

Daily Rhythm Tools: Restaurant



This module supports restaurant leaders with practical check-in templates tailored to the key phases of a restaurant day: prep, service, and post-service. It's designed to improve team resilience, consistency, and clarity without creating extra tasks. These tools help reduce burnout, foster trust, and give your team the support they need to thrive.

The purpose of this module is to provide leaders within restaurants a daily operational framework optimised for both execution of work and care of the team.

Working in restaurants can have some real challenges which test resilience and mental wellbeing. However, there are some pretty simple things that can be implemented into the day which provide buffers to your team feeling the effects of these challenges so much. The templates below were built so that leaders don't have to think deeply about ensuring these simple things are implemented daily – they become part of the routine.

For restaurants, the structure is broken down into the phases of a day when they have the opportunity to have things go wrong - Prep, Service and Post-Service. Feel free to add to these templates to make them fit into your venues' standard operating processes and timings more naturally, the idea of these is that they slot into your existing processes - not create ANOTHER thing to do. This is a guideline and can be implemented according to business circumstances.

When followed, the templates will provide your team training in stress management and coping skills, improvement in team relationships, trust and psychological safety, and communication guidelines for tough conversations - all things that improve resilience, reduce burnout and provide a boost to adaptive learning.

The hope is that through providing leaders with these, it reduces the mental burden for you of ensuring your staff have support and provides them with all the support they need to flourish in your venue.

Pre-Shift Meeting Template

Complete this at the start of the day when all staff have arrived.

Welcome & Daily Transparency

Reinforce a culture of **open communication**: "We don't hide problems. We meet them head-on."

- Share any **updates on the business** (how things are going, yesterday's feedback, upcoming events)
- Name any **challenges or concerns** (staffing gaps, supply issues, bookings) and **how leadership is addressing them**

Example: "Good morning everyone — thanks for showing up ready. Tonight is fully booked with a large table at 7pm, so we're going to be busy. We're short one person on FOH, and we've had a delivery delay on the lamb — we're working a backup plan with the supplier."

Assign Space for Hard Conversations

This defuses tension now but ensures concerns aren't buried. Name the **time and place** for these chats.

Example: "If anyone needs to talk through anything today - we'll be able to talk privately later on in the day from 3.30-4.30."

Pressure Point Check-in

This builds self-awareness, team accountability and an opportunity for collaboration/support. Each person quickly shares:

- One pressure point they anticipate (e.g. big prep job, tricky section, tiredness, headspace)
- One thing they're owning or managing personally

*Example: "Let's go around — what's the moment today that's going to push you?"
"I've got 6 trays of gnocchi to prep and I'm a bit low on sleep — I'll need a minute at lineup to reset."*

Tools & Support Reminder

Normalise seeking support and show you expect effort, not perfection. Bring attention to the mental health tools, comms processes, break protocols.

Example: "For your reset before service, we have the 'time-out' sheet in the binder by the pot wash. Make sure you use that to really do a good reset..."

Deep Breath Together

Primes the team to use skill and intentionality rather than adrenalin for the day. Do 3, large, deep breaths - in the nose and out the mouth. This lowers stress and narrows focus.

Example: "Let's take a breath together. In through the nose...out through the mouth."

Transition to Service Prep

One last opportunity to leverage community and team. Finish with your team's chant, clap or message.

Example: "You ready?" "Yes Chef!!"

Notes for Facilitators:

*Rotate who leads parts of the meeting where possible (builds shared leadership). Keep it short and sharp, but **never skip it** — resilience is built in consistency.*

FOH Pre-Service Meeting

Complete this 1 hour before service, this provides an opportunity for staff to fix final prep, mentally prepare and complete any of their pre-shift routines.

Re-establish the Goal

Connects the work and pain with the overall goal you are seeking as a team.

- Connect your entire team to the ultimate goal

Example: "Tonight our goal, as always, is a calm presence, quick eyes, and anticipating needs before they arise. "

Guest & Flow Brief

Identify the potential tricky bits they are about to face, allow your team time to mentally prepare themselves for any challenges, rather than be surprised by them.

- Walk through:
 - **Bookings and guest notes** (VIPs, allergies, special occasions)
 - **Where pressure may build** (large tables, late seatings, short turns)
- Assign:
 - **Float support** for sections with higher loads
 - **Scramble plan** if floor coverage breaks down — who steps in?

Example: "At 7pm we have four tables arriving all at the same time, one of which is a table of 12 people. We're going to try to get the orders from the first 3 tables first and then 3 of us do the table of 12 together."

Team Language & Calls

A quick review of the tools your team have should they face something they struggle with - encourage their use.

