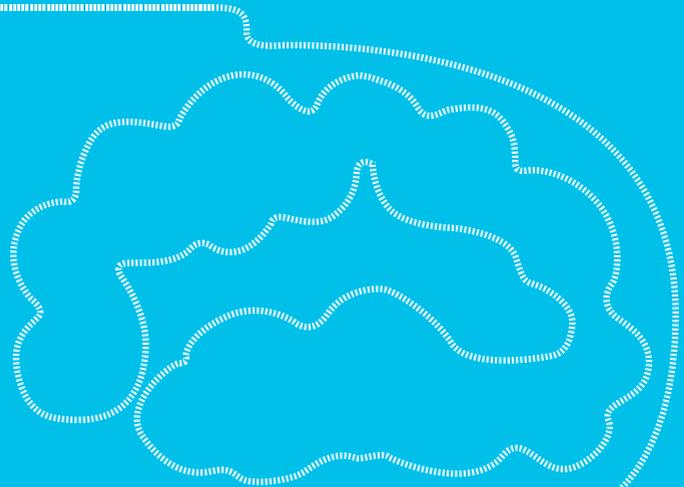




A Better,  
Safer  
Railway



# Understanding the elements of successful mental health training for managers

## T1124

A randomised controlled trial  
evaluating mental health training  
for line managers delivered face-  
to-face and through e-learning



Providing the right training for line managers is vital to help them understand, manage and promote mental health and wellbeing at work. It gives them more confidence to manage absence from work due to poor mental health and to manage the subsequent risks associated with stress at work. This not only benefits their direct line reports but has positive implications for company productivity. It has the potential to reduce both absences due to mental health and 'presenteeism', and to decrease staff turnover.

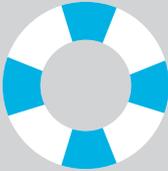
Commissioned by the RSSB, this important study was undertaken to shine more light on an area of employee health that, historically, lacks scientific research.

### The findings

The work was carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies. It gives us high quality evidence to support future investment in mental health training. this can be delivered either face-to-face or through e-learning.

### What are the best mental health and wellbeing topics to teach line managers?

There are five topics that should be included in mental health training for line managers.

Core	Line manager role	First response skills
<p>Awareness of, and knowledge about, mental health</p>  <p>Communication skills: <i>having conversations about mental health and handling disclosure</i></p> 	<p>Supporting mental wellbeing through managing workplace risks</p>  <p>Managing absence and return to work</p> 	<p>Responding appropriately to signs and symptoms</p>  

## What are the best methods available for training line managers in mental health and wellbeing?

There were no differences in the outcomes of face-to-face and e-learning training. Both benefited participants.

Our findings are that face-to-face training and e-learning methods are equal in effectiveness. This allows rail companies to choose the method of delivery that suits their organisation, without compromising effectiveness.

## What were the benefits to those who attended training?

This research is the first of its kind to examine the effects on line managers. Specifically, it compared the different formats against a control group. Impact on participants was evaluated directly after the training and six weeks later.

Results showed that both the face-to-face and e-learning interventions led to sustained changes in the line managers' knowledge about mental health. It also increased their preparedness to take action on mental health issues. The table below shows changes in questionnaire scores before and after training.

To further embed these mental health learnings and communication skills, refresher training and additional resources may be helpful. RSSB has commissioned a further study, currently underway, on embedding mental health training.

For more information visit [www.rssb.co.uk/Pages/mental-wellbeing.aspx](http://www.rssb.co.uk/Pages/mental-wellbeing.aspx)

## The research statistics

Factor	Pre-training mean score (min = 0, max =5)	4-6 weeks follow-up mean score (min = 0, max =5)	Change	P <sup>1</sup>	Effect size <sup>2</sup> ( $\eta p^2$ )
Preparedness for manager to take action on mental health	3.13	3.95	+.83	0.000***	0.128 (medium effect)
Self-reported knowledge about mental health	3.24	3.91	+.68	0.000***	0.141 (large effect)
Confidence to talk about mental health	3.57	4.04	+.47	0.337	0.019
Attitudes and misconceptions	4.24	4.34	+.10	0.109	0.038

<sup>1</sup> The lower the p value, the less likely it is that the result has been produced by chance. For the findings marked \*\*\* in the table, this is equivalent to a probability of less than 1 in 1000.

<sup>2</sup> The effect size indicates how big the difference is between the pre-training scores and the follow-up scores



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