

DECEMBER 9, 2025

SUPPORTING WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Practical Strategies for Tourism &
Hospitality Teams



BRANDY ZIMMERMAN

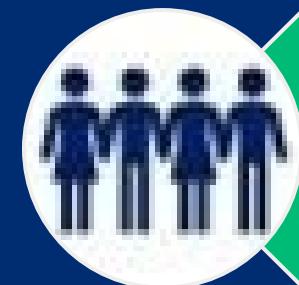


WHO WE ARE

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



Health & Safety



Human Resources



Industry Training



Research and Strategy

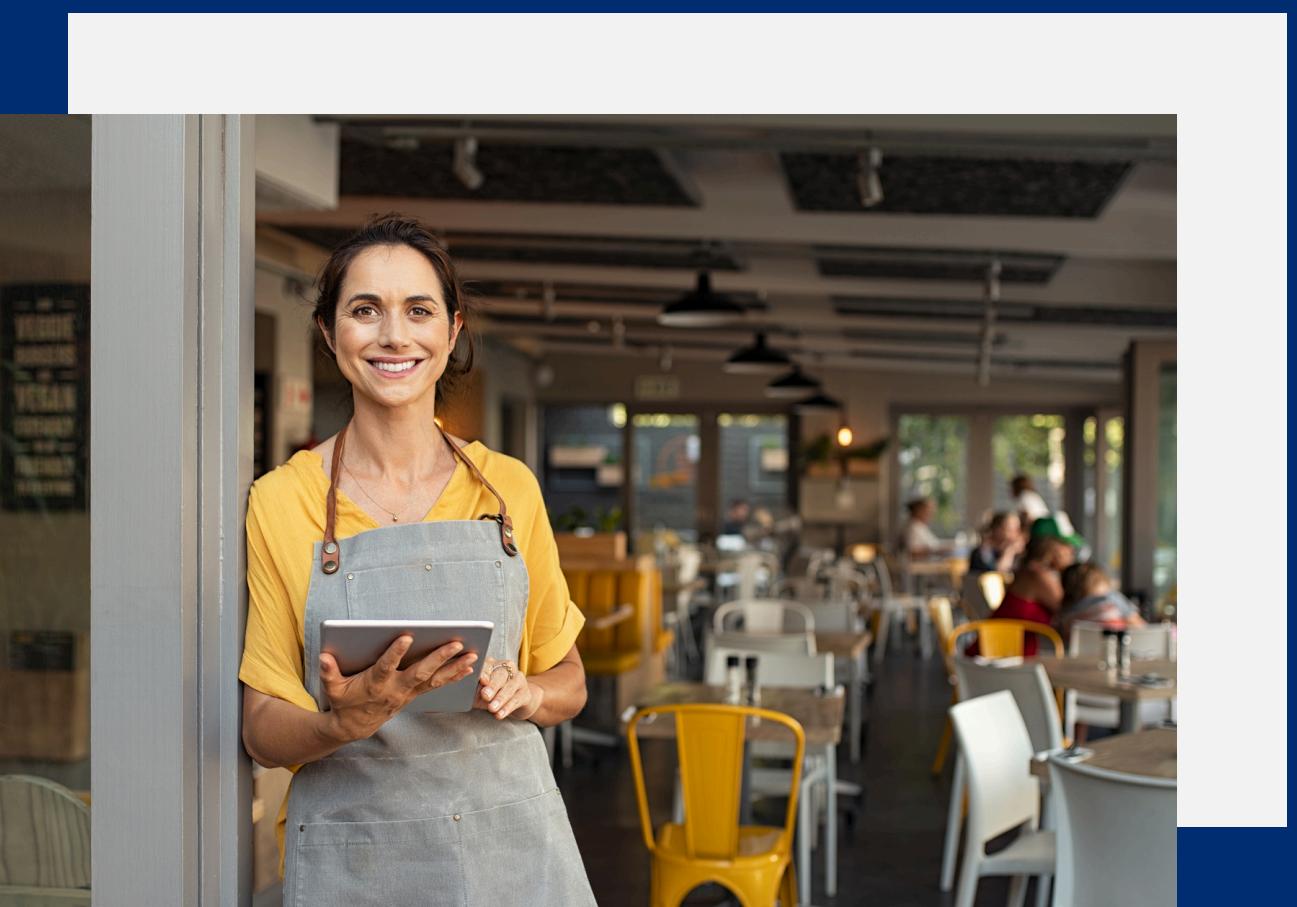
go2HR exists to drive **strong workforces and safe workplaces** to deliver world-class tourism and hospitality experiences in BC

go2HR®



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks for joining us!



