

# Debrief Script After a Difficult Shift

 [healthymindmenu.au](https://healthymindmenu.au)

 Back of House, Front of Mind Podcast

 @healthymindmenu



A debrief helps staff process challenging moments, reset emotionally, and finish the shift feeling supported.

This script is designed for supervisors to use after customer incidents, intense service periods, or emotionally draining shifts.

# Why Debriefs Matter

- Reduces stress and prevents burnout
- Helps staff feel heard and valued
- Improves teamwork and communication
- Supports psychological safety
- Encourages reflection and learning

# When to Run a Debrief

- After customer aggression or conflict
- After an unusually busy or stressful service
- When staff appear upset, overwhelmed or fatigued
- At the end of a shift where emotions ran high

# The Debrief Script (3–5 Minutes)

- Settle & Normalise
- What Happened
- How People Are Feeling
- Support & Adjustments
- Highlight Team Strengths
- Close With Care

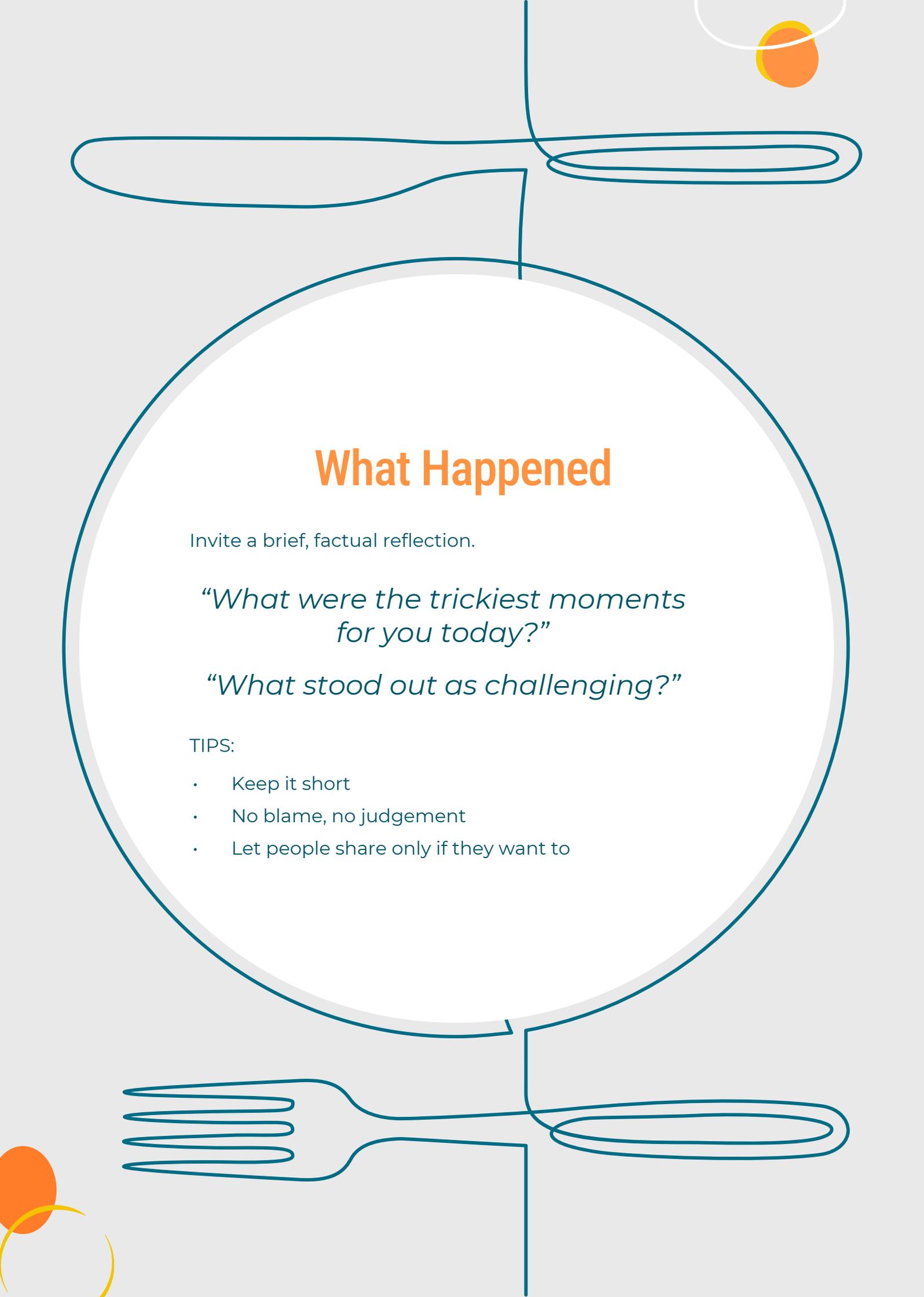


## Settle & Normalise

*“Thanks everyone — that was a tough shift. Let’s take a minute to check in and reset before we head home.”*

Optional grounding moment:

*“One slow group breath in... and a long breath out for our nervous systems. We want to make sure we get out of that fight/flight response and create a sense of safety”*



## What Happened

Invite a brief, factual reflection.

