



Toolkit for Promoting Mental Health & Wellbeing in Hospitality

A Practical Guide for Employers and
Small Business Owners

Created by Healthy Mind Menu, informed by Edith Cowan
University and Australian workplace mental health frameworks.

 healthymindmenu.au

 Back of House, Front of Mind Podcast

 @healthymindmenu





About Healthy Mind Menu

Healthy Mind Menu was created by top chefs, industry leaders and mental health advocates to strengthen mental wellbeing in Western Australia's hospitality industry. As a charity, we identify challenges in the workplace and develop practical tools and evidence-based support for hospitality staff, managers and venue owners.

Learn more: healthymindmenu.org.au

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is how we think, feel and cope with daily life. It affects stress management, relationships and performance at work.

Mental health sits on a continuum, from thriving to struggling to unwell.

Mental illness refers to diagnosable conditions such as depression or anxiety, but many staff experience distress without a formal diagnosis.

For hospitality venues, understanding this spectrum helps reduce stigma, encourages early support and guides managers in responding compassionately and appropriately.





Why Mental Health Matters in Hospitality

Hospitality is fast-paced, high-contact and emotionally demanding. These pressures increase the risk of stress, burnout, anxiety and turnover, impacting customer experience, safety and business performance.

The Business Case at a Glance

Impact

What It Means for Venues

Turnover

High turnover (often >30%) costs up to 30% of annual salary per replacement.

Presenteeism

Working while unwell costs up to 5× more than absenteeism.

Customer expectations

Emotional labour + customer incivility increase stress and errors.

Legal obligations

WHS Act 2020 (WA) requires venues to manage psychosocial risks.

Financial impact

Poor mental health costs Australian workplaces \$20 billion per year.

Return on Investment:

Every **\$1 invested** in mental health returns **\$2.30–\$4.00** in productivity and reduced sick leave.

Quick Win:

A mentally healthy venue = stronger culture, better service and improved retention.



Top Mental Health Risks in Hospitality

Based on WA hospitality research (ECU 2023–2024), the most significant psychosocial risks include:

- Customer abuse & aggression
- Emotional labour (“always smiling”)
- Irregular hours, fatigue & poor sleep
- Workplace bullying or unclear expectations
- Job insecurity & financial pressure
- Work–life conflict & limited roster control

These are the primary WHS psychosocial hazards for hospitality venues.

Legal Duties Made Simple

Under the **Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)** employers must:

- Identify psychosocial risks (bullying, fatigue, workload).
- Consult with staff.
- Put controls in place (fair rosters, clear expectations, anti-bullying measures).
- Provide information, tools & training.
- Review regularly.

Small Business Compliance Checklist

- Clear roles & expectations
- Anti-bullying/harassment policy
- Fair roster practices
- A trained “go-to” person (ideally Mental Health First Aid-trained)
- Support cards displayed back-of-house
- Staff know how to seek help
- Regular wellbeing talks/check-ins

Failure to manage psychosocial risks can lead to penalties and staff harm — 9% of all injury claims nationally relate to mental health.

WorkSafe WA: www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe

What Good Looks Like: Protective Factors

ECU research highlights five key protective factors that buffer stress and strengthen wellbeing:

- Supportive co-worker relationships
- Workplace fun & social connection
- Feeling valued & having a clear professional identity
- Fair, respectful leadership
- Inclusive culture & transparent communication

Simple ways to build these in small venues:

- Weekly 5-minute huddles
- Celebrate wins (“Wellbeing Champion of the Week”)
- Rotate tasks fairly
- Ask for staff input on rosters, breaks, menus or service flow



Practical Actions for Small Venues

<i>Action</i>	<i>Impact</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Display support & crisis numbers	Normalises help-seeking	5 min	\$0
Run weekly 5-minute check-ins	Builds safety & connection	Weekly	\$0
Clarify roles & expectations	Reduces anxiety	1 hr	\$0
Add “Please respect our staff” signage	Reduces customer incivility	10 min	\$0
Use an HMM podcast in team meeting	Opens conversation	15 min	\$0
Book a HMM wellbeing workshop	Skill-building	2 hrs	Low
Offer flexibility (shift swaps, early finishes)	Improves retention	Ongoing	\$0
Team bonding activity	Builds connection	Monthly	\$0
Enrol managers in HMM Leadership Course	Culture shift	Self-paced	\$250pp
MHFA training for supervisors	Crisis prevention	2 days	Med
Join HMM Membership	Tools & support	Annual	Tiered



Supporting Staff Through Mental Health Challenges

Signs of Struggle

- Irritability or tiredness
- Withdrawal
- Changes in performance
- Heightened emotional reactions
- Comments about stress or burnout

The 3-Step Approach

- **Notice** — “I’ve noticed you seem stressed lately.”
- **Ask** — “Is anything impacting you that we can support with?”
- **Guide** — Support cards, GP, MHFA-trained leader, crisis lines.

Your Oxygen Mask First

Owners and managers in hospitality experience high burnout. You can only support your team if you protect your own wellbeing.

Manager support ideas:

- Peer industry networks
- Time-off strategies
- Leadership programs
- Knowing when to seek help (GP, psychologist, EAP alternatives)

Crisis Quick Guide

If someone is in crisis:

- Stay calm
- Ensure safety
- Listen without judgement
- Ask directly about risk
- Call **000** if immediate danger
- Contact **MHERL** for guidance and next steps: 1300 555 788 (Metro) | 1800 676 822 (Peel)

Getting Started: Your Quick Start Guide for Employers

Most venues can begin improving mental health with a few simple steps.

The 5 Essential Starting Points

1. **Display support cards & crisis contacts** in staff areas
2. **Begin weekly 5-minute wellbeing check-ins**
3. **Review rosters** for fairness, fatigue and predictable scheduling
4. **Nominate a wellbeing champion** to coordinate small actions
5. **Choose ONE HMM resource** to start with (podcast, workshop, course)



Your Free Healthy Mind Menu Online Hub

Access ready-to-use downloadable resources:

- Posters
- Fact sheets
- Conversation scripts
- Emergency & Helpful Resources
- Checklists
- Staff self-support tools
- Templates for onboarding and meetings

This hub gives you everything needed to start implementing change today.

Grow Your Venue's Wellbeing Culture with HMM Membership

For venues ready to embed wellbeing long-term, the Healthy Mind Menu Membership offers:

- Accreditation materials
- Advanced tools & templates
- Discounts on workshops & MHFA
- Leadership support
- Priority event access
- Co-branding options
- Ongoing guidance from the HMM team

Membership supports venues at every stage- from first steps to full culture shift.

Learn more on our website.





A Culture of Care

You don't need to overhaul your venue overnight.

You just need to start with one small, visible action.

Every step you take helps your team feel safer, more supported and more valued.

And that leads to better service, stronger culture, improved retention, and a healthier business.