Stress awareness for hospitality shift teams

A supportive conversation works best when it leads to practical action on work pressures. Choose an appropriate private setting and ask what is making the job difficult. Hospitality pressures may involve staffing, conflicting priorities, unpredictable shifts, behaviour from others or uncertainty about duties. Listen without assuming the same issue affects everyone in the same way.

UK workplace awareness and signposting; clinical assessment, therapy and branded first-aid awards are outside scope.

The practical principles

Recognise pressure and change

Excessive demands, unclear roles, poor support or difficult relationships can contribute to stress. People respond differently, so changes in concentration, mood or attendance should prompt a respectful conversation rather than a diagnosis. Consider what has changed in the work: staffing, hours, control over tasks or communication. Work-related causes need attention as part of the employer's management of risk.

Have a useful conversation

Choose a suitable private moment and describe what you have noticed without judgement. Ask how the person is managing and what support might help. Listen, avoid minimising the concern and agree a manageable next step. A colleague can help someone reach their manager, GP or employee support service. Be honest about confidentiality where someone's immediate safety is at risk.

Turn concern into action

Workplace actions might include clarifying priorities, improving breaks, changing workload or arranging a follow-up meeting. Record agreed actions proportionately and give each an owner. Personal coping strategies can support wellbeing alongside changes to the work. If someone appears in immediate danger or seriously unwell, obtain urgent help through the emergency arrangements. Staff should know where current support information is kept.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: a colleague says they cannot complete closing duties in the allocated time and have stopped taking breaks. The manager asks which tasks are creating the problem, checks the rota and agrees a realistic action and review point. That may include changing work allocation or providing support. The conversation can also explain available support services, without making a medical diagnosis.

Avoid the common failure

Encouraging someone to be more resilient does not resolve an excessive workload or unclear role. Record agreed work changes and review whether they helped. Keep sensitive details appropriately restricted. If a person describes an immediate danger to themselves or others, use the organisation's urgent-help arrangements rather than treating it as a routine review.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: A colleague says repeated last-minute rota changes leave them overwhelmed and unable to plan rest.

Listen and ask what change would help. Support them in raising the scheduling issue with the manager and agreeing a follow-up. Point to available personal support if wanted, while keeping attention on the work arrangement causing pressure.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- Work pressure described
- practical change
- support route
- action owner
- review date
- privacy arrangement

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

A helpful starting point is:

Ask about changes and support needs A respectful conversation focuses on their experience.

Work-related stress can involve:

Demands, control and support Work design affects stress.

The same worker covers every late finish: a supervisor's conversation

A supervisor notices that one person has covered four late finishes and is making mistakes at close. The worker says they do not want to let anyone down. How can the supervisor start a useful review?

Compare your decision

Speak privately, describe the workload pattern and ask which parts of the shift have become hardest. Review staffing, breaks, task allocation and support within your authority. Agree one achievable change and a time to check its effect.

Use a specific follow-up: "On Thursday I'll check whether the second closer arrived in time for stock count." The worker should know who to contact if the plan fails earlier.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/overview.htm

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue's procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details