

MENTAL WELLBEING

For Hospitality Workers



WHY MENTAL WELLBEING MATTERS

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.

When you're mentally well, you:

- Handle stress better
- Enjoy work and life more
- Build stronger relationships
- Think more clearly
- Feel more resilient

RECOGNISE THE WARNING SIGNS

You might be struggling if you:

- Feel overwhelmed or unable to cope
- Have trouble sleeping (or sleep too much)
- Feel constantly tired or lacking energy
- Lose interest in things you usually enjoy
- Withdraw from friends and family
- Feel irritable, angry, or numb
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Experience physical symptoms (headaches, stomach issues)
- Have thoughts of self-harm

If you're experiencing several of these, it's time to reach out for support.

COMMON MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN HOSPITALITY

Burnout: Emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion from prolonged stress. Signs include cynicism, detachment, and feeling ineffective.

Anxiety: Excessive worry, panic attacks, racing thoughts, or constant nervousness that interferes with daily life.

Depression: Persistent low mood, loss of interest, hopelessness, and difficulty functioning.

Stress: While some stress is normal, chronic stress damages your health and wellbeing.

Mental health challenges are common in all industries, including in hospitality. The good news is they can be treated. You're not alone, and help is available.

QUICK COPING STRATEGIES

When stress hits – Box breathing:

- Breathe in for 4 counts
- Hold for 4 counts
- Breathe out for 4 counts
- Hold for 4 counts
- Repeat 4 times

When anxiety overwhelms – 5-4-3-2-1 grounding:

- Name 5 things you can see
- Name 4 things you can touch
- Name 3 things you can hear
- Name 2 things you can smell
- Name 1 thing you can taste

When thoughts race – thought challenging:

- Notice the thought
- Is it true? What's the evidence?
- What would you tell a friend thinking this?
- What's a more balanced thought?

DAILY MENTAL HEALTH HABITS

Do these regularly:

- Connect with people who care about you
- Move your body (exercise helps mental health)
- Sleep enough (7-9 hours)
- Eat regular, balanced meals
- Limit alcohol (it worsens mental health)
- Practice gratitude (write down 3 good things daily)
- Do activities you enjoy
- Set boundaries (it's okay to say no)

SELF-CARE FOR HOSPITALITY WORKERS

Self-care isn't selfish. It's essential.

Simple Self-Care Ideas:

- Take your breaks (seriously, take them)
- Spend time in nature
- Listen to music or podcasts
- Read a book
- Have a relaxing bath
- Cook a nice meal
- Watch something funny
- Practice a hobby
- Call a friend
- Do absolutely nothing (rest is productive)

Set boundaries:

- Don't always say yes to extra shifts
- Protect your days off
- Leave work at work (don't check messages on days off)
- Be honest about your capacity

WHEN TO GET PROFESSIONAL HELP

Talk to your GP if:

- Symptoms persist for more than 2 weeks
- You're struggling to cope with daily life
- Your mental health affects work or relationships
- You're using alcohol or drugs to cope
- You have thoughts of self-harm

Your GP can:

- Assess your mental health
- Create a Mental Health Care Plan (up to 10 subsidised psychology sessions)
- Prescribe medication if needed
- Refer you to specialists

CRISIS SUPPORT (AVAILABLE 24/7)

If you're in crisis, reach out immediately:

Lifeline – 13 11 14

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

Depression, anxiety, and mental health support

MensLine Australia – 1300 78 99 78

Support for men

Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800

For young people aged 5-25

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

24/7 support for anyone affected by suicide

Emergency – 000

If you or someone else is in immediate danger

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Many workplaces offer free, confidential counselling. Ask your employer if EAP is available.

Talk to Your Manager

If work is affecting your mental health, speak up. Good employers want to support you.

YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

This week I will:

- Practice one coping strategy daily
- Connect with a friend or family member
- Take all my breaks at work
- Do one thing I enjoy
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep most nights

This month I will:

- Talk to someone I trust about how I'm feeling
- Book a GP appointment for a mental health check
- Save crisis support numbers in my phone
- Start a daily gratitude practice
- Set one healthy boundary

REMEMBER:

- Mental health challenges are common and treatable
- Asking for help is a sign of strength
- You don't have to handle everything alone
- Recovery is possible – you matter

