

# Improving access for people with mental impairments

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## The issues

- Good access is a key contributor to the quality of life.
- Disabled people have poorer access than other people.
- Less is done to improve access for people with mental impairments than other disabled people.
- Why is this?
- What can be done about it?

# Mental impairments

Type of impairment	Examples	Nature of the condition	Areas where there may be difficulties
Learning	Dyslexia Learning disability	Usually acquired at birth	Interpreting and/or processing information
Intellectual	Dementia Traumatic brain injury	Acquired during lifetime, gradually or suddenly	Processing information Taking decisions Planning
Behavioural	Autism ADHD	Usually lifelong	Social communication Controlling behaviour
Memory	Dementia Learning disability	Associated with other conditions	Recalling information
Mental health condition	Anxiety Agoraphobia Depression	An illness which can fluctuate over time in its effect	Interacting with others Being confident

# Top 5 reasons for not using the bus

	Type of impairment					
	None	Learning	Intellectual	Behavioural	Memory	Mental health
1	Transport unavailable	Cost	Anxiety / lack of confidence	Anxiety / lack of confidence	Anxiety / lack of confidence	Anxiety / lack of confidence
2	Cost	Transport unavailable	Cost	Cost	Difficulty getting on or off the bus	Cost
3	Other reasons	Anxiety / lack of confidence	Overcrowding	Overcrowding	Cost	Transport unavailable
4	Delay and disruption to service	Other reasons	Transport unavailable	Delay and disruption to service	Difficulty getting to stop	Difficulty getting on or off the bus
5	Too busy / not enough time	Delay and disruption to service	Attitudes of passengers	Fear of crime	Difficulty getting from stop to destination	Difficulty getting from stop to destination

# What causes anxiety and lack of confidence during a journey?

Causes of anxiety and lack of confidence

A flowchart diagram with a central box at the top containing the text 'Causes of anxiety and lack of confidence'. Two large, light blue arrows point downwards from this box to two separate boxes below. The left box contains the text 'Finding the way (and not getting lost)' and the right box contains the text 'Interacting with other people'.

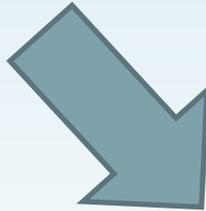
Finding the way  
(and not getting lost)

Interacting with  
other people

# How do people find the way (and not get lost)?

Recall information  
from memory

Perceive and interpret  
information from the environment



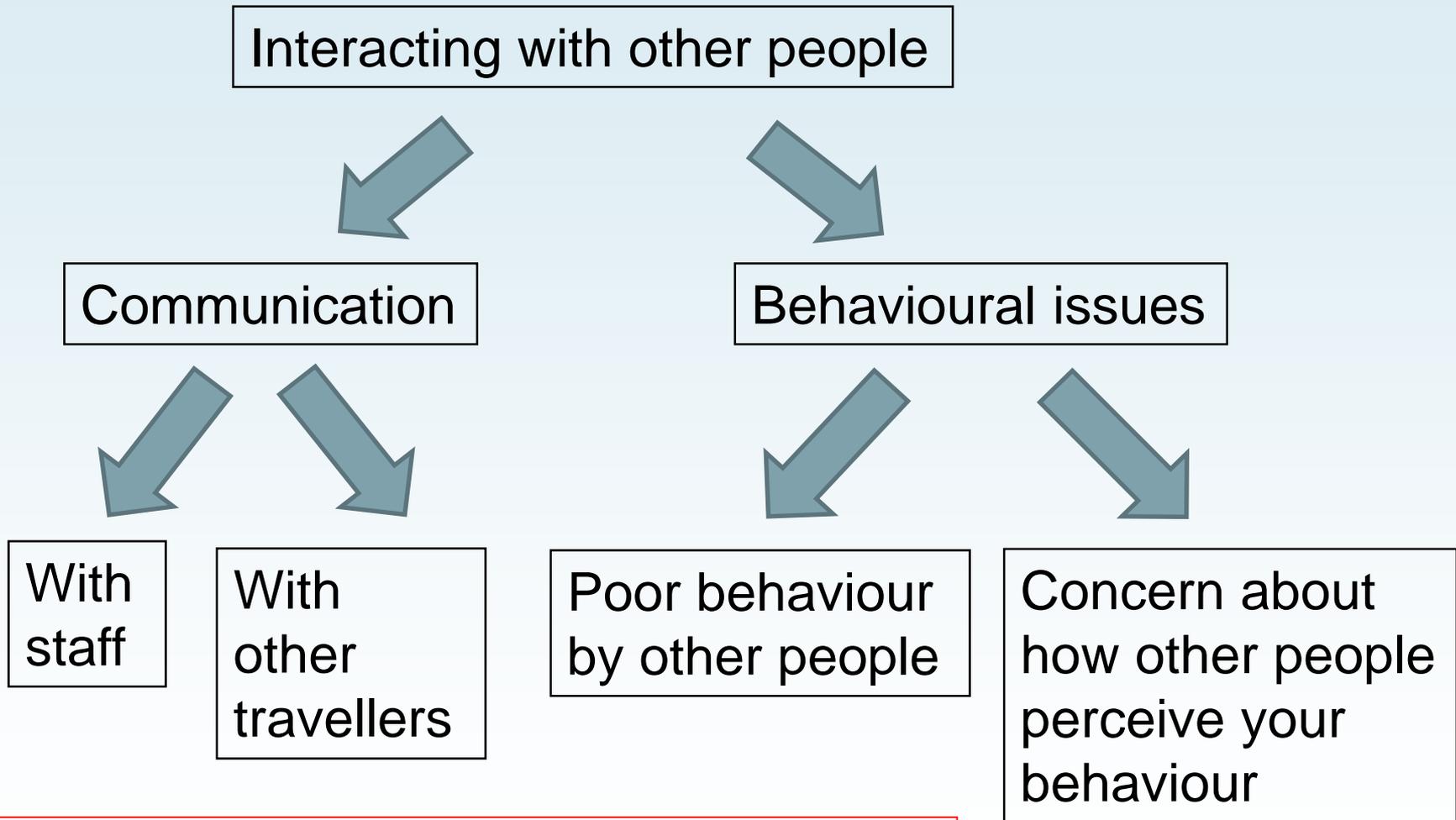
Process the information



Make decisions -  
turn left, turn right,  
decide what to do if lost etc.

People with  
mental  
impairments  
may have  
difficulty with  
these processes

# Interacting with other people



These are also areas where people with mental impairments may have difficulties

# How can things be improved?

Finding the way and not getting lost

- Enhance the skills of the traveller
  - Travel training
  - Providing experience in travelling
- 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

## More ways to improve things

- Provide electronic information
  - AVI (audio-visual information) on buses and trains
  - Mobile phone apps
- Provide support when lost
  - Safe Places
  - Herbert Protocol
- Improve communication with staff
  - Staff training
  - Travel assistance cards
- Improve communication with other travellers
  - Schemes like 'Please offer me a seat'
  - Campaigns to educate the public

## Further information

- See the report ‘Building confidence – Improving travel for people with mental impairments’, available 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](mailto: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.