



# Barfection Safeguarding Notice November 2023

**November 2023 Special Edition: Navigating Men's Mental Health in Hospitality**

Dear Aspiring and Established Hospitality Professionals,

In recognition of Men's Mental Health Awareness Month this November, we are steering our attention towards the well-being of men who are embarking on or advancing in their hospitality careers. Our industry is known for its dynamic pace and service excellence, which can sometimes overshadow the importance of mental health, particularly amongst men. As future leaders and key team members, your mental resilience is paramount.

## Understanding Men's Mental Health in Hospitality

### The Hidden Challenge:

In an industry that often prizes a 'tough it out' mentality, it's important to recognise that mental health issues don't discriminate. Men in hospitality can face immense stress, long hours, and high customer expectations, all of which can impact mental health.

Studies show that mental health support in the workplace leads to reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and improved morale, but how do we know when someone needs support if they don't ask?

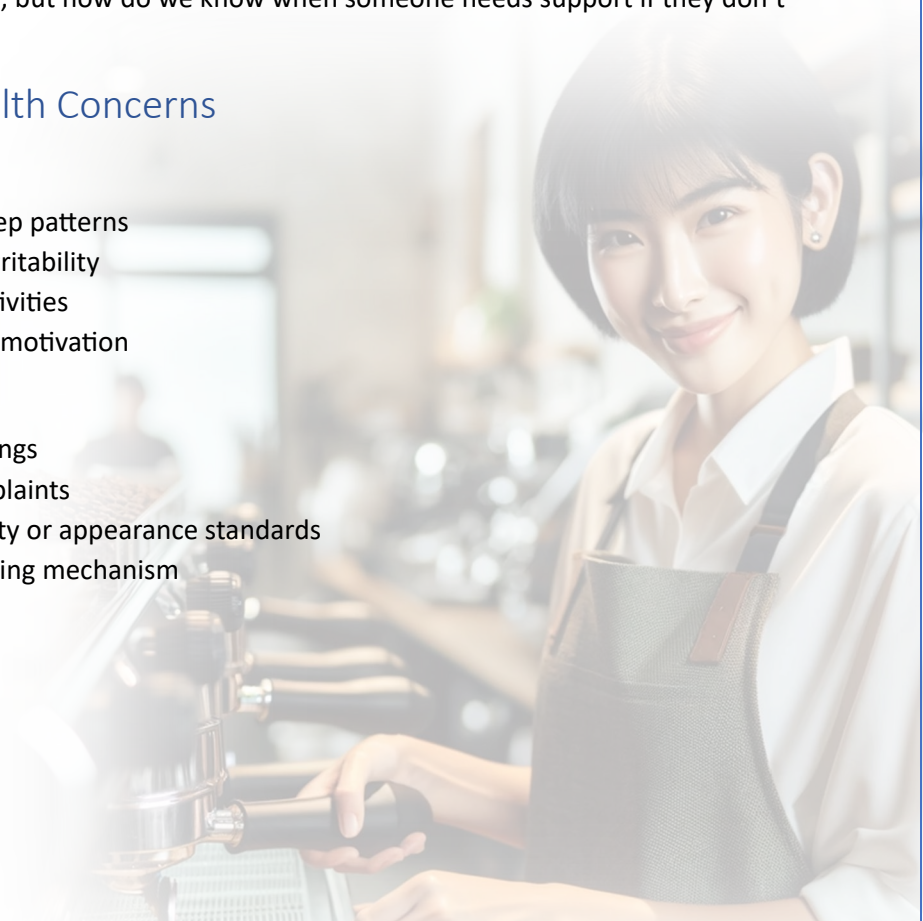
## Recognising Mental Health Concerns

### Physical and Emotional Signs:

- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Visible stress, anxiety, or irritability
- Withdrawal from team activities
- Decreased productivity or motivation

### Behavioural Signs:

- Avoidance of work gatherings
- Increase in customer complaints
- Neglecting workplace safety or appearance standards
- Substance misuse as a coping mechanism



