

JUNE 2025

# An Introduction to Psychological Health & Safety in Emergencies:

## Implementing a People-centred Approach to Crisis Preparedness

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June 19, 2025



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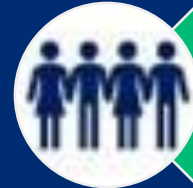
# WHO WE ARE

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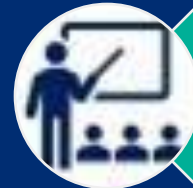
go2HR is BC's  
tourism and  
hospitality  
human resource  
and health &  
safety  
association



Health & Safety



Human Resources



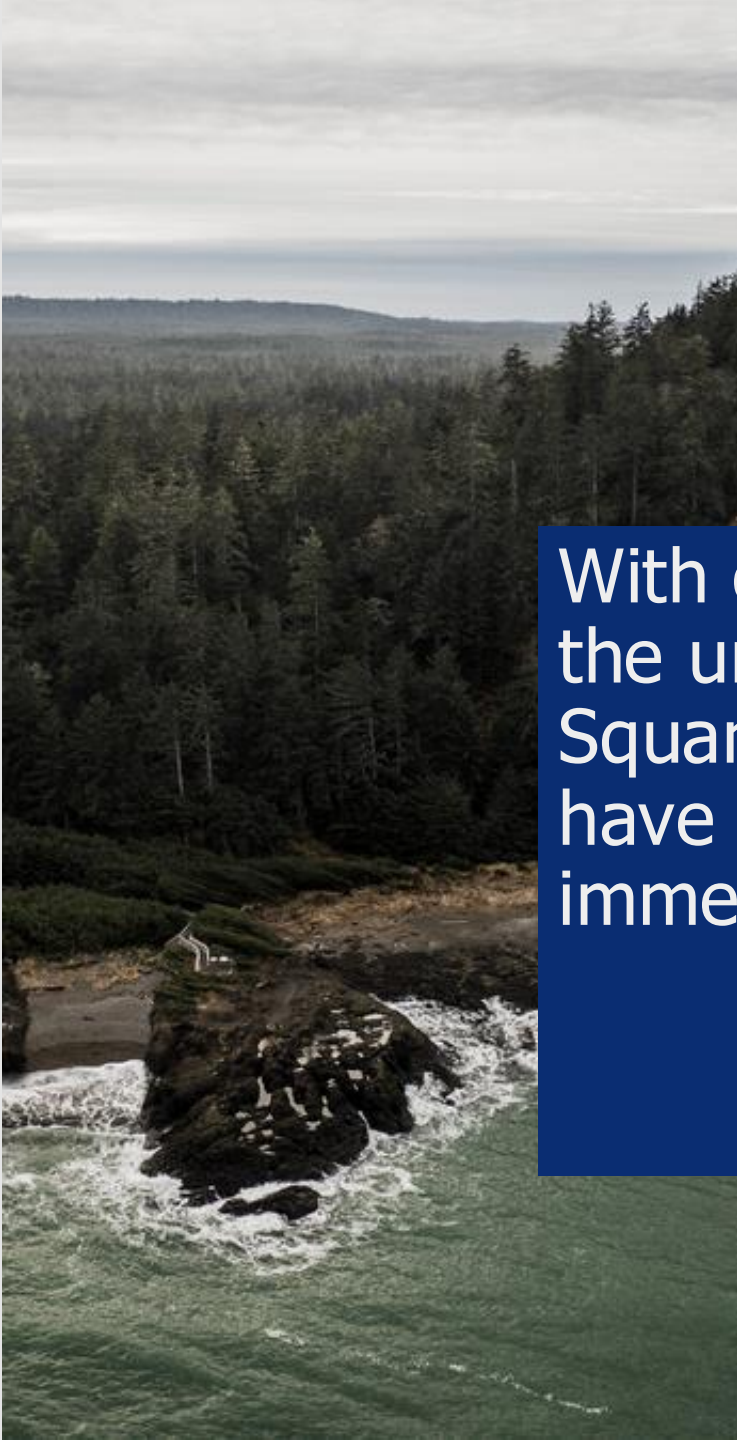
Industry Training



Research and Strategy

go2HR exists to drive **strong workforces and safe workplaces** to deliver world-class tourism and hospitality experiences in BC





With gratitude, we recognize that we are on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples, who have cared for this land since time immemorial.



