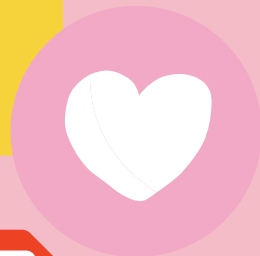
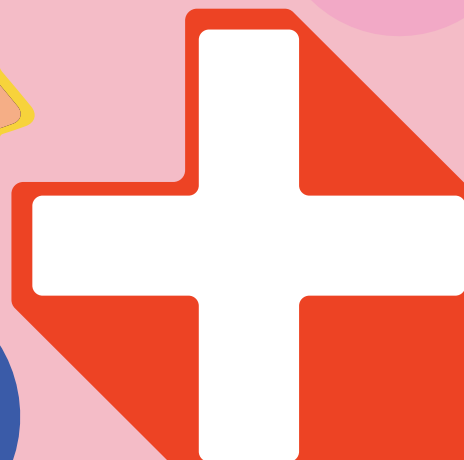
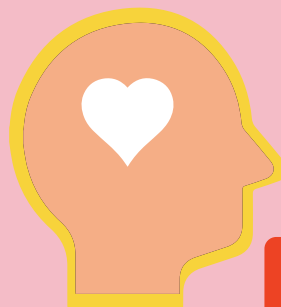




Managers' Handbook



Thrive
at Night



BRISTOL
NIGHTS

Bristol Nights



Welcome



“ Our night time economy is the heart and soul of our city. It’s where Bristol citizens come together to laugh, play, eat and dance. Our 6pm-6am workforce looks after the social lives of our community... but who is looking after us?

Anyone who works in or has made a career out of night work knows it can be a tough gig. As a sector we have job insecurity, lower pay and are still emerging from the financial impacts of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

Our workforce regularly has disturbed sleep patterns, higher rates of depression and anxiety, and poorer health indicators than the daytime working population. **It doesn’t have to be like this.** There are tools and strategies to help foster a mentally healthy workplace.

After consulting with people across Bristol’s Night Time Economy, we have pulled together easy, actionable advice for our night time teams to Thrive At Night.

This work is as much about supporting **you** as it is about creating systems to build emotionally resilient and compassionate teams. As night workers, particularly in the hospitality and leisure industries, we truly care about creating welcoming, safe and enjoyable environments for our audiences.

Our workplaces can be fast moving, high-stress environments, often focussing on social and creative outputs which positively enrich our audiences’ lives.

This guide has been created to help transform the sector and harness the “compassionate leaders” amongst us.

No matter what life may be throwing your way, we have collated specialised support to help you prioritise your own wellbeing, so you can continue to do the essential service of keeping our city thriving after dark ”



Carly Heath

Night Time Economy Advisor,
Bristol City Council

Protecting the mental health of Bristol's night time economy workers

“Bristol's night-time economy plays a key role in our city, one that is driven by the strong workforce that keeps it running from 6pm to 6pm. After a tough few years for the sector, from the Covid pandemic through to the current national cost of living crisis, it's vital that we look after our employees, staff and colleagues accordingly.

Late night work can be rewarding, from meeting great characters, to helping create the atmosphere in our venues that Bristolians love.

But this work can also be demanding, from dealing with challenging customers to the shifts that leave staff getting home in the early hours. Immense pressure has been placed on the mental health of staff over recent years. This will have impacted people across Bristol, something that, as One City, we must take steps to address.

We must ensure that our staff are protected, so work in the sector is as enriching as possible. We all want Bristol's nightlife to be a safe and enjoyable sector to work in.

This managers handbook is an important tool from Bristol Nights, taking key steps to ensure the protection of Night-time economy workers' mental health. It is a thorough guide that helps business owners, organisations, and managers create emotionally resilient and compassionate teams.

I want to thank all staff at Public Health and at Bristol Nights that have put so much work into this handbook. They have shown that Bristol working as One City is committed to protecting front line staff and it's thriving nightlife.

As a city, we have become more aware of the importance of talking about how we are feeling, but there is still need to further ensure night-time staff are protected in the workplace. We must tackle this issue through a collective approach, in order to secure implementation of best practice across the city's organisation and venues. This we mean we can all have a great and safe night out, and everyone can thrive at night. ”



Marvin Rees
Mayor of Bristol

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How to Use This Guide

This handbook is for **business owners, managers, and wellbeing champions** inside your organisations to create a robust mental health and wellbeing strategy for your teams.

We also offer advice to help you deal with a critical incident, handle sensitive conversations, respond to sexual harassment, or talk to your staff about their substance use.

There are further materials to help you embed this into your organisation through in-person training and eLearning.

For individuals, check out our Thrive at Night workbook. All materials are available for free **www.bristolnights.co.uk/thrive-at-night**

A mental health issue is not a sign of weakness; in fact, it can be just the opposite. Determined, energetic, purposeful high achievers can also be the most vulnerable because they push themselves so hard.

Anthony Joshua, Ed Sheeran, Professor Green, Adele, Miley Cyrus and Lady Gaga to name a few, have all talked openly about their challenges with their mental health, and how they have overcome them.

It's good business sense to improve the wellbeing of your workforce

Organisational benefits of improved mental health

-  Compliance with legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
-  Reduced staff turnover
-  Reduced sickness absence
-  A healthier workplace
-  Better team morale
-  A more engaged and committed team
-  Better customer service
-  Skills retention

A Quick Look at the Facts



38% of Bristol jobs are between 6am and 6pm. (ONS, 2021)

One in four people will experience a mental health issue, such as depression, stress, anxiety, each year. These issues can affect how people think, feel, and behave. (Mind, 2017)

Between one in five and one in six working age adults are depressed, anxious or experiencing stress-related problems at any one time. (MHFA England, 2020)

Work is beneficial to physical and mental health: periods out of work can exacerbate a mental health condition because people feel isolated, forgotten, and purposeless. (WHO, 2023)

Better mental health support in the workplace can save UK businesses up to **£8 billion annually**. (Mental Health Foundation, 2009)

What is Mental Health and Wellbeing?

Mental Health

Mental health is just as important as physical health.

We all have ‘mental health’, we have good days and bad days.

The experiences which play on our mind can affect our mood or the way we experience the world around us. Everyone’s mental health experience is different.

Historically, there has been stigma around mental health. This handbook aims to provide practical advice on how to talk about mental health and wellbeing at work. By leaving judgement at the door, and signposting you to resources, we hope to help guide the unique needs of you and your team.

Mental health is an essential part of our overall health. Good mental health is more than simply the absence of mental disorders.

Good mental health enables us to function well in our personal and professional lives, to enjoy life in our own way such as:

- **Form and sustain positive relationships (Connection)**
- **Work productively (Learning)**
- **Making choices that fit with own morals and values (Give)**
- **Achieve the things that matter to us (Fulfilment)**
- **Cope with the usual pressures of life (Resilience)**
- **Maximising our own potential (Sense of Purpose).**

“*The World Health Organization (WHO), describes mental health as a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community*”

Wellbeing

Wellbeing underpins all aspects of our lives. It is a term which broadly means being comfortable, healthy, or happy.

There are many types of wellbeing including Emotional, Physical, Social, Workplace and Societal. To build our overall wellbeing all these elements need to be in tune.