WELCOME!

go2HR®



HOUSEKEEPING

- 60 minutes
- Cameras optional
- Questions welcome
- Recording available



THE HOLIDAY PARADOX

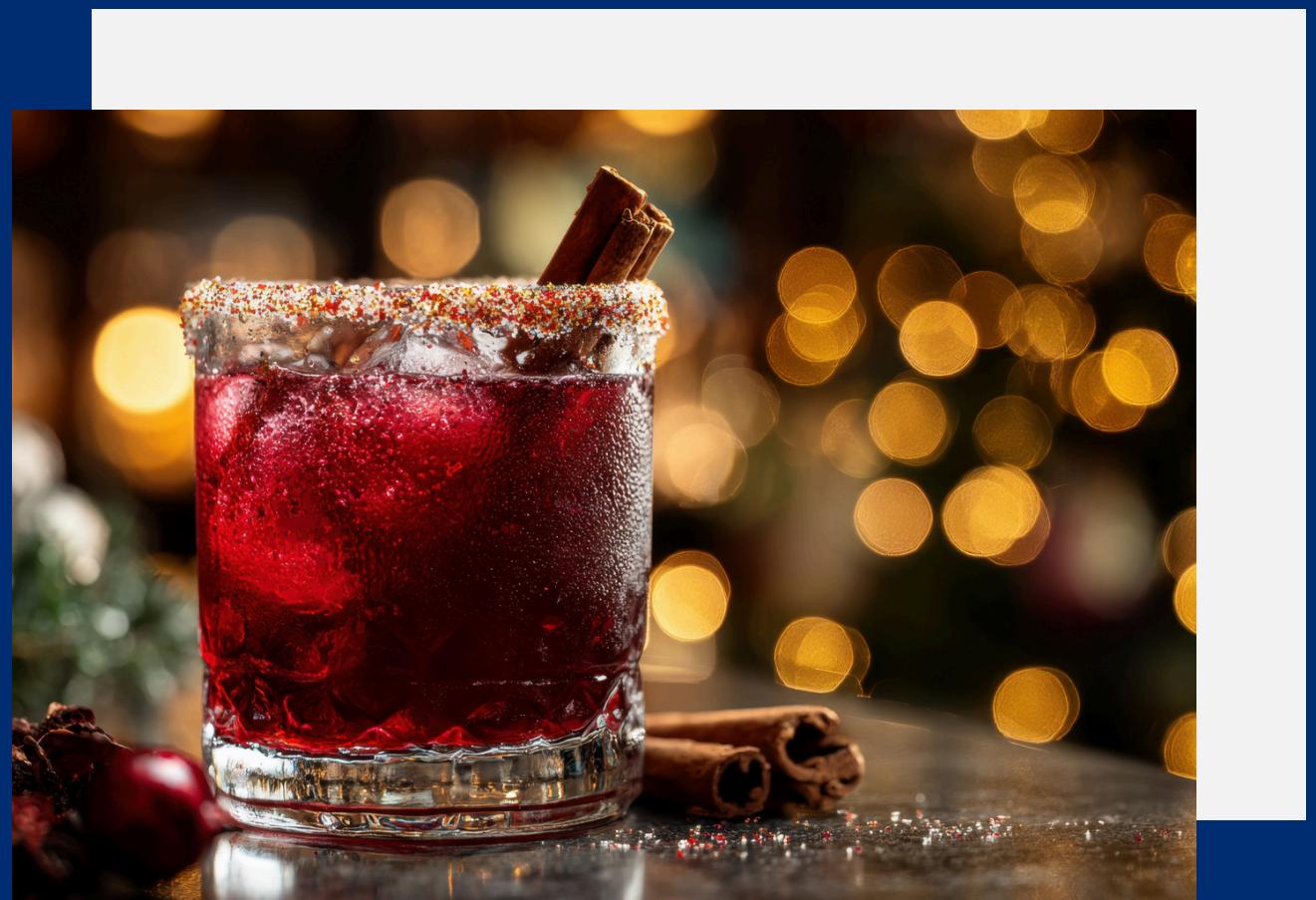
- We create joy for others during our most stressful time
- Peak demands collide with personal expectations
- Mental health challenges intensify during holidays
- Supporting wellbeing = sustainability, not luxury

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN TODAY

- **Identify** holiday-specific mental health challenges
- **Apply** role-appropriate support strategies
- **Recognize** warning signs and when to escalate
- **Implement** practical accommodations that work

Why the holidays are uniquely difficult in hospitality

HOLIDAY- SPECIFIC CHALLENGES



THE SIX CHALLENGES

Emotional Labour

- Serving others' joy while missing your own
- Performing happiness while depleted

Cumulative Fatigue

- Longer shifts, extended busy season
- Physical + emotional exhaustion = complete depletion