# TODAY'S PATH

- Understand key considerations to proactively prepare for potential emergencies or crisis situations.
- Explore the mental health impacts of anticipating, experiencing, and processing emergencies
- Learn how to build team resilience and confidence through training, awareness, and effective communication.
- Discover practical strategies, supports, and resources to promote mental well-being



# Did you know?

In 2024, over 1,600 wildfires burned nearly 1 million hectares across BC, disrupting travel, damaging tourism infrastructure, and forcing more than 7,000 residents to evacuate during peak visitor season.



# POLL #1

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How confident do you feel in your current ability to support your team's psychological health and safety during a crisis?

- A) Very Confident
- B) Somewhat Confident
- C) A Little Confident
- D) Not Confident



# Let's break it down.



## **Organization (system & leadership direction):**

- Business policies/procedures, strategic direction, mandates, decision-making.



## **Team/Peer-to-Peer (care & understanding for peers):**

- Daily interactions, team work/collegiality, care for our colleagues.



## **Individual (care & understanding of self):**

- Care for ourselves/emotional awareness, courses/training, exercise, mindfulness, diet, taking consistent breaks, coaching/counselling.

# What is Psychological Health & Safety?

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# Why does PH&S matter?

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1. Allows for workplaces to respond more effectively
2. Prevents long-term mental health impacts
3. Part of the employer's legal and ethical duty of care



