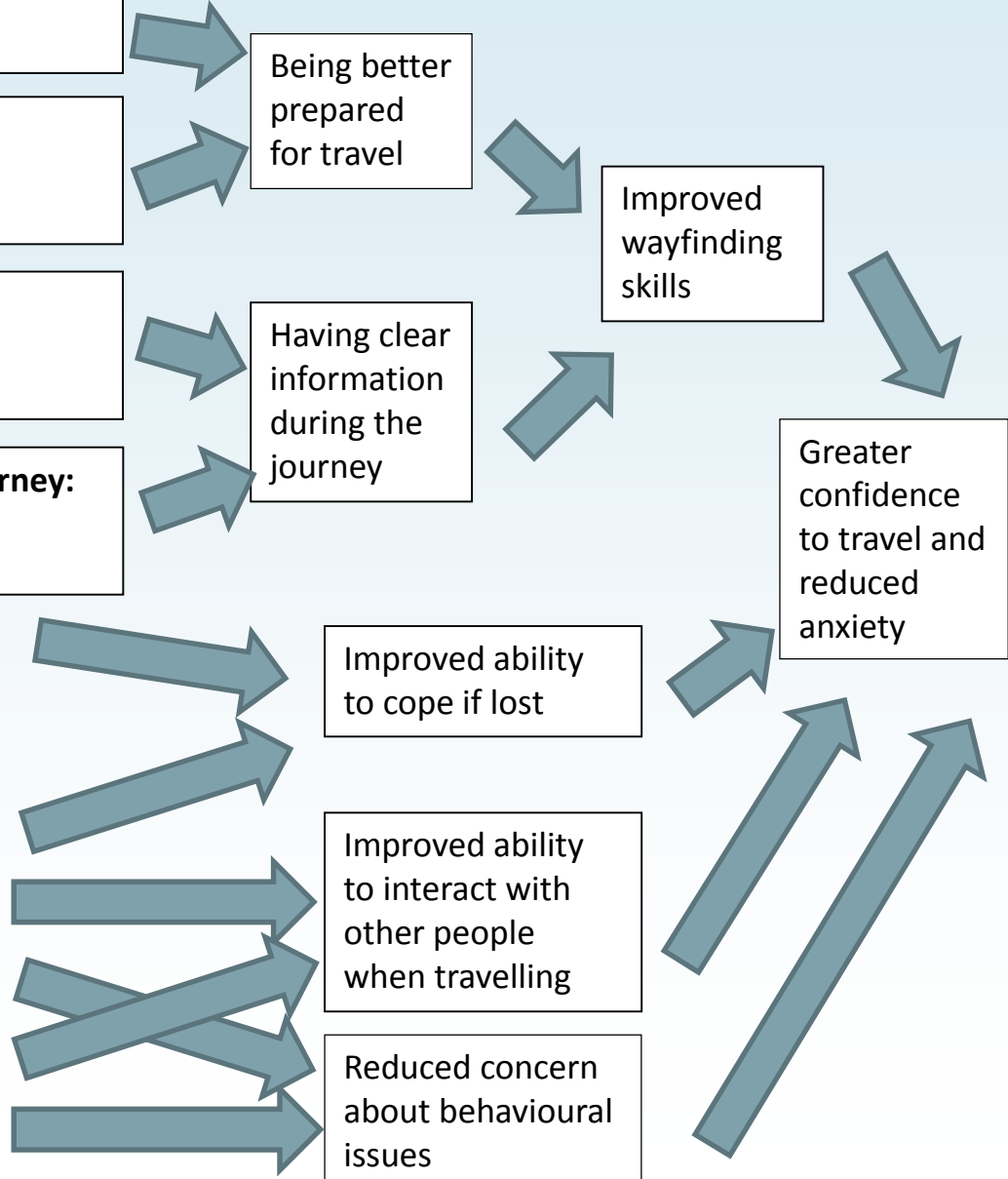
Improved wayfinding skills

Having clear information during the journey

Greater confidence to travel and reduced anxiety

Improved ability to cope if lost

Improved ability to interact with other people when travelling

Reduced concern about behavioural issues

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

- See the report '**Building confidence – Improving travel for people with mental impairments**', produced for DPTAC and downloadable from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/exploring-the-barriers-to-travel-for-people-with-mental-impairments.

- 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.