“*Mental wellbeing is a positive state of mind which enables and supports good relationships, improved resilience, improved health, meaning, purpose and control.*”

World Health Organisation

Tips for positive mental health in the workforce

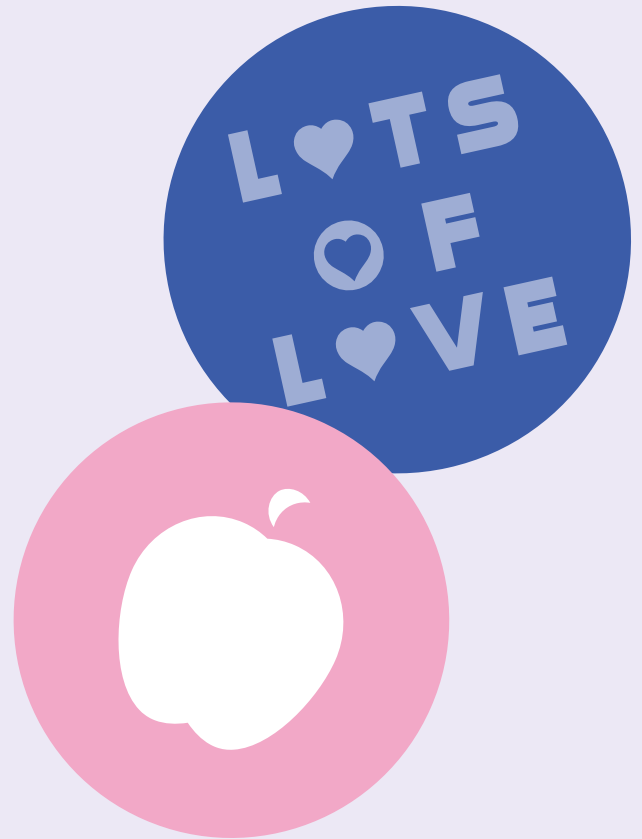
- Encourage open communication
- Have and help others to create boundaries
- Encourage work life-balance
- Address concerns promptly
- Encourage your team to look after and prioritise their own mental and physical wellbeing, in and out of the workplace.

Tips for Self-Care

Self-care is all about the behaviours which promote health and happiness in your own life. This looks different for everyone. You do you!

Common examples of self-care include:

- Maintaining a regular sleeping routine
- Eating healthily
- Spending time in nature
- Practising a hobby you enjoy
- Expressing gratitude.



Stress in the Workplace

Stress is normal, and everyone experiences it. Not all stress is bad, and sometimes it's even useful to help us reach goals, meet challenges, and manage deadlines.

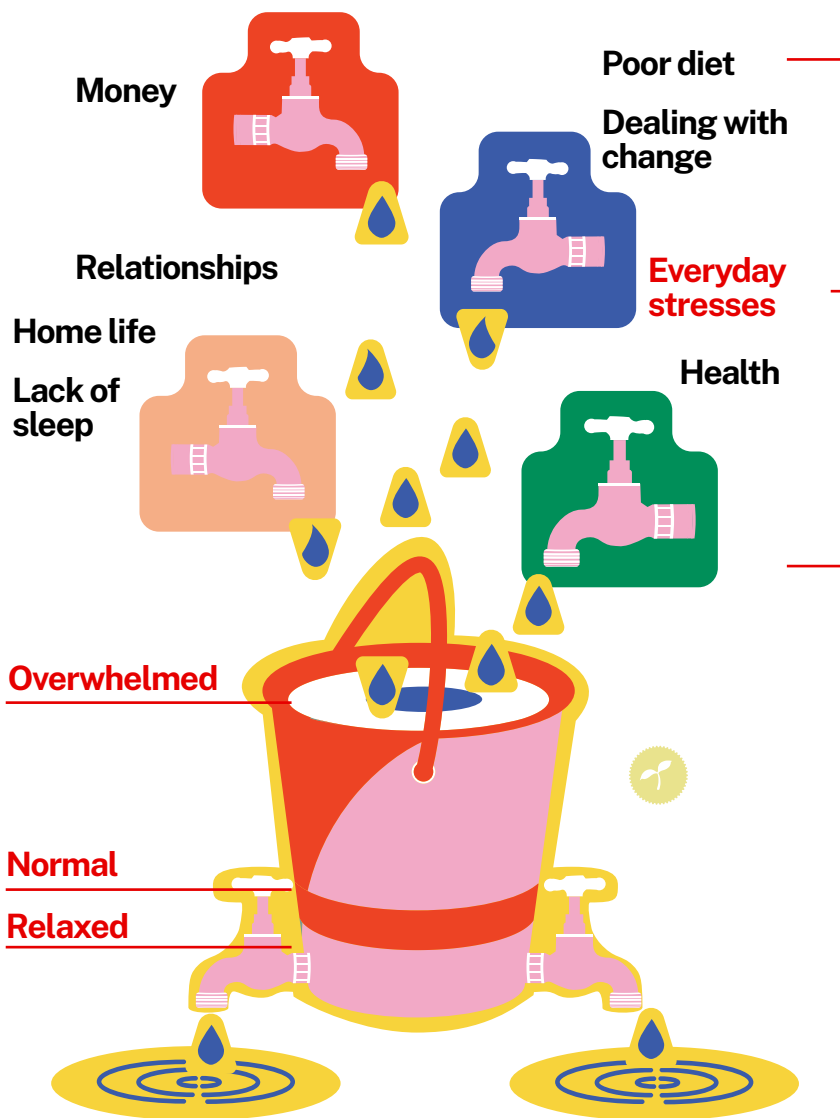
However, stress in our lives can build up. Prolonged exposure to stress that is not well managed can have a deep impact on our mental and emotional wellbeing, as well as our physical health.

There can also be an overlap between stress and trauma. Later in this guide we explore trauma, and how to respond as a compassionate leader.

Imagine that your capacity to cope with everyday stress is like a bucket, it's normal for stress to flow in and out. How we respond to these stressors helps us build resilience, but sometimes these different types of stress can mount up. The aim of the 'Stress Bucket' is to try to avoid this overflowing.

In the Thrive At Night workbook we explore the Stress Bucket in more detail.

Stress bucket



Things that help empty the bucket:

- Socialising • Exercising • Taking a break
- Talking with friends • Asking for help



Understanding stress in 5 simple parts

Physical stress

Caused by poor health, lack of sleep, and lost opportunities to exercise.

Emotional stress

Arises from negative emotions like anger and sadness.

Cognitive stress

Linked to mental strain and information overload.

Social stress

Results from relationship conflicts and expectations.

Environmental stress

Triggered by external factors like noise and financial pressures.

Managing stress and building resilience

Being prepared for stressful periods can make it easier to get through them. Some people refer to the ability to manage our stress as **resilience**.

Resilience is our ability to deal with setbacks and helps us recover after stressful events.

There may be factors in your team members' lives which makes it harder to be resilient, such as experiencing discrimination or lacking support. Some causes of stress are beyond our control and some ways of building resilience may not be easily available to your team members.

Being a compassionate leader means that you greet people where they are in their own mental health journey and give your team regular opportunities to build resilience within their working life.

You can find out more about being a compassionate leader later in this guide.

Resilience is like a muscle; we can grow and strengthen it over time

Mental Health and the Law

Everyone should feel safe and supported to talk about their mental health at work. If people are treated differently because of a mental health issue, employers may be held accountable and risk facing prosecutions under the laws that protect mental ill health in the workplace.

Employers have a legal responsibility and a 'duty of care' to do all they reasonably can to support the health, safety, and wellbeing of their staff.