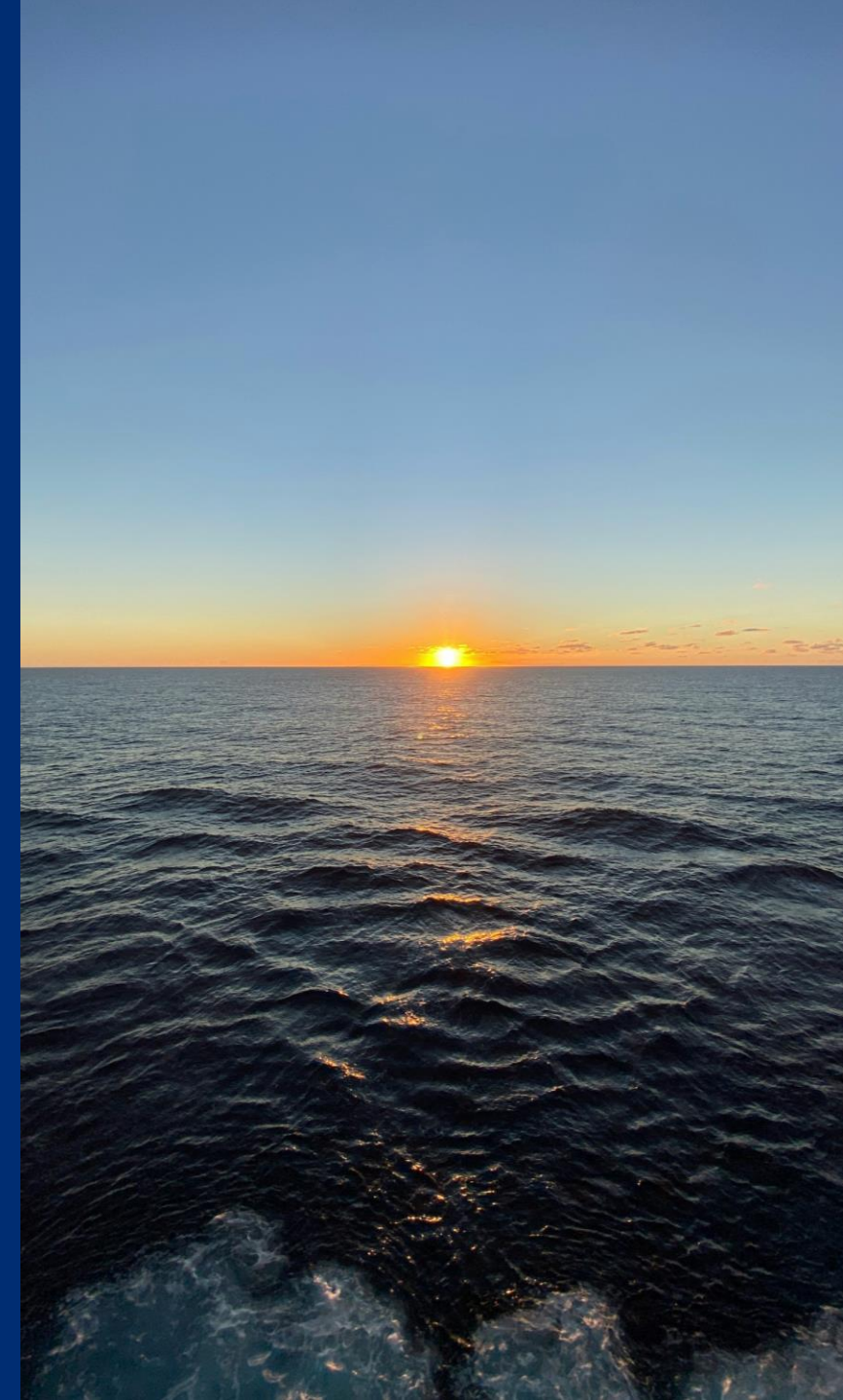
# Phase 1: Before the Crisis

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1. Conduct a **risk assessment**: identify physical and psychosocial hazards; control for them in your crisis response plan

**\*Helpful Resource:** [People Working Well Course: Identifying Hazards, Mitigating Risks](#)

2. Develop a Crisis Response Plan - gather and include team perspectives
3. Offer **Mental Health First Aid** training to all staff (identify team champions)
4. Establish clear crisis communication channels
5. Normalize well-being conversations



## Phase 2: During the Crisis

1. Follow Crisis Response Plan
2. Clear communication
3. Provide practical supports
4. Maintain routine (if possible)
5. Regular leadership presence and check-ins.
6. Acknowledge and validate emotions





# POLL #2

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During an emergency, which communication strategy do you believe would be most effective in supporting employee well-being?

- A) Daily video updates from leadership
- B) Regular text messages/email alerts
- C) Creating a dedicated crisis communication webpage or social media account
- D) Individual phone calls/check-ins with leaders



# How do you make your staff feel seen, heard & understood?

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# Your “go2” mental health framework

**See:** recognize changes in behaviour or mood

**Say:** start a caring, non-judgmental conversation

**Support:** offer access to appropriate resources

**Self-care:** look after your own mental health



# SEE

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## What are clues that someone might be having a tough time?

- 1) Behavioural Cues
- 2) Work Performance
- 3) Social Changes
- 4) Physical health and wellness

### Helpful Resource:

[People Working Well Safety Talk: Asking for Help](#)



# SAY

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- 1) Choose the right moment
- 2) Be compassionate & calm
- 3) Active listening
- 4) Use non-judgmental language

## **Helpful Resources:**

[Language Matters](#)

[Mental Health Continuum](#)



# SAY

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“How have you been holding up since everything happened?”

“What’s been sitting with you since the incident occurred?”

“Many people find events like what just happened overwhelming, is that something you’re experiencing, too?”

“Everyone processes things differently. Whatever you’re feeling is valid.”

“Let me know if there's anything you'd like to share about your experience, I'm all ears.”

# SUPPORT

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- Familiarize yourself with the available wellness resources and training to relay to others
- Normalize getting help
- Offer help
- Respect boundaries





# SELF-CARE – what do I need?

Take a moment to process the situation.