Image credit: Destination British Columbia

THE SIX CHALLENGES

Financial Stress

- Working in abundance while struggling financially
- Pressure to spend on hospitality wages

Isolation & Loneliness

- Working when everyone else gathers
- Social media amplifying what you're missing

Image credit: Destination British Columbia

THE SIX CHALLENGES

The Comparison Trap

- Instagram-perfect holidays vs. your reality
- Impossible standards creating guilt

Grief & Loss

- Holidays amplify existing pain
- Pressure to be cheerful while grieving

Image credit: Destination British Columbia

THE PRESSURES ARE
REAL



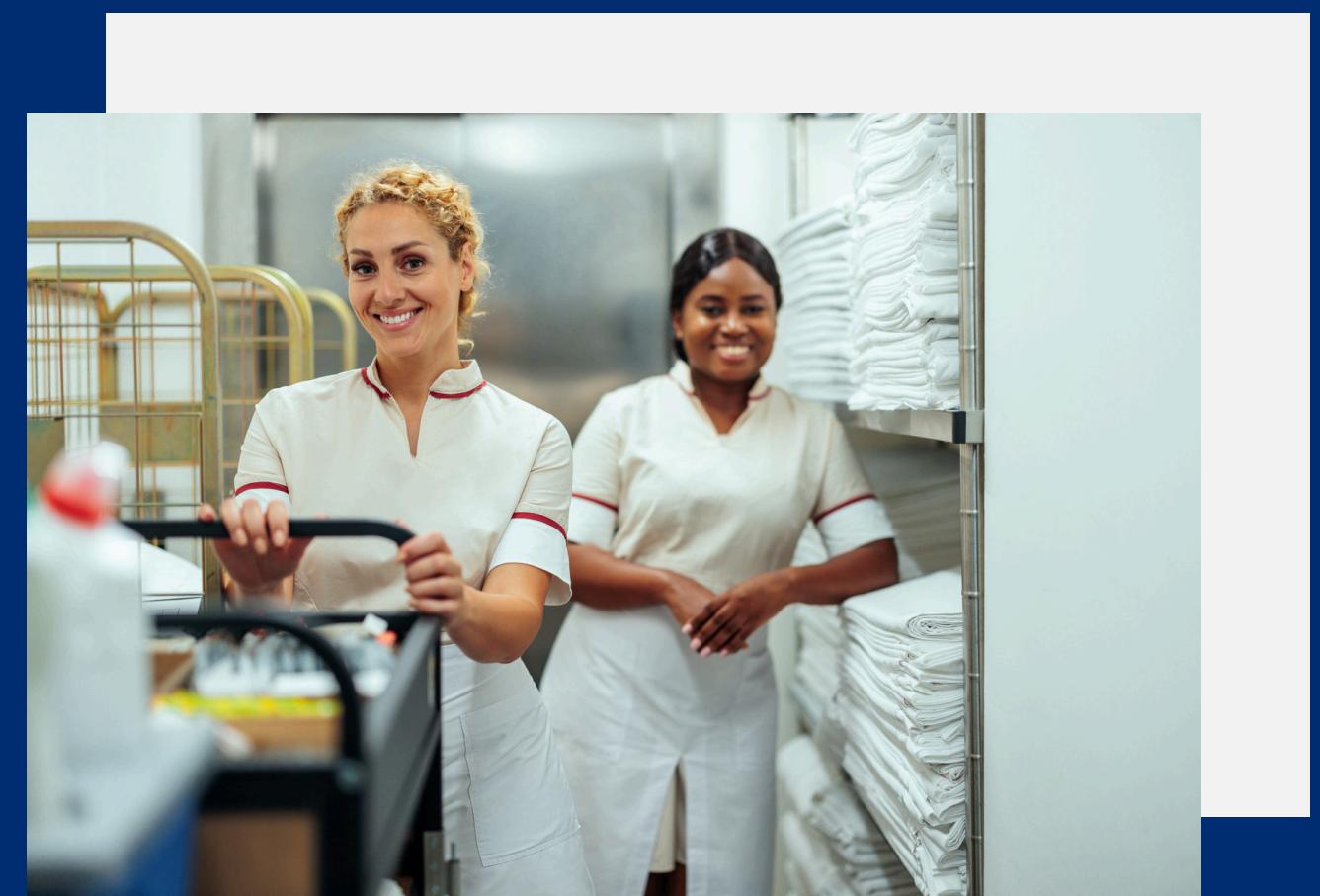
YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING IT

- 76% of hospitality workers report increased stress during holidays
- 43% experience financial anxiety peaking Nov-Jan
- 62% say emotional demands increase during holidays
- Holiday season = highest hospitality worker burnout rates

