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Supporting employees in a post-terror environment

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French companies have been on a steep learning curve following the terrorist attacks on Paris last year. One issue they have had to deal with is helping employees cope with trauma caused by the tragic events, whether they were directly affected by the atrocities or not. Commercial Risk Europe spoke to a range of experts on the best way for risk managers, human resources (HR) and their firms to deal with this tricky issue.

The series of shootings that resulted in the deaths of 130 civilians in Paris on 13 November was the second terrorist attack on the French capital in 2015. It followed the shootings at Charlie Hebdo last January. The attacks created fear among French citizens, who had not witnessed such atrocities for around two decades.

Following the attacks, a number of French companies were praised for organising memorial ceremonies to remember the victims and providing psychological support to workers who felt threatened or saddened by the tragic events.

But there were also reports of organisations choosing to downplay the attacks and discouraging their discussion at work.

According to experts interviewed by Commercial Risk Europe, this second approach is not the best response.

“Denial is not the best way to deal with this kind of problem,” says Bruno Lefebvre, a Paris-based psychologist and consultant. “Even if a company’s employees were not directly affected, this would be the wrong road to take.”

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