If an employee is showing symptoms of poor mental health, it's vital that their employer takes the matter seriously and with the same care and consideration as that of a physical illness.

This includes:

-  **Making sure staff are working in a safe environment**
-  **Protecting staff from discrimination**
-  **Carrying out appropriate risk assessments.**

Employers have a number of legal obligations to reduce the risk of discrimination at work.

- **Equality Act (2010)**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)**
- **Mental Health (Discrimination) Act (2013)**

Implementing internal mental health policies to manage mental health at work on a day-to-day basis is a forward thinking, proactive way of raising awareness and reducing stigma around mental health issues in the workplace, and culturally a very positive step.

This is a very brief summary of some areas of the law to be aware of and consider. There are further issues to consider in relation to the people who may have a disability, so be sure to seek specific guidance and advice if relevant to your organisation, such as via ACAS, or your union.

More information on Mental Health and The Law can be found on www.bristolnights.co.uk/Thrive-at-night

Five Ways to Wellbeing

Research shows there are five simple things you can do as part of your daily life – at work and at home – to build resilience, boost overall mental wellbeing and lower the risk of developing symptoms of poor mental health.

These simple actions are known internationally as the **Five Ways to Wellbeing**. They help people take care of their mental health and wellbeing. Regularly practising the Five Ways is beneficial for everyone – whether you have challenges with your mental health or not.

We recommend the Five Ways to Wellbeing because they are:

Shown to have a positive impact. These daily actions have been researched, so we know they can help people improve how they feel.

Easy-to-follow tips that anyone can adopt into their lifestyles regardless of the career they have.

Focused on the **positive steps** we can all make as individuals to make mental wellbeing a part of our daily life.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing give us a framework to design our mental health and wellbeing policy around. Compassionate leaders can use these as tools to ensure that their workplace promotes clear, positive steps and actions that teams can incorporate into their daily lives.

These daily actions are



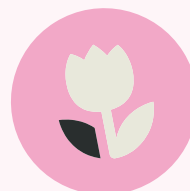
Connect with other people



Give



Keep learning



Take notice



Be active

The Five Ways in Action

Connect with other people

There is strong evidence to show that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against symptoms of poor mental health.

Many night time jobs are firmly rooted in the love of human connection. Are there ways you can encourage your staff to connect with people at work, as well as with customers?

Here are a few ideas for encouraging connection amongst the team:

- Speak to colleagues instead of sending a text
- Make an effort to greet your colleagues when they arrive on shift
- Make new or temporary members of staff feel welcome by introducing them to the team
- Ask about someone's week and really listen when they tell you
- Give a colleague a lift to work or share the journey home with them.



“ *Strong relationships with others are an essential part of building resilience and boosting wellbeing* ”

Give



Carrying out acts of kindness, whether small or large, can increase happiness, life satisfaction and general sense of wellbeing.

Here are a few ideas for encouraging kindness amongst the team:

- Do something nice for a colleague or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time to a community group or set up a charitable activity with other colleagues.
- Get your staff to help choose a charitable activity and use your business to help support them through an event.

Look out as well as in. Seeing how happiness is linked to those around you can be incredibly rewarding and create meaningful connections with others, especially amongst your staff.

“Giving makes us feel good. Carrying out acts of kindness whether small or large, can increase happiness, life satisfaction and general sense of wellbeing”

Keep learning



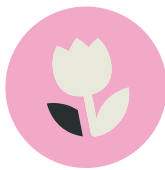
Being curious and seeking out new experiences positively stimulates the brain. **Learning is more than just formal education - it's about exploring new ideas, seeking opportunities, embracing new experiences, and sharpening our skills.** It also means being curious and having an inquiring mind. This is true for all areas of life, not just at work.

“Being curious and seeking out new experiences positively stimulates the brain”

Here are a few ideas for encouraging learning amongst the team:

- Ask colleagues if they have skills they would like to develop, or improve their working knowledge by taking on a different responsibility, If appropriate, swap shift tasks amongst staff, learn about a different colleagues' interests and ask them to share new things with you.

Take notice



Paying more attention to the present moment, to thoughts and feelings and to the world around, boosts our wellbeing. Some people refer to this awareness as ‘mindfulness’.

Mindfulness doesn’t just mean ‘meditation’. People can practise mindfulness in their daily lives. Some people find it in simple actions, such as doing the washing up, or prepping the food for service. There are many ways to practise mindfulness at work or through your hobbies.

Here are a few ideas for encouraging mindfulness amongst the team:

- Take a moment to enjoy when something good happens
- Tidy up your workstation - whether it's your back bar or a tiny desk space
- Encourage open conversations with colleagues, allowing them to share their thoughts and feelings
- Suggest that staff take their breaks in a different room, so they can fully recharge.

“*Paying more attention to the present moment, to thoughts and feelings and to the world around us can boost our wellbeing*”

Be active



As well as improving our physical wellbeing, moving our bodies regularly is great for our minds. Being physically active, including at work, improves our overall mood and wellbeing and decreases the symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety.

“*Being physically active everyday is great for our bodies and minds*”

Many night jobs can be physically active. Talk to staff about what kind of ways they stay active outside of work.

- Do some stretches before you leave for work. Could you set up a work sports team? Or encourage staff to take a walk together during their breaks? Can you create time in the working week for staff to be active? Even if that just means moving more.

Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace

Empowering compassionate leadership is at the heart of creating a mentally healthy workplace.

In this chapter we explore how managers play a critical role in workplace culture, and how you can lead from the front in promoting the health and wellbeing of your workforce.

The best results require a proactive and compassionate approach.

Remember, senior managers are employees too. You need to include them (and yourselves) in this process!

Make a commitment to mental health in the workplace

- Ensure senior level buy-in across all management
- Communicate to your team that you are taking mental health at work seriously
- Appoint a mental health champion
- Assess where you are now, to help benchmark your success
- Gather feedback from your staff
- Measure staff wellbeing.

Build your approach

- Create a safe working environment
- Empower your team to communicate openly about how they are feeling
- Update policies based on feedback and make plans to improve
- Involve your team in decision making
- Encourage open conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

Create a positive culture

- Support and value your team
- Reduce stress linked to work
- Have a plan to identify issues and do your best to address them
- Review job roles (and redesign if necessary)
- Create social activities or bring in a team member to be your social guru
- Normalise talking about mental health and wellbeing in your organisation
- Challenge stigma around mental health
- Develop a culture where bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

Provide support and training

- Share and signpost information
- Build your mental health and wellbeing policy into your induction process
- Train managers to be confident in dealing with sensitive conversations

Promote a management style that encourages participation, constructive feedback, mentoring and training.

Help people to recover

- Support employees back to work
- Make adjustments where appropriate.

Go further

- Regularly evaluate your approach
- Celebrate your achievements.



Workplace Culture

How to create a workplace culture that values mental health and wellbeing

Become a compassionate leader

As a manager, it is crucial for you to set the tone. Staff need to feel reassured that they can come to you with an issue, and it'll be handled with care and consideration.

The way management behaves and approaches mental health will determine the overall atmosphere of the workplace.

- Take care of your own mental health, demonstrate healthy behaviours, and encourage others to do the same
- Be compassionate and kind to yourself and those in your team.

Compassionate leadership in the workplace is more important than ever in these challenging times and can help team members feel supported and valued. Celebrate successes and recognise employees who prioritise mental health and wellbeing.