## **ASK YOURSELF:**

“Do I need a minute to pause and reset?”

“Should I reach out to a peer to debrief?”

“Am I feeling grounded and professional to keep supporting others?”



# Phase 3: Post-Crisis

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- Encourage peer-to-peer support
- Lessons Learned: hold post-crisis debriefings to improve future emergency planning
- Keep sharing EFAP and other well-being resources
- Communicate clearly, frequently, and often
- Celebrate staff resilience and courage



# Phase 3: Post-Crisis – Critical Incident Response

Coordinate Critical Incident Response Services

**\*Access via Employee Family Assistance Program (EFAP)  
or WorkSafeBC.**

- Provides immediate emotional support after serious incidents (e.g. violence, medical emergencies, accidents)
- Reduces long-term mental health impacts through early intervention
- Delivered by trained peers or professionals – not counselling, serves as short-term support
- Normalizes reactions and promotes recovery
- Format: group debriefs, one-on-one check-ins, or referrals to further help





# Phase 3: Post-Crisis – Signs of a Critical Incident

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A critical incident is any sudden, unexpected event that is emotionally intense and overwhelms a worker's ability to cope in the moment.

## Examples:

- Natural disasters that require evacuation
- Acts of violence/threats to safety
- Accidents involving guests and/or staff
- Medical emergencies or on-site casualties
- Major disruptions impacting guest care and safety – ie. power outage, widespread food/drink contamination



The background of the slide is a scenic photograph of a forest at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that filters through the trees. In the foreground, a paved path winds through the forest, and two cyclists are riding away from the viewer. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. A large, light blue rectangular box is centered on the slide, containing the title text.

# PHS & OHS Resources & Support



# Psychological Health & Safety Community Resources

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**Bounce Back BC** – mental health skill building program

**Employee Family Assistance Program**

**Get Support - People Working Well**

**Here to Help BC** – mental health information & resources

**KUU-US Crisis Line** – culturally safe support by and for First Nations & Indigenous Peoples

**Mind Your Mind** – resources, information & support for young adults

**Safety Talk: Asking for Help - People Working Well**

**MHCC: Language Matters** - promotes respectful, non-stigmatizing language around mental health.

**The Mental Health Continuum and Stages of Wellness - People Working Well**

**Workplace Strategies for Mental Health** – Psychological health & safety resources for employers



# Occupational Health & Safety Community Resources

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[CCOHS Emergency Preparedness for Workers](#)

[CCOHS Emergency Response Planning](#)

[Identifying Hazards and Mitigating Risks for Supervisors and Managers](#)

[WorkSafeBC Critical Incident Response](#)

[WorkSafeBC Emergency Planning & Response](#)

# Psychological Health & Safety (PHS) Advisory Services

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## 1:1 Support to help Industry Employers:

- Identify PHS hazards (e.g. bullying, harassment, violence, conflict, working alone) & manage risks
- Integrate PHS within existing OHS program
- Promote a psychologically safe workplace culture (e.g. open communication & worker engagement)
- Support workplace mental health challenges (e.g. stress, burnout)
- Recommend mental health & PHS training (e.g. People Working Well, Mental Health First Aid)
- Provide PHS & workplace mental health resources (e.g. Critical Incident Response program, BounceBack BC, EAP)

Let's Meet! [Contact us](#)



# People Working Well Website



If you are in need of immediate assistance please dial 9-1-1 or 9-8-8. You're not alone in this journey. Find more trusted [local resources](#).

**People  
Working  
Well**

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In partnership with go2HR

## People Working in Tourism & Hospitality

We want to help you and your workplace get the right support for mental health. Let's keep our communities strong together.

[Find Resources](#)



# Training Resources

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Psychological Health & Safety (PHS)  
Workplace Mental Health



Occupational Health & Safety





# Reflection

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What's one action you're feeling inspired to take after today's session?

*Image credit: Destination British Columbia*



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# THANK YOU!

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# Questions?

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*Image credit: Destination British Columbia*