

# *2024 Matrix Innovation Awards*

Incident resilience training and  
support to manage cumulative  
vicarious trauma

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# Warnings about this presentation

- Refers to death and serious injury.
- Includes images and text related to fatal crashes.

# About our Matrix Award application

- Need for the intervention.
- Innovative thinking involved.
- Effectiveness of the intervention.
- Benefits to transport system users.



# Need for the intervention

- In the last five years (2019 - 2023) 1,699 people were killed and 11,919 were seriously injured on NZ roads.
- This total of 13,618 is not just a number; it represents partners, parents, children, friends, ... real people.
- A key part of our day job is to reduce death and serious injury on our roads.

# Need for the intervention

To do our day job we have to:

- Consider and talk about death and serious injury on a daily basis.
- Be at crash locations where people have died.

# Need for the intervention

- It's unusual for people whose job is not focused on "people caring" to deal with death and serious injury on a daily basis.
- For the practitioners involved in road safety work, our day job is not "normal".

Preventing this is  
our day job.

But every traumatic  
contact leaves a trace.

We bring past traces to  
each scene (contact);  
we take new traces  
from each scene.

Car v car.



Another  
contact,  
another trace.

Car v truck.





Another  
contact,  
another trace.

Car v car v car  
v car.



It's words as  
well as  
images.

More  
contacts,  
more traces.

*"The driver of Vehicle 1 was **fatally injured.**"*

*"The male **pedestrian died** at the crash site;  
the female pedestrian was **seriously injured ...**"*

*"The front seat passenger of Vehicle 2 was  
**fatally injured.**"*

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# Need for the intervention

- Transportation practitioners are repeatedly dealing with traumatic incidents.
- The cumulative vicarious (secondary) trauma from our work can lead to PTSD.

# Innovative thinking involved

- Road safety work is incredibly rewarding.
- But it can also be very confronting.
- WSP developed a four-tiered programme to protect our people against PTSD and support them while they use their technical skills to save road users.



# Innovative thinking involved

Four-tiered programme:

- Pre-exposure briefing.
- In-house senior “amateur” advisers.
- Group incident resilience training sessions.
- Psychological referrals.

# Effectiveness of the intervention

- Individual resilience plans established.
- Significantly improved our focus on looking out for ourselves and each other.
- Raised awareness across industry as clients and contractors from outside WSP have been involved in our training sessions.



# Effectiveness of the intervention

- Impractical to objectively measure the effectiveness of the intervention.
- Based on feedback received, the programme is very successful.
- We've identified a significant road safety challenge, that wasn't being considered or addressed, and produced a robust multi-level solution.



# Effectiveness of the intervention

- Significantly improved our ability to recognise when road safety work is adversely affecting our people.
- Mental health implications of road safety work are out of the shadows.
- We don't dwell on the implications, but they are routinely discussed as part of our day job.



# Benefits to transport system users

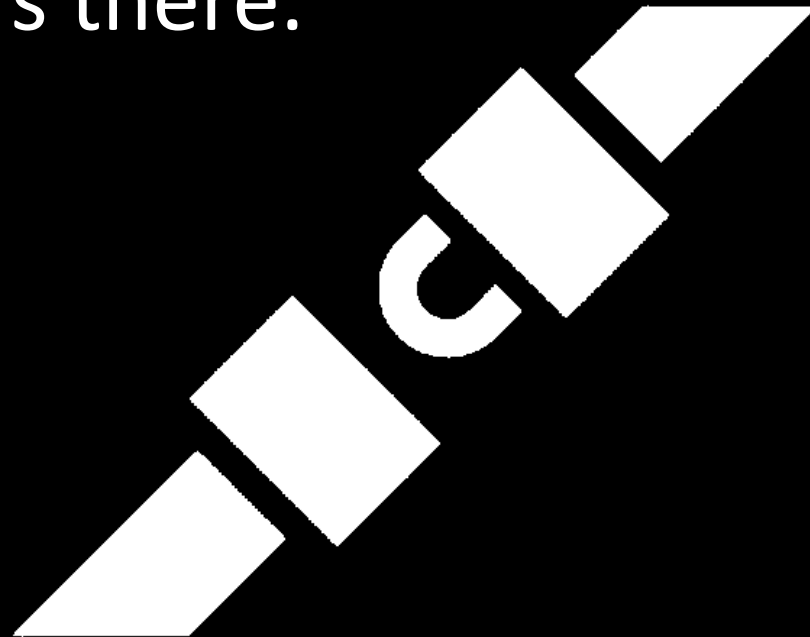
- The programme is readily adaptable by other organisations.
- Road safety practitioners are a critical part of reducing death and serious injury.
- Addresses the risk that people working to save lives need to have their own lives saved.

# Benefits to transport system users

- The programme recognises the vulnerability of technical practitioners who work to save the lives of road users.
- By supporting our practitioners, the programme benefits every road user saved (and their extended networks).

# Managing cumulative vicarious trauma is a bit like wearing a seat belt

Usually, you don't need it, and you hope you never do.  
But when it's required, it's there.



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