Lead by example. Can you share a story about your own mental health struggles? This can help improve people's understanding and change their attitudes. It will also give them reassurance that it's ok to talk about mental health issues at work.

Nominate a mental health and wellbeing champion

You might want to nominate a Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion; this can be someone in your team who already has an interest in wellbeing.

“Champions are self-appointed employees at any level of your organisation who help challenge stigma and change the way employees think and act about mental health.”

They can champion regular conversations around mental health and feedback to management where appropriate. This should be in addition to your management team having an active approach to wellbeing. Make sure you communicate who the wellbeing champion is to new starters, agency staff and freelancers before they begin their shifts.

Encourage open communication

It is essential to create an environment where team members feel comfortable discussing mental health and wellbeing concerns. As a manager, you should encourage open communication, listen actively, and show empathy towards those who may be struggling with the challenges life can throw at them.

Cultural Considerations

Cultural differences can impact how people talk about mental health and wellbeing. It's important to be aware of these differences and to communicate in a way that recognises the diversity of experiences and perspectives.

Recognise and respect diversity

Discrimination and prejudice can impact mental health. Make sure to show respect and understanding for people of different races, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and socioeconomic status.

Consider race and ethnicity

Team members who belong to racial or ethnic minority groups may face discrimination and harassment. This can include racism, xenophobia, and small, often unintentional acts or comments that can make someone feel unimportant, unwelcome and uncomfortable at work.

Consider how disability is perceived in your business

People who have disabilities or long term health conditions may experience both physical barriers in the workplace and negative attitudes towards disability. Think about providing wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, and other accommodations as needed.

Be aware of immigration status issues

Are any of your team immigrants or refugees that may face additional challenges or discrimination related to immigration status, such as fear of deportation?

Traditional gender roles

This can also be a cultural challenge when it comes to talking about mental health. Men may feel pressure to “be strong” and not show their feelings or complain and women might not want to “make a fuss.”

Address workplace discrimination and harassment

This could involve improving policies and procedures related to workplace mistreatment or providing training on unconscious bias and discrimination.

Be aware of assumptions

It's important not to make assumptions about individuals based on their identities. For example, assuming that someone with a disability needs help without asking first can be perceived as disrespectful or intrusive.

Homophobic or transphobic microaggressions

Staff members who identify as LGBTQ+ may experience discrimination, abuse and bullying based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Classist microaggressions

Staff members who come from less affluent backgrounds may be treated differently and not given the same opportunities as others within the staff team.

Understand the Challenges Faced by Your Team

Every sector has common workplace challenges, but there are additional considerations for staff who work at night. These can be physical, emotional, social, or financial.

Disrupted sleep patterns

Working during the night can disrupt normal sleep patterns. Noise and light pollution might interrupt sleep, and shift work can make it hard to prioritise regular sleep patterns.

Irregular or Long working hours

Working long hours during the night can lead to fatigue, stress, and burnout, which can make staff members more vulnerable to developing poor mental health.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons. Regular night work in the winter can mean that staff miss out on daylight hours.

High-stress environment

The night time economy can be a high-stress environment, with tight deadlines, long hours, and high pressure to perform.

Exposure to drugs and alcohol can have negative effects on mental health and wellbeing. This can include exposure to second-hand smoke, as well as increased risk of problematic substance use and addiction.

Social isolation

Unsocial hours can increase feelings of loneliness. Your staff may be missing out on quality time with family and friends in their personal life. Solo working or high staff turnover can make staff feel disconnected and unsupported. Special care should be taken to check in with these workers.

Financial instability

may lead some staff members to take risks, such as working overtime or taking on additional jobs, to improve their financial situation. This can lead to physical and mental exhaustion and may increase the risk of accidents or injuries on the job.

Safety concerns

Working during the night can pose safety concerns, such as exposure to violence, harassment, or other forms of workplace mistreatment.

Sexual harassment and objectification

Experienced by all genders, but particularly women.

Exposure to violence

Staff members may be at risk of physical or verbal assault from customers, which can be traumatic and lead to the development of PTSD if not managed.

Witnessing traumatic events

Staff members may witness traumatic events such as fights, accidents, verbal abuse, sexual violence or overdoses, and sudden death, which can be distressing and lead to the development of PTSD if not managed.

Physical health conditions

Developing physical health conditions can increase the risk of mental health issues.

Family and friends

Negative relationships outside of work can have a negative impact on our mental health, including increased stress and risk of mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Your team members might be suffering domestic abuse and these relationships can have an overall impact on our capacity in the workplace which may cause staff to struggle to carry out aspects of their work.

Always prioritise the safety of your team member. There are plenty of organisations who can help in the instances of domestic abuse.

Assumptions about their job

Some people may think that staff working in the night time economy are there because they can't find other work or because they are not good enough to do other jobs. We know this isn't true. Be sure to celebrate the talents of your team.

Increased frustration

Often experienced by not feeling seen and/or heard.

Stuck in survival mode

Prolonged exposure to stressful events, the pressure to 'hold it together', no time or place to offload and reset.

Poor nutrition

Lack of access to high quality food in your work hours.

Remember: Stress-related sickness absence is sometimes not reported as such, because of perceived stigma. Being open and honest with your staff about work-related stress helps to reduce stigma and improve the wellbeing culture in your workplace

Practical Steps to a Mentally Healthy Workplace

To understand the mental health needs and concerns of individuals in your team there are some simple steps you can take.

Priority should be given to Safety, Trust, Collaboration, Empowerment and Choice.

Bring your staff along for the journey

The heart of any business are the people who work there. Collaborating with your team to create a mentally healthy workplace culture will empower ownership of the policy and boost buy-in. Including your team, listening to their concerns, and adopting their ideas will increase awareness of the steps individuals can take to support their own mental wellbeing, as well as that of their colleagues and your customers.

Communication is key

Let your team know why you are doing this work and that their views matter.

Invite your team to share their experiences What are the regular or likely stressors? Are there specific events and conditions prevalent in your business?

What is the view of mental health in your business? Some cultures view mental health issues as a weakness or a personal failing. Is there a lack of understanding about mental health challenges within your team?

Are there cultural considerations? Language barriers? Do people fear discrimination or negative consequences? Do people feel they need to be strong and can't show weakness within the work environment?

What is already in place? Assess the availability and effectiveness of facilities that your workplace provides for individuals with mental health needs related to trauma. Do you provide paid time off for mental health needs? Do you provide a quiet space to deal with issues as they arise? Do you provide access to training or support as an organisation?

“*These conversations don't have to end when the plan's finished. Set up regular communication, this can be as simple as emailing all team members, setting up a WhatsApp group, or displaying a poster in your staff room or manager's office*”



What are the Changes You Need to Make?

Once you have reviewed the themes or specific incidents you need to address in your health and wellbeing policy, it's time to look at what you can do to mitigate stress within your business.

Think about how these changes are related to the concepts we discuss in the Five Ways of Wellbeing module of connecting, taking time to learn, giving back, taking notice and being active.

By opening an honest conversation, we can dispel myths and assumptions that prevent people accessing effective and timely care, which ultimately can cost lives

Popular areas for consideration for nightlife businesses might include:

Shift Patterns

Can you look at your shift patterns and working hours to allow for more consideration for wellbeing?

Alcohol Policies

Do you have an alcohol policy for staff during working hours? Can you review this?

Holiday and Sick Pay

What holiday and sick pay do you have in place outside of your statutory obligations? Do you include freelance or contract staff in this? Does your absence policy make special notice about mental health and wellbeing?

