PTSD

from the train driver’s point of view

BARRY WALDING       Training and Safety Consultant - 1435 Consulting
a consideration the effects of stressors on train drivers

(and others close to them)
why are train drivers stressed?

work environment is unfriendly

enhanced exposure to risks to their safety

significant exposure to abnormal stressors
their work environment

24 hour / 7 days operation

isolated (frequently solitary)

noisy and subject to vibration

primarily sedentary activity
their work colleagues

a predominately older male workforce *

low rate of high school completion *

expectation of self reliance & high performance

* this is slowly changing
their work environment

it's a big, widespread Network

44,000 route kilometres

23,500 level crossings

(1 per 1,870 metres)

http://tracksafefoundation.com.au
their work environment

one significant and unique attribute
(not common in any other transport medium)

assisted suicide
(rail-assisted suicide)
rail-assisted suicide
directly engages another person to undertake the final act of terminating life

(No worker expects to kill another person at work)

but how realistic is this possibility?
150 successful suicide incidents on the Australian Railway Network (annually)


* approximately
900 additional failed or aborted suicide attempts (annually)

*http://tracksafefoundation.com.au/*

* estimated
about 58 hours between each successful suicide incident
rail level crossing collisions

train collisions with road vehicles

train collisions with pedestrians

(at a public level crossing)

actually less common than rail suicides

https://www.onrsr.com.au
69

level crossing collisions on the Australian Railway Network (annually)

* www.carrsq.qut.edu.au/publications/corporate/level_crossing_fs
who is the victim?

the driver

a worker just going about their normal day at work

what are the effects?
post trauma effects

fear
guilt
isolation
helplessness
loss of confidence

anger
who else is a victim?
the driver's

families

relationships

workmates
peers and managers supporter or contributor?

“You couldn't be seen to be weak with your workmates they'd tell you .... ”

“Well, (so and so), he's had 7 prangs, and he's all right ..... so what's wrong with you?”

the driver’s perspective

“who of you really has any idea of what actually goes on in a train drivers mind after he has seen that look in a persons eyes just before they die?“

a train driver

not a soldier

not a law enforcement officer

what do we know of their world?
the driver’s perspective

..... you keep walking back, and then you see something ....

the torchlight leads you to a bloody mess ....

... you want to look away, but you can’t ....

... and the vision that confronts you, becomes part of you.