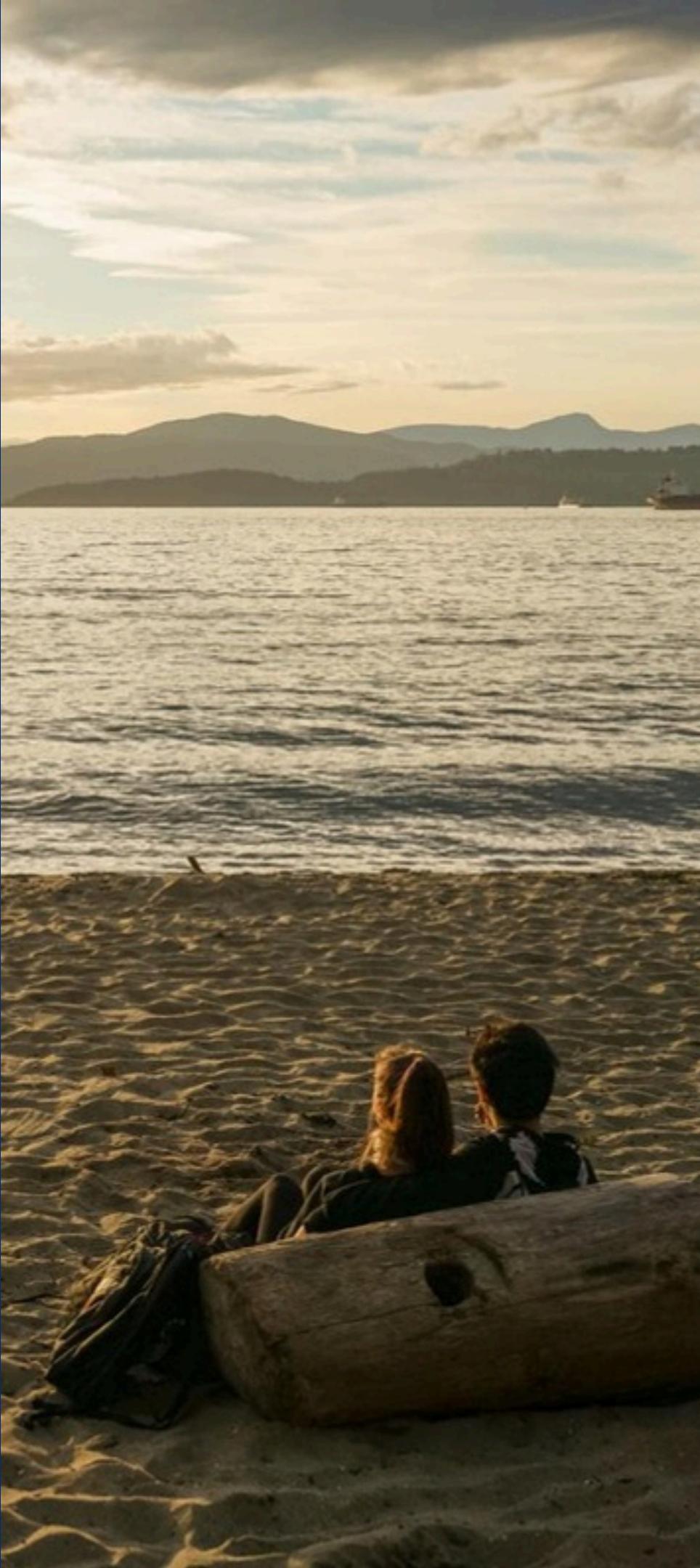
SHARE IN THE CHAT

What's ONE specific way the holidays create unique stress in your hospitality role?

Self-care and peer support
that actually works



PRACTICAL STRATEGIES



SELF-CARE THAT FITS

5-Minute Resets:

- Step outside for air
- Cold water on face, stretch
- Brief check-in with trusted coworker

Micro-Boundaries:

- Say no to ONE extra thing
- Protect sleep when possible
- Permission to do less



KNOW YOUR WARNING SIGNS

Mental/Emotional:

- Feeling numb or tearful
- Constant irritability/worry

Physical:

- Sleep or appetite changes
- Frequent illness, unexplained pain

Behavioural:

- Withdrawing from people
- Using substances to cope
- Calling in sick more



SUPPORTING COWORKERS

DO:

- ✓ Notice: "You don't seem like yourself"
- ✓ Ask directly: "Are you okay?"
- ✓ Listen without fixing
- ✓ Offer specific help: "I can cover for 10 min"
- ✓ Remind of resources, check in later

DON'T:

- ✗ Try to be their therapist
- ✗ Share without permission
- ✗ Minimize: "At least you have a job"