Team Building

What team socials will you organise? When will your staff have time to bond?

Training

What training will you encourage your team to do? Do you pay staff for their time to do this?

Acceptable Behaviours

How are you communicating to your customers about how to behave in your venue, or more specifically, the behaviours which will not be tolerated, such as harassment towards staff.

Wider Community

Are you connecting with the wider community? Perhaps giving your space for free to a local charity? Does your team get to contribute to how you do this?

Staff Success

Are you celebrating success? Do you give staff time to take a moment and enjoy the environment around them? These moments are often why you got into your job in the first place!

Pay and Conditions

Consider how your pay and conditions for staff potentially relate to their mental health and wellbeing. Are they clear, and are there changes you could make to improve or amend those terms and conditions to support the mental health and wellbeing of staff? Could you do more to facilitate ongoing engagement and discussions with your staff?

Take a view of how you can address the issues you have identified and make commitments to change where possible to prioritise team wellbeing.



Shifting Cultures

Shifting culture in the workplace can be a challenging task, as it involves changing the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of you as a manager and your team.

Taking your team along the journey of mental health and wellbeing will take time. People can sometimes feel uncomfortable with change. We get it, change is scary!

Below are a few considerations to think about change as a compassionate leader

Resistance to change

Discrimination and prejudice can impact mental health. Make sure to show respect and understanding for people of different races, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, and socioeconomic status.

Social influence

Social influence is a powerful factor in cultural change, as employees are influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of their colleagues who are often friends. It is important to create a culture of openness and support, encourage positive attitudes and behaviours, and promote the adoption of new norms and values.

Beliefs and attitudes

The change you're asking for may cause people to experience conflicting beliefs or attitudes. To help your team, provide education and resources that challenge existing beliefs and attitudes, and ensure employees feel comfortable exploring new ideas and perspectives.

Motivation

Your team needs to be motivated to adopt new attitudes and behaviours. To promote motivation, it is important to provide clear goals and objectives, offer incentives and rewards, and create a sense of urgency around the need for cultural change.

Leadership

Leadership is a crucial factor in cultural change, as leaders set the tone and direction for the organisation. To promote cultural change, it is important for leaders to model the desired attitudes and behaviours, provide support and resources for employees, and communicate a clear vision for the future.

Writing a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy:

A step-by-step guide

So, What is a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy?

What is it? What does it need to do?
Who writes it, and how do we put all
this information together into a plan?

This step-by-step guidance is to help night time
businesses create a bespoke mental health and
wellbeing policy or a plan which works for you.

Every business is different. Your organisation
needs to develop a plan which is appropriate for
your environment. A mental health and wellbeing
policy will look very different for late night retail or
a call centre, in comparison to a pub, restaurant or
music venue.

**A mental health and wellbeing policy is only one
part of the response.** Staff need good training and
support to implement any policy.

**Your policy should be seen as a working
document,** continuously amended, and improved
in response to new developments in your team. It
should be reviewed on an annual basis.

**The involvement of your team in developing a
policy can greatly enhance its worth,** strengthen
working relationships, and empower resilience
within your team.

What does my Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Need to do?



**Establish and promote a mentally
healthy workplace**



**Maintain the mental health and wellbeing
of all staff through workplace practices**



**Encourage staff to take responsibility for
their own mental health and wellbeing**

The policy should set out the organisation's aims,
aspirations, and responsibilities, as well as what
needs to be done when things go wrong.

Think of this as an opportunity to demonstrate
that the wellbeing of your staff is key to
organisational success and sustainability.

“ The purpose of this policy is for your
organisation to establish, promote and
maintain the mental health and wellbeing
of all staff through workplace practices, and
encourage staff to take responsibility for
their own mental health and wellbeing ”

What Does My Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Need to Contain?

The policy should set out the organisation's aims, aspirations, and responsibilities, as well as what needs to be done when things go wrong.

Introduction

Introduce your policy. Clearly state why you have the policy and what you hope to do. Start by setting out the purpose and scope.

Who the policy applies to

Clearly state who in your team this policy applies to. Think about those people who you work with but might not be directly employed by you, for example freelancers or contractors, such as security teams, agency staff or visiting artists. Will your policy include these colleagues?

Actions to be taken

Your policy is a working document, and this means actionable tasks.

Include clear steps that your business will take to create a mentally healthy workplace.

These could include a plan to:

- Promote leadership and staff engagement
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing or all staff
- Help staff recognise the signs of mental health issues
- Help line managers support people with mental health difficulties
- Identify sources of stress in the workplace
- Build a positive culture around mental health and reduce stigma
- Review the plan, measure its impact, and communicate the progress made.

Responsibilities

Everyone in your organisation has duty to create a mentally healthy workplace culture. Think about the different responsibilities for everyone on your team.

- Employees
- Line managers
- Senior managers or owners
- Freelance or contract staff.

Guidance on how to use the policy

The policy should be a working document. Monitor and evaluate the policy on an ongoing basis, adding or changing procedures as new experiences arise or issues are experienced.

Be sure to state when the policy is in effect from, when you intend to review it, and who is responsible. This could be an appointed task for your mental health and wellbeing champion, or through setting a regular meeting with your team. Consider updating on an annual basis

- Review and updates
- Policy information and ownership.

Associated documents

You may have other in-company policies that this document will compliment, include these. For example, policies on Sexual Harassment, Harm Reduction, staff absence or flexible working. Refer to existing workplace documents.

- List other company policies and documents that this will reference with.

The legal or statutory position needs to be considered when writing your policy or plan.



Coping Strategies

Policies and plans are only a few tools in our arsenal for creating a mentally healthy workplace.

The following chapters contain some practical advice on how to put some of this into practice.

Popular areas for consideration for nightlife businesses might include:

- How to talk to a member of staff who is struggling with poor mental health
- How to recognise and respond to trauma
- Serious incidents: how to positively guide your team through the aftermath
- Harassment and sexual abuse
- Substance use in the workplace
- Advice on mental health good practice we can offer our team in the here and now.



Handling Sensitive Conversations

Initiating conversations about mental health and well-being can pose challenges. It is vital to ensure that everyone is well-informed about appropriate responses and actions when a coworker or employee shares their mental health concerns.

Start by having an informal chat – but if there’s a problem, plan a more formal meeting

Find a private place where you won’t be interrupted – perhaps a neutral space outside work

Switch off your mobile! Build the skills and confidence to be able to approach someone who may be experiencing difficulties

Focus on the person, not the problem. Ask if they need any short-term adjustments to their work environment. They are the experts on their mental health, so they are best placed to know what they need

Ask open questions: “How are you doing at the moment?”, “You’ve seemed a bit withdrawn lately. Is anything the matter?”

Give them time to answer, and listen to what they say – don’t make assumptions.

Give advice and support, where appropriate.

Agree a plan of action and schedule a follow-up meeting. You may not reach this stage in a single meeting – people may not open up straight away.

Don’t worry – reassure them that your door is always open, and that the support is there if they need it.