*“What were the trickiest moments  
for you today?”*

*“What stood out as challenging?”*

TIPS:

- Keep it short
- No blame, no judgement
- Let people share only if they want to



## How People Are Feeling

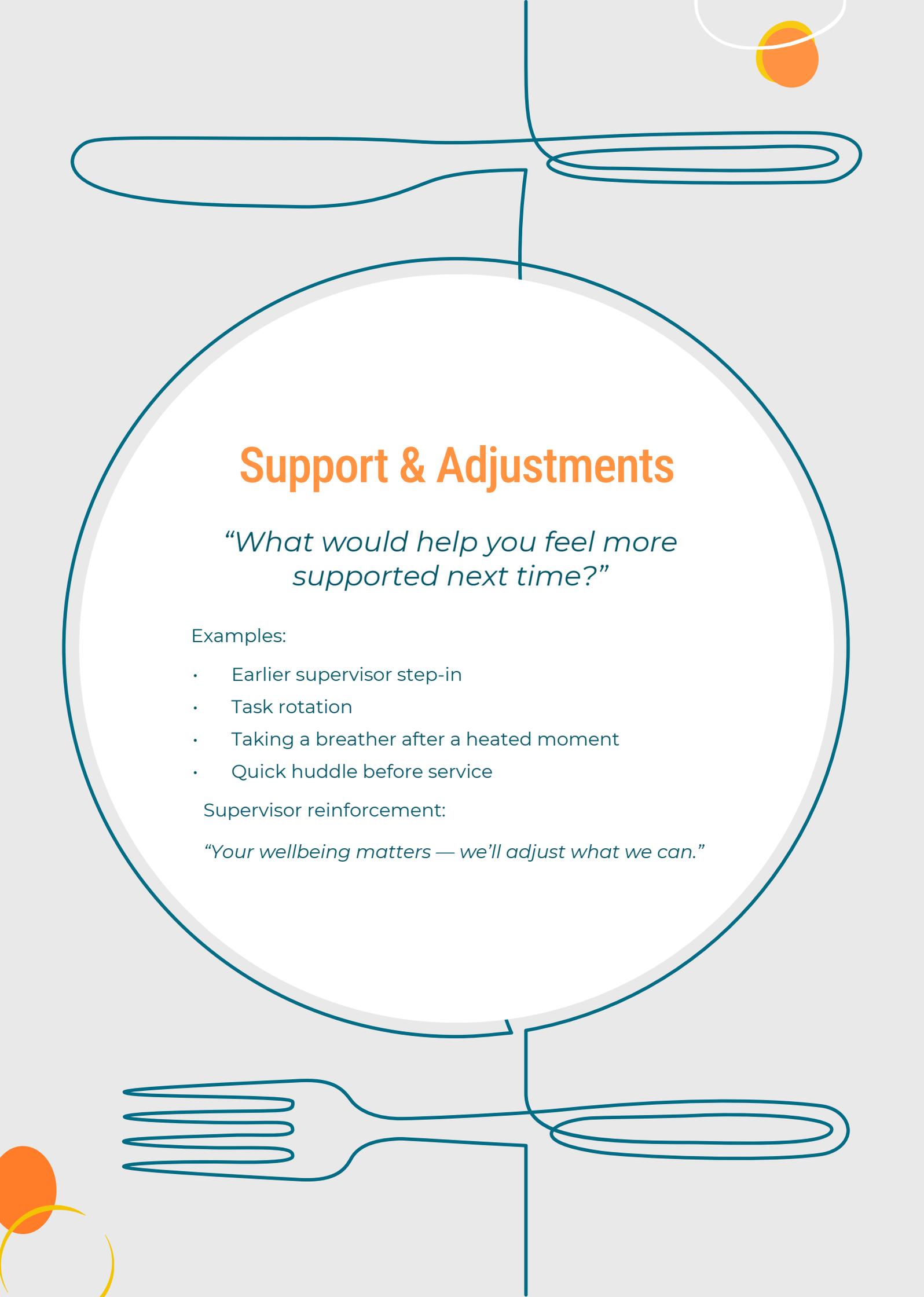
*“How’s everyone feeling right now?”*

Examples:

- Drained
- Frustrated
- Proud of the team
- Tired but okay
- Still feeling shaky

If someone is distressed:

*“Thanks for sharing — let’s chat privately after this, if that’s okay?”*



## Support & Adjustments

*“What would help you feel more supported next time?”*

Examples:

- Earlier supervisor step-in
- Task rotation
- Taking a breather after a heated moment
- Quick huddle before service

Supervisor reinforcement:

*“Your wellbeing matters — we’ll adjust what we can.”*



## Highlight Team Strengths

*“Before we wrap up — what went well today?”*

Examples:

- Calm handling of a difficult customer
- Clear communication
- Quick teamwork during pressure

Supervisor closing:

*“You handled that with real professionalism — thank you.”*



## Close with Care

*“Thanks everyone — take care of yourselves tonight.”*

*“If anything comes up later, you can always reach out.”*

# Signs Someone May Need Extra Support

- Tearfulness
- Shaking or agitation
- Withdrawal
- Repeating the incident
- Difficulty calming down

Next steps if needed:

- One-on-one chat
- Use support cards
- Pause before leaving to regulate emotions
- Suggest MHERL or professional supports for significant distress

## Tips for Supervisors

- Keep your tone warm and steady
- Avoid judgement or “fixing”
- Focus on validation
- Keep it short and supportive
- Follow up next shift

### Download More Tools

Access posters, scripts and wellbeing resources through the Healthy Mind Menu Online Hub.

[healthymindmenu.org.au](https://healthymindmenu.org.au)