BUILD YOUR SURVIVAL TOOLKIT

- 5-Min Resets
- Peer Support Phrases
- Boundary Scripts
- Emergency Contacts

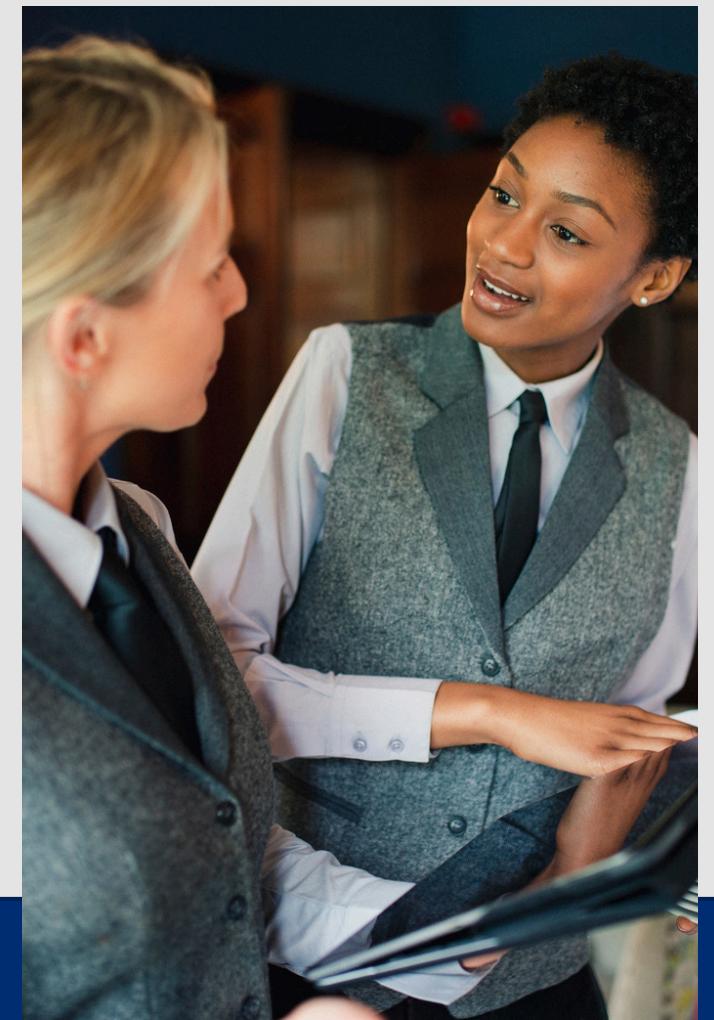
Supporting your team without burning
yourself out