Remember, once a conversation has taken place about someone’s mental health, it should be revisited to see how the employee is progressing

Conversation Starters

“I’ve noticed that you’ve been feeling more stressed than usual lately. I’m here to support you and want to make sure you have the resources you need to take care of yourself”

“I’m aware that some of the work we do can be challenging and may be affecting you in ways that are difficult to manage. If you ever need to talk about your experiences, I’m here to listen”

“If you’re feeling overwhelmed, it’s okay to step away for a moment and take a break. Your well-being is important to us and we want you to feel supported”

“I want to make sure you know that it’s okay to take time off if you need it. We have resources available if you need support and can work with you to adjust your schedule if necessary”

Recognising and Dealing with Trauma Symptoms

Occasionally, extreme events happen in the workplace. It's the responsibility of the management team to respond to these events in a proactive way and demonstrate your values as a compassionate leader.

Experiencing a very stressful, frightening, or distressing event is sometimes called a **trauma**.

When something causes a trauma, our natural instincts to survive kicks in to help you manage these stressful incidents, overriding our ability to exert control over how you are thinking, feeling, and behaving.

This is commonly known as a **fight or flight response**, which puts the body in an active survival mode and a high state of alert, causing stress.

How to identify trauma in your team

Early intervention is important. You can help by equipping your team—but especially management and senior staff—with the knowledge to spot the signs that either they themselves or someone they know may be struggling, and to signpost them towards appropriate sources of support.

- Does the individual appear overly stressed, disturbed, or distracted?
- Are they taking more sick days than you would expect?
- Do they appear dazed, withdrawn or shutdown?
- Are they fidgety, restless, or jumpy?
- Are they talking in an unclear way or laughing inappropriately?
- Do they seem over-excited, irritable, or aggressive?
- Do they appear to be having illogical or irrational thought processes?
- Do they keep repeating themselves or obsessing?
- Do they appear to be taking information in?
- Do they seem to be responding to experiences, sensations, or people not observable by others?
- Are they complaining of headaches, stomach pains, chest pains or feelings of dread?

The fight or flight response

Racing thoughts

Thoughts become quicker to help us evaluate danger and make fast decisions

Dry mouth

Digestion shuts down during dangerous situations.

Rapid breathing

Quicker breathing takes in more oxygen to power the muscles for fight or flight.

Adrenaline release

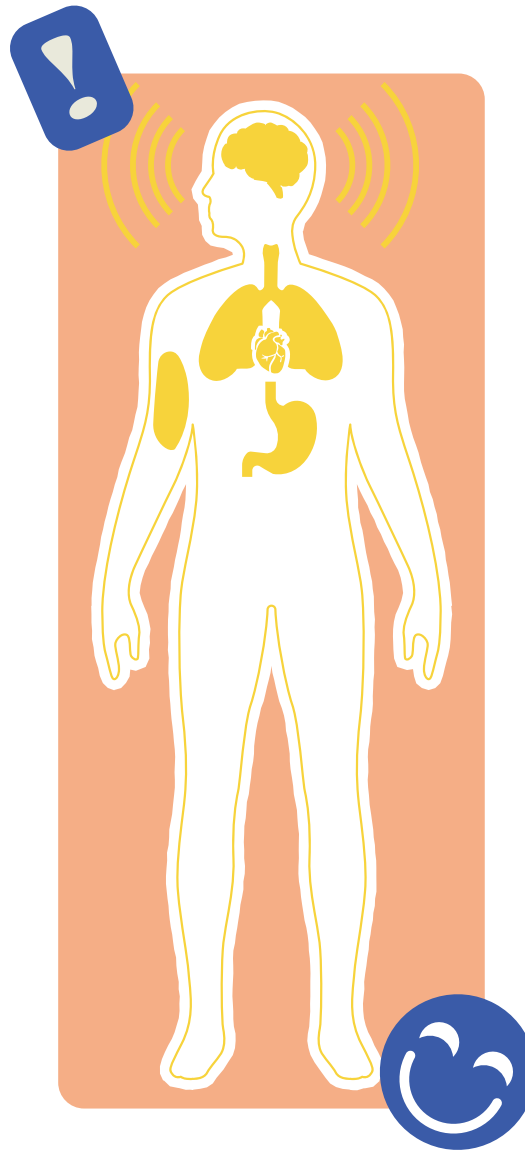
Adrenaline signals the body to get ready to respond to danger

Bladder urgency

In response to stress muscles in the bladder restrict

Nausea or “butterflies” in stomach

Blood moves from the digestive system leading to feelings of nausea



Changes in vision

‘Tunnel vision’ may occur to sharpen attention to the danger

Dizziness

As the heart rate increases and breathing patterns change the body’s oxygen levels, this can leave you light headed or dizzy

Heart beats faster

A faster heartbeat drives more blood to the muscles so they are ready for fight or flight.

Cold hands or sweaty palms

Muscles all over the body react and prepare for fight or flight

Muscle tense

Blood vessels constrict and send blood to muscle groups. When in danger, the body sweats to keep cool.

Acute trauma

This type of trauma is caused by a single, unexpected event, such as a car accident, sudden death, violence, serious injury, or a natural disaster. Acute trauma can lead to symptoms such as shock, anxiety, and confusion in the immediate aftermath of the event.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a specific mental health condition that can develop after a person experiences or witnesses a traumatic event, such as physical or sexual assault, combat, or a natural disaster. PTSD can lead to symptoms such as intrusive thoughts or memories, flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety or fear.

Complex trauma (aka the drip effect or slow burn)

This type of trauma is caused by repeated or ongoing experiences, such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence. Complex trauma can have long-lasting effects on a person's mental and emotional well-being, and can lead to symptoms such as depression, dissociation, and relationship difficulties.

If your staff are displaying any signs that they may be struggling, it's time to act.

The Thrive At Night workbook is full of helpful advice for individuals to think about their mental health and wellbeing.

If your team member needs further support, direct them to a relevant helpline, and reassure them that you will help them through this difficult period as best you can.

Useful resources are listed at the back of this guide, and online www.bristolnights.com/thrive-at-night.



Encouraging Healthy Behaviours

By providing a range of physical activities that are fun and inclusive, managers and staff can promote physical health, sensory awareness, and connection which is vital for the recovery from traumatic experiences.

These activities can help to create a more supportive and engaging environment and promote overall wellbeing and resilience.

Exercise classes

Exercise classes, such as aerobics, dance, or yoga, can provide a range of physical and sensory experiences, such as movement, balance, and coordination.

Food tasting

Bristol is known for its diverse food scene, and food tasting activities can be a great way to engage the senses and explore different cultural traditions.

Potluck parties

A social gathering where each guest brings a dish to share with the group. The dishes can be homemade or store-bought, and can be of any type, such as appetisers, entrees, side dishes, or desserts.

Outdoor games

Outdoor games, such as tag, frisbee, or ball games, can provide opportunities for physical activity and social engagement.

Walking or hiking

Walking or hiking can be a great way to get some fresh air, exercise, and sensory stimulation. Walking or hiking in nature can also provide opportunities for observing and interacting with the environment.

Swimming

Swimming can provide a range of sensory experiences, such as water pressure, temperature, and buoyancy. It can also promote relaxation and muscle strength.

Martial arts

Martial arts, such as karate, judo, or taekwondo, can provide opportunities for physical activity, coordination, and discipline.

Circus skills

Circus skills, such as juggling, trapeze, or acrobatics, can provide opportunities for physical activity, coordination, and creativity.

Climbing

Climbing can be a fun and challenging activity that promotes physical strength, coordination, and focus. It can also provide sensory experiences, such as different textures and heights.

Yoga

Certain poses, such as forward folds, gentle twists, and restorative poses, can help to release tension in the body and calm the nervous system.