## What can we do to support a colleague we suspect is suffering with mental health concerns?

- **Observe Without Judgement:** Keep an eye on the colleague's behaviour without making assumptions.
- **Approach Gently:** Find a private and comfortable setting to express your concern. Use “I” statements, such as “I’ve noticed you seem a bit unlike yourself lately, is everything okay?”
- **Listen Actively:** Give them your full attention and listen without interruption or judgement. Sometimes, the simple act of listening can provide great relief.
- **Offer Support, Not Solutions:** It’s important not to offer solutions or dismiss their feelings. Instead, let them know you are there for them and ask how you can help.
- **Encourage Professional Help:** Gently suggest they seek support from a mental health professional. Reassure them that there’s no shame in seeking help.
- **Provide Information:** Share resources that Barfection offers, such as counselling services and advice from The Drinks Trust, which can be found here: <https://www.drinkstrust.org.uk/get-help/restore>
- **Maintain Privacy:** Respect their privacy and keep the conversation confidential. Trust is essential in such sensitive matters.
- **Follow Up:** Show that you care by checking in with them after your initial conversation but be mindful not to pressure them into sharing.
- **Support Their Workload:** If possible, offer practical help with their workload. This can alleviate stress and give them space to focus on their well-being.
- **Promote a Supportive Environment:** Encourage a culture of openness and support within the classroom. This can help to reduce stigma and make it easier for people to speak up about mental health issues.
- **Be Patient:** Understand that mental health recovery can take time. Show patience and give them the space they need to heal.
- **Educate Yourself:** Learn about mental health issues so you can understand what they might be going through and how best to support them.
- **Encourage Work-Life Balance:** Promote balance within your group, encouraging breaks, and reasonable study hours.
- **Be Inclusive:** Include them in team activities and conversations if they are up to it. Sometimes just feeling a part of the group can make a big difference.
- **Speak to a member of the safeguarding team:** If you’re worried about someone’s safety or you feel they need more support than you can give, it might be necessary to confidentially speak to someone within the safeguarding team. Call 0151 203 9159 option 5 or submit a safeguarding referral form via our website: <https://www.Barfection.co.uk>

## What can we do to support our own mental health?

- **Set Boundaries:** It's vital to delineate clear lines between your work/study time and your personal life. Learning to say 'no' when you've reached your capacity is crucial, as is ensuring you have ample opportunity to relax.

- **Practice Self-Care:** Prioritise activities that foster well-being, such as regular exercise, pursuing hobbies, or engaging in relaxation techniques. Even amidst a hectic shift, make time for brief pauses to breathe deeply or stretch.
- **Stay Connected:** Keep up a robust network of friends, relatives, and colleagues. Don't shy away from sharing your experiences and emotions with trusted associates.
- **Seek Professional Help When Needed:** If you find yourself struggling, it's important to reach out for support from a mental health professional. Many employers and educational bodies provide counselling services.
- **Mindful Eating and Hydration:** Erratic mealtimes are commonplace in the hospitality industry. Strive to consume well-balanced meals and keep yourself adequately hydrated, as both can have a substantial impact on your mood and energy levels.
- **Adequate Sleep:** Ensure that you are getting sufficient rest. Sleep is fundamental for managing emotions and stress effectively.
- **Continuous Learning:** Make an effort to educate yourself about mental health. Understanding the ins and outs of stress, anxiety, and other mental health concerns can equip you to act proactively.
- **Reflective Practice:** Maintain a journal or diary to reflect on your daily experiences, release frustrations, and recognise your accomplishments.
- **Time Management:** Develop proficient time-management abilities to strike a balance between the demands of your work/study and your personal life, which can help reduce stress and avert burnout.
- **Healthy Work Environment:** Regardless of whether you're studying or working, it's important to make sure your setting is conducive to comfort, with adequate lighting and ergonomic furniture to diminish physical stress.
- **Limit Caffeine and Alcohol:** Depending on caffeine to stay sharp and alcohol to relax can lead to a detrimental cycle that adversely affects mental health.
- **Use Technology Wisely:** Utilise apps and resources for mindfulness, meditation, or anxiety management that are specifically designed to foster mental well-being.
- **Develop Emotional Intelligence:** Work on cultivating skills such as empathy, self-awareness, and self-regulation, which can assist you in navigating the emotional demands of hospitality work.
- **Schedule Downtime:** Just as you organise your work and study schedules, earmark regular periods for downtime to engage in activities that replenish your energy, like reading, taking walks, or enjoying music.
- **Professional Development:** Participate in training and workshops that offer expertise not only in hospitality but also in managing workplace stress and personal growth.
- **Celebrate Successes:** Recognise and celebrate your successes, no matter how modest they may seem. This practice can lift your spirits and promote a positive state of mind.
- **Volunteer or Mentor:** Offering your time to help others can give you a sense of purpose and perspective, which can alleviate stress and enhance mental well-being.
- **Be Mindful of Social Media:** Regulate the amount of time you spend on social media platforms, which can often lead to unhealthy comparisons and unnecessary stress.

## Useful Resources

<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.kooth.com/>

<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-help>

<https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/who-else/housing-health-wellbeing/wellbeing/mental-health>

## Parting Thoughts

As you move forward in your hospitality career, remember that personal well-being is the cornerstone of professional excellence. This Men's Mental Health Month (and every month) let's commit to being mindful of our mental health as we pursue our goals. Our training programmes are designed to support you not just in skill-building, but in fostering the resilience needed to thrive in the hospitality industry.

Here's to building a future in hospitality where success is measured not just by performance, but also by the health and happiness of our professionals.

Best wishes,

The Safeguarding Team

Please note this newsletter is for informational purposes and should not be taken as medical advice.