

Trafinz Safety Leadership

Incident resilience training and support for road safety practitioners - WSP

As an integral part of the Road to Zero strategy, the “day job” of road safety practitioners involves identifying how death and serious injury (DSi) on our road networks can be reduced. This requires them to discuss, consider, analyse, review, and report on DSi crashes on a daily basis. While practitioners are trying to save the lives of others, very little attention is given to the trauma practitioners may experience as they carry out their work.

The problem was initially identified by the WSP Human Resources team who realised the work being done by people, would expose them to vicarious trauma through their attendance at active fatal crash scenes. Action was initially taken to provide those staff with tools to help them deal with the potential for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of vicarious trauma. It was subsequently identified there was a potential widespread issue for which systems needed to be put in place.

Three primary outcomes were sought from the project:

1. Protecting our practitioners and keeping them safe.
2. By protecting our people, this gives them the ability to identify potential issues with colleagues and to broaden the scope of support provided.
3. By keeping our people safe, they are able to do their jobs even better and, as a result, to save the lives of others.

The programme has four key tiers:

- Tier 1: pre-exposure briefing
- Tier 2: Senior amateur advisers
- Tier 3: Group Incident resilience training sessions
- Tier 4: Psychological referrals

The key result that has been achieved is providing people with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to recognise when their road safety work is adversely affecting them. But, more importantly, by encouraging them to have plans in place to address those adverse effects. WSP have brought the mental health implications of the adverse effects of road safety work on practitioners out of the shadows and it is now a matter that is routinely discussed.

As a result, WSP have removed the potential stigma associated with helpers (road safety practitioners) seeking help. There is a significantly improved focus on looking out for ourselves and looking out for each other. This extends beyond the WSP staff that have attended the training, because we have also involved clients and contractors in our training sessions. WSP recognised the need to care for their people as much as the people whose lives they are working to save.



Rohan O'Neill Stevens, Trafinz President presenting award to Grant Spedding, WSP, on behalf of the team comprising Robert Swears (lead), Grant Spedding, and Raewyn Nielsen of WSP, and Jason Hannett.