Management of distressing events and prevention of post-traumatic stress

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PRELIMINARY POINTS

- Occupational Health and Safety Group project
- Project start date: 6 March 2010
- Final report: end of 2011
- Active railways: DB AG, Infrabel, Network rail, SNCB, SNCF, Southeastern Railway, Trenitalia
Increased number of psychologically traumatic events affecting railway staff

Difficulty of predicting the evolution of post-traumatic stress and the different consequences depending on a person’s personality

Report by C. Gravert (DB AG)
OBJECTIVES

- Gather and share experiences on this topic
- Draw up a guide of recommendations and good practices
- Make practical memos available for use by staff, managers and bosses
Make a list of the different management and prevention strategies used in terms of post-traumatic stress

Benchmark the incident management models

Identify the best recommendations and good practices

\textbf{PPTI} = \text{Potentially Psychologically Traumatising Incident}
1. Risk evaluation
2. Preparation and prevention
3. Intervention
4. Post-intervention and follow-up
5. Evaluation and integration of lessons learnt
1. RISK EVALUATION
- Main principles -

> Draw up an organisational management strategy

- List the duties and activity likely to be affected by a PPTI
- Establish a target group
- Examine job descriptions
- Take the lessons learnt from previous PPTIs into consideration

Non-exhaustive list: station staff, train managers, train drivers, maintenance staff, staff responsible for managing PPTIs, etc.
2. PREPARATION AND PREVENTION
- Main principles -

> Put appropriate strategies in place to manage the effects of this exposure

- Devise a genuine policy
- Develop procedures
- Ensure that all levels within the company are aware of these processes
2. PREPARATION AND PREVENTION
- Practical organisation -

- Identify support and care systems
  (e.g. peer support, line managers, occupational health team, and staff assistance programmes)

- Training
  - Staff likely to experience a PPTI
  - Staff responsible for providing support

- Raise awareness among:
  - Managers
  - Employers
  - Social partners
  - Field staff
3. INTERVENTION
- Practical implementation (1) -

There are a number of possible strategies for helping someone during or immediately after a PPTI:

- Emergency psychological help (manager or close colleague)

**WHY?**
- Make the person feel safe again
- Reduce their anxiety and agitation
- Promote the sense that they are part of a community

**HOW?**
- Take the person to a calm location
- Offer them a drink or medical assistance
- Ask if they would like to contact someone close to them
- Find them the means to return home
3. INTERVENTION
- Practical implementation (2) -

- Information
  » On the management of reactions, about what has occurred, about the investigation, etc.

- Links to support systems
  » Inform them about treatment options
  » Encourage them to contact their support network and get in touch with someone close

- Reducing the risk of future exposure
  » Temporarily free the person from their duties immediately after a PPTI
  » Provide encouragement for people returning to work
4. POST-INTERVENTION AND FOLLOW-UP

> Monitoring those who display more persistent and pervasive symptoms

- Managers are trained to detect symptoms
- Clear procedures for monitoring staff exposed to PPTIs
- Accessible support services
- Flexibility of intervention options
- Constant support for management and staff
- Clear rehabilitation process for those returning to work
5. ASSESSMENT AND INTEGRATION OF LESSONS LEARNT

- Companies must regularly review their care systems for staff exposed to PPTIs
  - Post-incident evaluation
    » Review the lessons learnt from PPTIs
  - Systemic analysis
    » Assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the organisational processes
  - Statistical follow-up
Thank you for your kind attention!

For further information please contact:

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