Dance

Dance can be a powerful tool for releasing trauma. Movement can help to release the pent-up energy that is stored in the body, and can also be a form of self-expression.

Trauma release exercises (TRE)

A set of exercises that are designed to activate the body's natural tremor mechanism, which can help to release tension and trauma. It involves a series of simple movements, such as lying on the ground and shaking, that can be done at home.

Breathwork

Deep breathing can be an effective tool for calming the nervous system and releasing tension. Practices such as Pranayama, Wim Hof Method and Holotropic Breathwork can help release stuck emotions from the body.

Dealing with Serious Incidents

If a serious incident happens at your place of work, it will be your job as a manager to react, respond, and guide your team through the aftermath.

It may only be one team member who experienced a serious incident, sometimes the whole organisation is affected in some way. The depth and seriousness will depend on the incident.

These kinds of incidents are very rare, but they do happen. How can you support your team through this experience with care and consideration?

Preparation

Before conducting a briefing or debriefing, it is important for managers to prepare themselves and their staff members.

- Reviewing the procedure to make sure they take the correct steps
- Identify any potential individuals that may be triggered by the briefing.

Make sure you put aside enough time. Rushed or partial conversations, or conversations that

are interrupted, can cause additional stress and emotional harm.

Choose a quiet and private space, with a relaxed atmosphere, away from distractions.

Remember for some conversations, a walk outside, a car journey or wherever you and your team member feel comfortable might be the right place.

Briefing

The briefing should be delivered as soon as possible after the critical or traumatic event and should aim to provide staff members with accurate information about what has occurred. This may include:

- Details about the event
- How it will be addressed
- What support is available

It is important to be transparent and honest with staff members, while also being sensitive to their emotional needs.

Debriefing

The debriefing should be conducted at a later time, when staff members have had the opportunity

to process their initial emotional responses. The debriefing should provide staff members with a safe space to share their experiences, emotions, and concerns related to the event.

Ensure confidentiality: Employees should feel confident that their experiences will be kept confidential and that sharing their experiences will not lead to negative consequences.

Provide options for sharing: This may include options such as one-on-one conversations, group discussions, or written reflections, so that employees can choose the method that works best for them.

Focus on strengths and resilience: When sharing experiences, it's important to focus on strengths and resilience, rather than solely on negative experiences. This can help to promote a sense of hope and empowerment among employees who may have experienced trauma.

Acknowledge the impact of trauma: It's important to acknowledge the potential impact of trauma on mental health and wellbeing. This may include providing access to mental health resources or support groups.

Support and resources

As a manager, you could provide regular training on topics such as stress management, communication skills, and resilience building. Encourage employees to attend our online workshops, peer networking, or other learning opportunities related

to mental health and wellbeing. A full list of resources is outlined in the back of this manual and visit www.bristolnights.co.uk for online and in person training modules.

It is also important to follow up with the individual after the conversation to ensure that they are receiving the support they need. Being available and supportive following a difficult conversation can help individuals feel valued and respected, which can help to promote their well-being.

Self-care

It is important for managers to encourage staff members to practise self-care following a traumatic event. This may include taking time off, seeking support from friends or family, or engaging in activities that promote relaxation and stress reduction. Managers should also prioritise their own self-care, as it can be emotionally taxing to support others through traumatic events.

Follow-up

Schedule follow-up meetings or check-ins with staff members to assess their well-being and to provide additional support as needed.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment in the Workplace

Sexual abuse and harassment can have a profound and lasting impact on the wellbeing and work performance of staff members. It's important for organisations to provide support to employees who have experienced such trauma.

Sign up to the Women's Safety Charter

Bristol Nights has a range of tools and resources for a zero tolerance approach to harassment and gendered violence, including a toolkit and training to plan for safety.

www.bristolnights.co.uk/womens-safety-charter

Offer a safe and confidential space

It's important to provide staff members with a safe and confidential space where they can discuss their experiences and receive support. This could be a designated counsellor or an employee assistance program.

Provide time off

Staff members who have experienced sexual abuse or harassment may need time off to process their experiences and recover.

Offering paid time off or flexible working arrangements can help support employees during this time.

Foster a supportive work environment

Creating a supportive work environment can help staff members feel more comfortable coming forward and seeking help. This can include promoting open and honest communication, providing training on bystander intervention and sexual harassment prevention, and having clear policies in place to address such incidents.

Hold perpetrators accountable

It's important to take allegations of sexual abuse and harassment seriously and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. This can include conducting a thorough investigation, taking appropriate disciplinary action, and providing support to the victim.

Remember, it's important to listen to the experiences of staff members and to believe them.

By taking steps to support employees who have experienced sexual abuse or harassment, organisations can help create a safe and inclusive workplace for all.



Substance Use in the Workplace

Workers in the night time economy, particularly in hospitality, may be exposed to substance use in the workplace. This includes alcohol as well as drugs, both illegal and prescribed. Substance use may have negative effects on mental health and wellbeing or influence an unhealthy workplace culture.

Bristol Nights has resources on creating a harm reduction policy for the night time economy, which may guide your response.

www.bristolnights.co.uk/harm-reduction

It's important to approach the situation with compassion and a non-judgmental attitude. Substance use is a complex issue, and those who struggle with it often need support to overcome it.

Self medication

If drinking on the job is common in your workplace, you as the manager need to be aware of the following potential issues:

Risk of addiction

Self-medication can lead to dependence and substance use, particularly when workers are using drugs or alcohol to cope with stress or anxiety related to their work.

Impaired performance

Self-medication can impair performance and increase the risk of accidents or mistakes in the workplace.

Mental health concerns

Self-medication can also exacerbate mental health concerns, particularly when workers are using drugs or alcohol to cope with depression, anxiety, or other issues.

Workplace safety concerns

Self-medication can lead to safety concerns in the workplace, putting both workers and customers at risk.

Unexpected consequences

Self-medication can have legal consequences, particularly when workers are using illegal drugs or are under the influence of alcohol while on the job. This can lead to fines, legal charges, or loss of employment. For business owners, it can also lead to loss of a licence or even criminal charges.

Supporting Team Members who use Substances Problematically

If you are in a position of supporting staff who are struggling with substance use remember this could be a coping mechanism for trauma.

Problematic or dependence on the use of alcohol or other drugs is often, but not exclusively, an unhealthy way of coping with trauma and other stressful life events.

Encourage them to seek help

Encourage the staff member to speak with a doctor, a counsellor, or specialist drug and alcohol worker. Offer to help connect them with resources if needed.

Be an active listener

Provide a non-judgmental and empathetic ear. Let the staff member know that you care and are there to help.

Keep it confidential

Respect the staff member's privacy and keep any information shared confidential, unless it poses a risk to the individual or others.

Offer counselling and support

Offering counselling and support to staff who are self-medicating can be a powerful tool in promoting recovery and reducing the risk of relapse. This could include offering confidential counselling services, support groups, or peer support programs.

Provide resources

Share information about substance use treatment programs, helplines, support groups, and employee assistance programs.

Promote a Healthy Workplace Culture

Encourage a supportive work environment that promotes healthy habits and discourages substance use in the workplace, (including limiting alcohol consumption whilst working).

Lead by example

Model healthy habits and promote a culture of wellness in the workplace.

Develop clear policies and guidelines

Clear policies and guidelines around substance use in the workplace can help to reduce the risks and consequences of self-medication. Be sure to include clear guidance on positive support through access to specialist services. This approach is more likely to create open dialogue and reduce stigma.