FOR
SUPERVISORS &
LEADERS



THE SUPPORTIVE CONVO FRAMEWORK

1. Notice
2. Ask
3. Listen
4. Refer



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

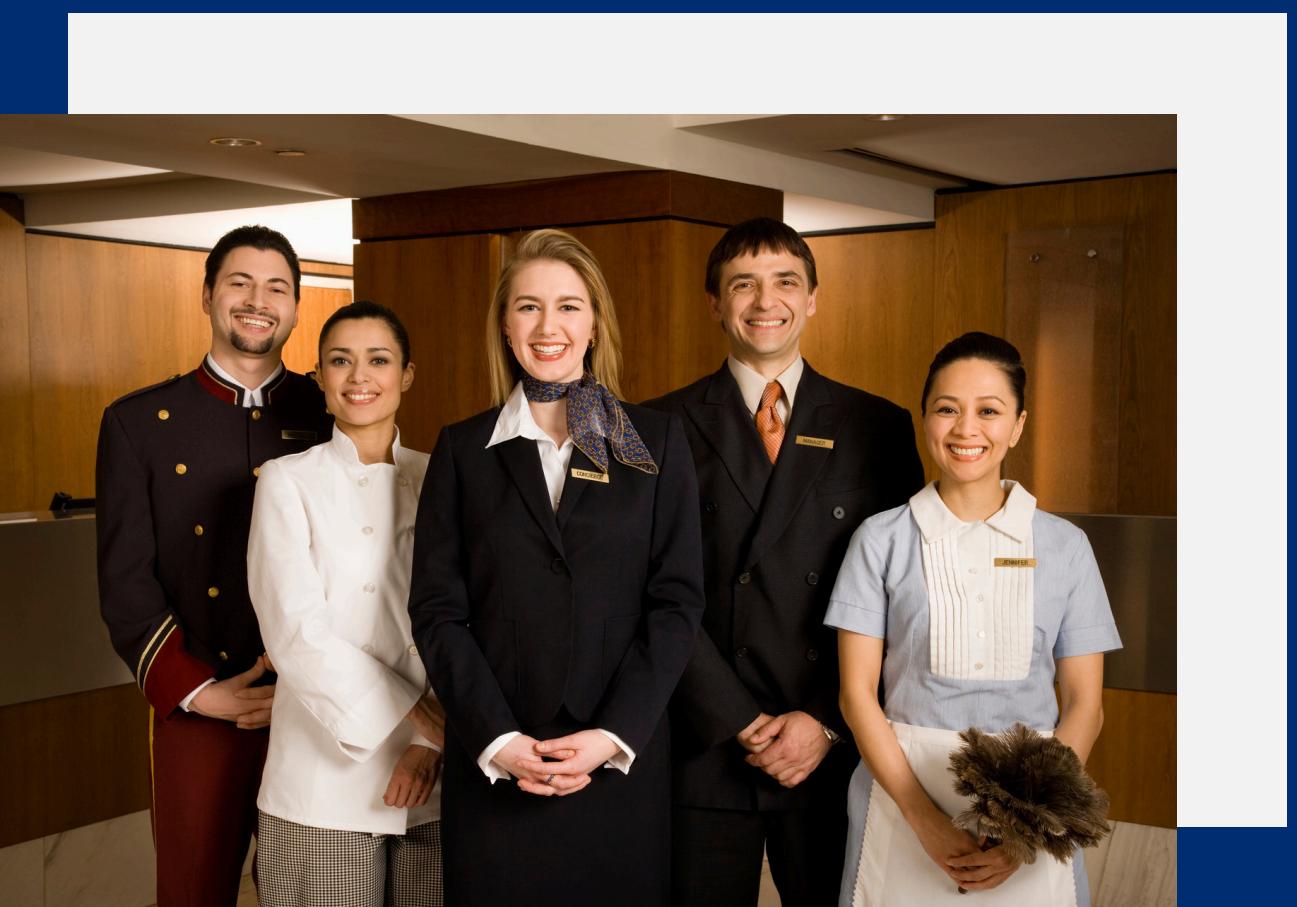
Your best server has been 20 minutes late three times this week. They seem distracted and you've seen them crying. Your busiest week is ahead.

Image credit: Destination British Columbia

KEY TAKEAWAYS

| Scheduling Compassionately | Meaningful Recognition | When to Escalate IMMEDIATELY |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Ask preferences early | Specific verbal appreciation | Thoughts of suicide or self-harm intent |
| Distribute impact fairly | Time (early release, extra day off) | Intent to harm others |
| Build in recovery time | Choice (pick your schedule/station) | Significant functioning change |
| Be transparent about decisions | Financial (bonus, gift card) | Substance use impacting safety |
| Offer choices when possible | NOT just food/generic praise | Call 988 or 911 if imminent danger |

Creating systems that support mental health



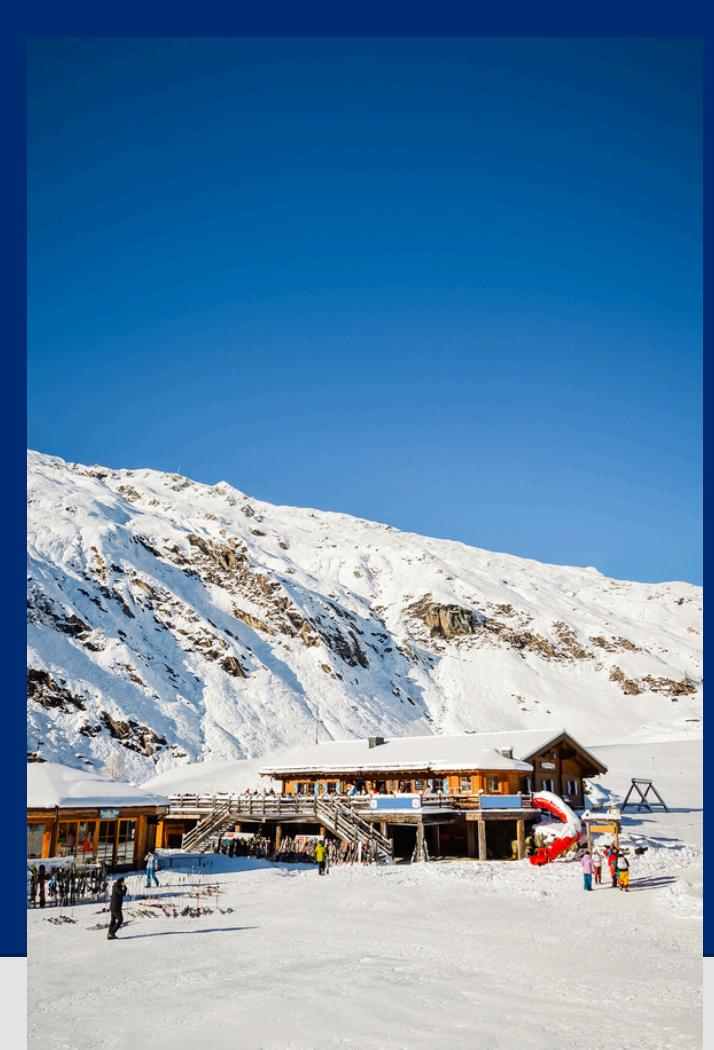
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & YOUR ACTION PLAN

CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH

What This Looks Like:

- Leadership talks openly about stress
- Mental health = physical health
- Clear, accessible resources
- Asking for help = strength
- Mistakes = learning opportunities
- Celebrating making it through together





Practical Accommodations

ZERO/LOW-COST ACCOMMODATIONS

- Flexible break scheduling
- Permission to step away when overwhelmed
- Shift preference survey
- Quiet decompression space
- Later start after closing shift
- Day off after brutal shift/event

HOLIDAY PLANNING TIMELINE

| BEFORE/ AT THE BEGINNING | Share resources, gather preferences, set expectations |
|-----------------------------|---|
| DURING | Clear communication with expectations, regular check-ins, visible leadership, activate accommodations |
| AFTER | Debrief, recovery time, gather feedback, celebrate |

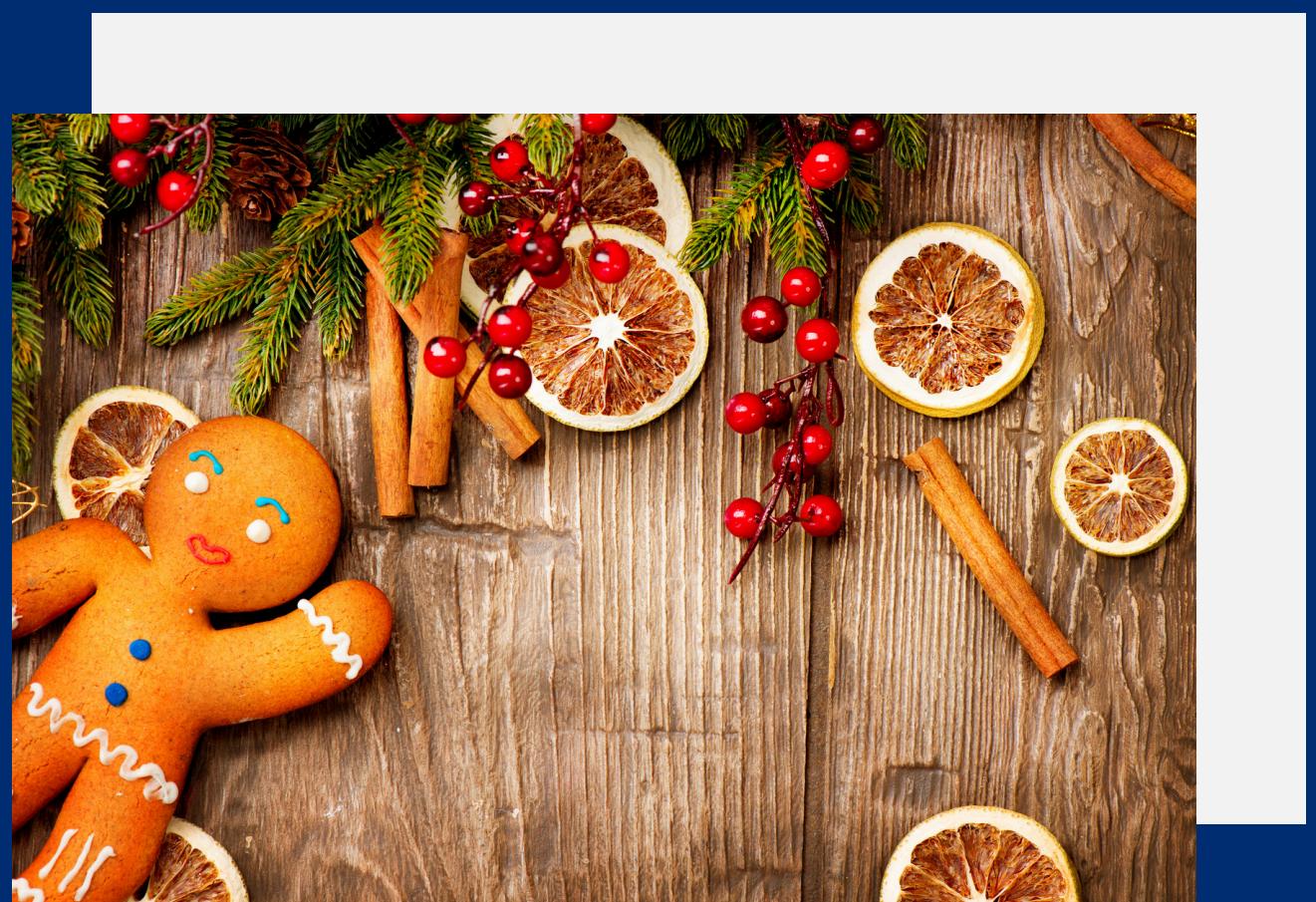


LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

Share ONE thing your workplace does well
for holiday mental health
OR: ONE thing you wish they did