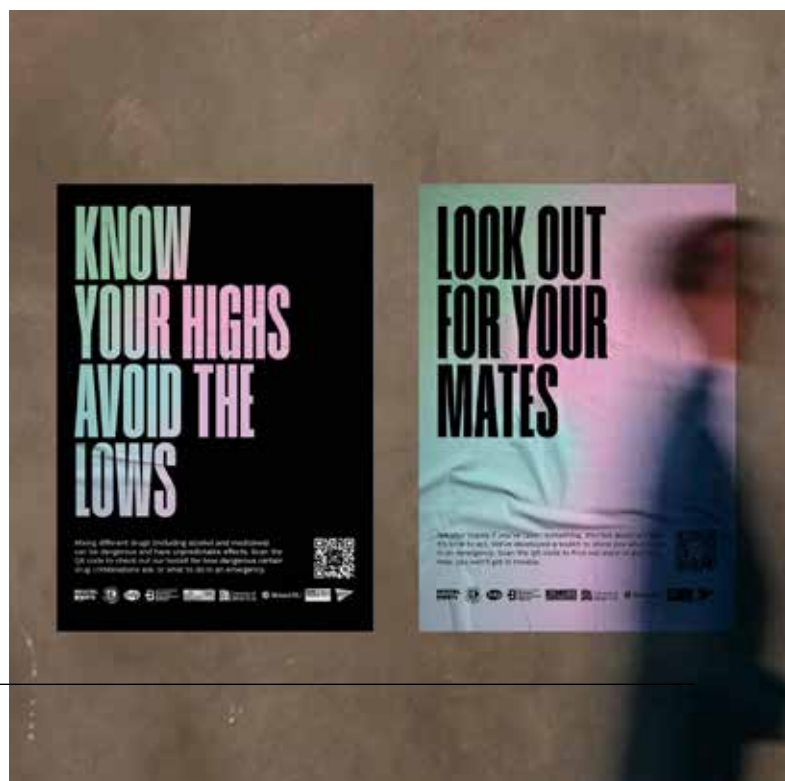
Consider harm reduction in your response

Developing clear policies and guidelines for how you as an employer can support an employee's disclosure of substance use, could be the difference between losing a good employee to retaining your workforce whilst being a supportive business.

Harm Reduction is non-judgemental at its core. Helping your team member through a challenging time can help set them on a more stable path to recovery.

Losing regular employment could become a catalyst into a downward spiral for your employee.

If appropriate for your organisation, consider Harm Reduction as your approach, coming from a place of safety, care, and guidance before any disciplinary action is taken.



Mental Health Good Practice

Techniques to Manage Stress

When employees have the necessary resources and support to maintain their mental wellbeing, they are better equipped to build resilience, manage stress, make sound decisions, and contribute effectively to their work.

In committing to become a mentally healthy workplace, organisations contribute to breaking the stigma surrounding mental health issues and create a more inclusive and compassionate work environment for everyone on their team.

There are many methods for calming anxiety, and stabilising your nervous system when stress flares up. Here are a few ideas to share with your team.

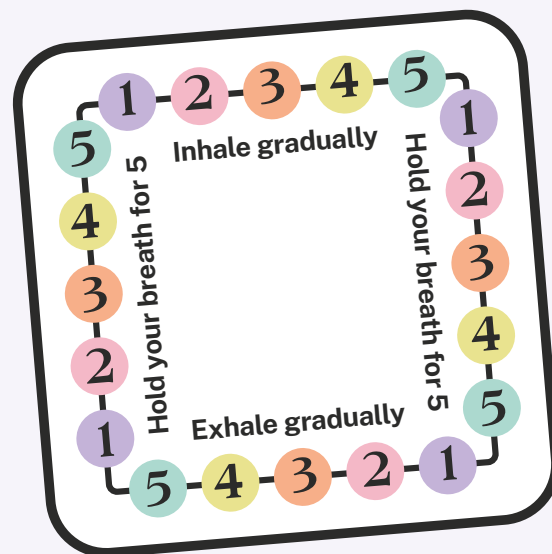
Regain control of your breathing by consciously breathing

Conscious breathing helps us feel calm by working with our brain and nerves. When we focus on our breath and take deeper, slower breaths, we trigger a calming response in our body by increasing production of calming brain chemicals and reducing stress hormones.

Square breathing

Take deep breaths: Breathing in for the count of 4 and exhaling to the count of 4.

Deep breathing is a simple yet effective way to regulate the nervous system. Deep breaths help to restore a sense of control and sends signals to the brain and body that no danger is present and that no emergency response is required.



Visualisation

To start with, pick a safe space that is personal to you. This can be anywhere, a place, a room, a setting that helps you feel at ease and at peace. The idea is to form a picture in your head that is detailed in colour, smell, sight, sounds and all sensory inputs from your surroundings. This can be effective in restoring a sense of calm and safety.

Visualise your emotion, giving it a name, a colour and holding it in mind-create boundaries around it such as placing it inside a box or container. Try picturing the emotion as an object, for example a hard concrete slab and reduce it to a wet piece of card.

Reducing the emotion to something that we perceive to be more manageable can assist in feeling more in control of that emotion that is all consuming.

Grounding techniques

The idea of grounding is to shift the focus of thought or bodily sensation or internal distress by focussing on the external world.

This means bringing your internal awareness of what's happening into the present moment and shifting that focus on what's happening externally or around you.

For example:

Using our senses to notice 5 things

1. **FIVE** things that you can see.
2. **FOUR** things that you can touch.
3. **THREE** things that you can hear.
4. **TWO** things that you can smell.
5. **ONE** thing that you can taste.

Resources and Support

**In case of emergency always call 999
if someone is in immediate danger.**

**Samaritans: If you need someone to talk to,
in confidence, open 24 hours a day:**

Call 116 123 for free

eLearning and training

For in person and online training on the content covered in this resource, please visit www.bristolnights.co.uk/thrive-at-night

Further resources

Please go to the Thrive at Night website for a list of resources and support.

Industry specific mental health support

The hospitality industry can be a high-pressure, fast-paced environment, and employees may be at risk of experiencing mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, and addiction.

A comprehensive directory of industry-specific support can be found on the Bristol Nights website.

Wellbeing workbook

The Thrive at Night Wellbeing workbook is packed full of practical advice for an individual to take to start the journey of thinking about their own mental and wellbeing.

Employee assistance programs (EAPs)

Many employers in the hospitality industry offer confidential counselling and support services for employees and their families.

These programs can provide mental health support, financial advice, legal advice, and other types of assistance.

About this document

This document has been created in collaboration with Bristol City Council, Bristol Nights and NAOS, along with a number of city partners.

Special thanks to the Public Health team at Bristol City Council, Bristol Drugs Project and the Bristol Nights advisory board for their input and insight.

Copies of this document are available from www.bristolnights.co.uk/thrive-at-night



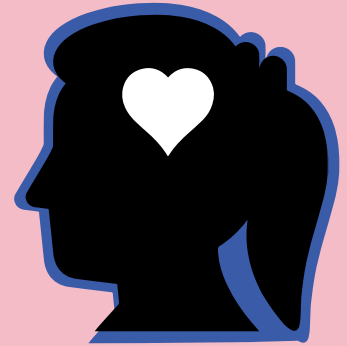


Scan for more information or visit:
www.bristolnights.co.uk/thrive-at-night

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