One thing you'll do differently this
holiday season

YOUR
COMMITMENT





REMEMBER THIS

- The holidays will be hard
- Taking care of yourself & your team is essential
- You can't pour from an empty cup
- Small acts of care matter
- You're not alone in this

Image credit: Destination British Columbia

Let's address your specific situations



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION



PHS & OHS Resources & Support

Psychological Health & Safety (PHS) Advisory Services



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](#)



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

Mental Health for 

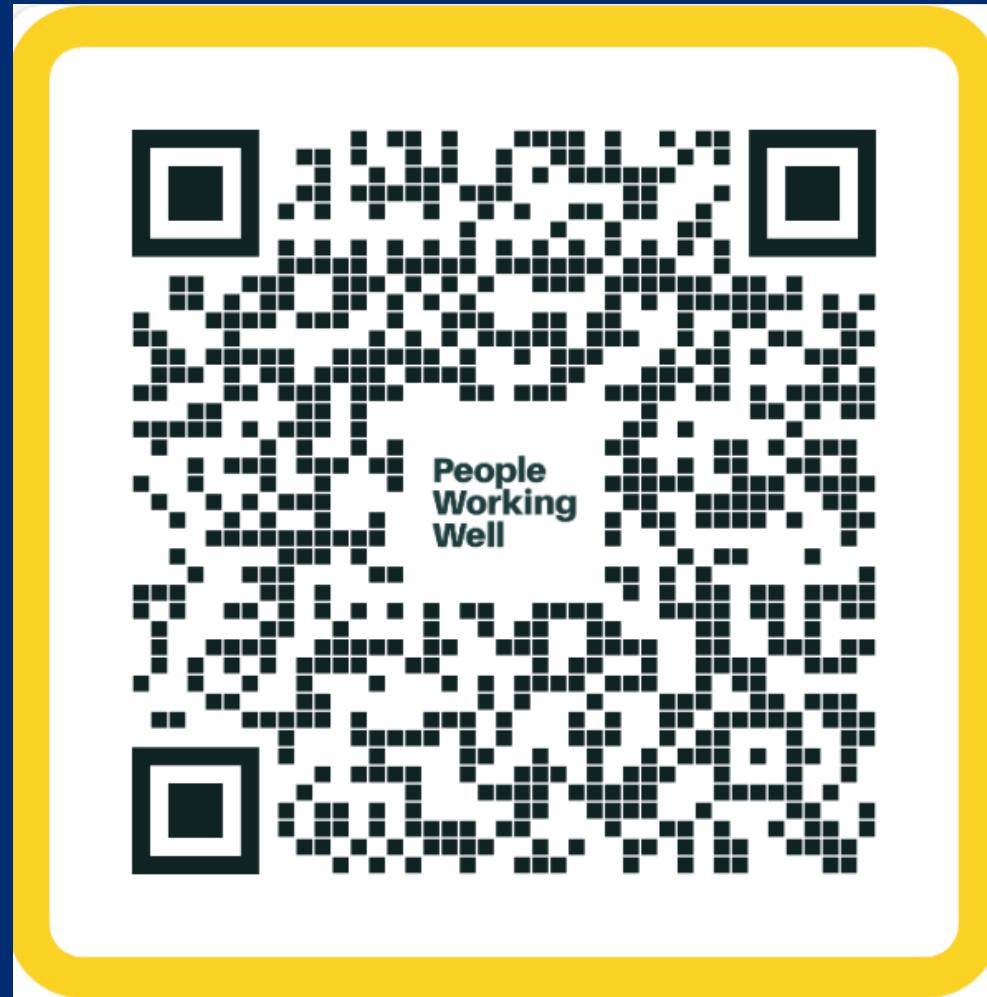
Learning Hub

Courses

About 

In partnership with                                 <img alt="

Training Resources



**Psychological Health & Safety
(PHS)**
Workplace Mental Health



Occupational Health & Safety



THANK YOU

Brandy Zimmerman
Productive Workload Specialist
brandy@thrivingworkplaces.ca

Thriving
Workplaces

go2HR®