Quick review of **FOH-specific service cues**:

- **"Timeout"** = step back to get bearings
- **"Scramble"** = shift or cover a section
- **"Clear Air"** = regain composure under pressure

Example: "If we need to "Scramble on Table 7", __ backs up Section 2. If you're stuck, remember we try and catch it early and quickly with team responses."

Set the Leadership Tone

Set the expectation of teamwork and your dependency on them.

A team that feels as though their leader is 'with' them not 'above' them through their challenges significantly improves collective resilience.

Example: "I'm here to help the floor run smooth — but I need feedback to do that. Speak up early, keep each other strong, and let's give our guests a great service."

Deep Breath Together before Stepping into Service

Primes the team to use skill and intentionality rather than adrenalin for service.

- Do 3, large, deep breaths - in the nose and out the mouth. This lowers stress and narrows focus.

Example: "Let's take a breath together. In through the nose...out through the mouth. Let's keep it tight, kind, and sharp. Doors open in 45.""

BOH Pre-Service Meeting

Complete this 1 hour before service, this provides an opportunity for staff to fix final prep, mentally prepare and complete any of their pre-shift routines. A good time is just after a final tasting of ingredients.

Re-establish the Goal

Connects the work and plan with the overall goal you are seeking as a team.

- Connect your entire team to the ultimate goal

Example: "Tonight our goal, as always, is speed of food to keep these tables full."

Guest & Flow Brief

Identify the potential tricky bits they are about to face, allow your team time to mentally prepare themselves for these challenges rather than be surprised by them.

- Walk through:
 - **Bookings and guest notes** (VIPs, allergies, special occasions)
 - **Where pressure may build** (large tables, late seatings, short turns)
- Assign:
 - **Float support** for sections with higher loads
 - **Scramble plan** if floor coverage breaks down — who steps in?

Example: "At 7pm we have four tables arriving all at the same time, one of which is a table of 12 people, we're going to try to get the food from the first 3 tables out first and then scramble the table of 12 together."

Team Language & Calls

A quick review of the tools your team have should they face something they struggle with - encourage their use.

Quick review of **BOH-specific service cues**:

- **"Timeout"** = step back to get bearings
- **"Scramble"** = shift or cover a section
- **"Clear Air"** = regain composure under pressure

Example: "If we need to "Scramble on Protein", __ backs up Pastry. If you're stuck, remember we try and catch it early and quickly with team responses."

Set the Leadership Tone

Set the expectation of teamwork and your dependency on them.

A team that feels as though their leader is 'with' them not 'above' them through their challenges significantly improves collective resilience

Example: "I'm here to help us run smoothly — but I need feedback to do that. Speak up early, we can all help one another. Let's give our guests a great service."

Deep Breath Together before Stepping into Service

Primes the team to use skill and intentionality rather than adrenalin for service.

- Do 3, large, deep breaths - in the nose and out the mouth. This lowers stress and narrows focus.

Example: "Let's take a breath together. In through the nose...out through the mouth. Let's keep it tight, do final checks and clean surfaces please. Doors open in 45."

Post-Shift Meeting Template

Complete this after clean down, allowing emotions to settle and the processing of adrenaline built during service.

2-Minute Personal Reflection (Silent)

Post-service reflections build stronger teams by creating space to learn, reset, and support each other after the pressure of service - reducing burnout significantly.

Each member of the team, using their notebook or phone, answers honestly to themselves:

- **What went well?**
- **What was hard?**
- **What can we improve for tomorrow?**

Example: "Take two minutes now, just for you and do your personal reflections."

Leader Reflection - Like Magnus did

From the leader, this models honest, constructive expression, and reinforces team culture. As the leader, share your own reflections, including:

- Wins to celebrate ("The pace tonight was clean and steady — you nailed it.")
- Challenges they observed ("I could see us struggling with the fish dish tonight - I have noted it down to solve tomorrow")
- A thank you or acknowledgement, especially if the team held it together under pressure

Example: "Here's how I saw tonight go...And I want to say a big THANK YOU to you all for a job well done."

Team Sharing

This process is about emotional offloading and shared learning, it is NOT a performance review.

Each team member shares aloud their reflection — ideally in the same 3-part format:

- What went well
- What was hard
- What could improve tomorrow

Ground rules:

- No cross-talk
- No immediate problem-solving
- Just listen and hold space

Example: "Let's go around and share, as a team how did you see it?"

Information to set up for tomorrow

Allow your team time to mentally prepare themselves for any challenges rather than be surprised by them.

If there is anything coming that could impact your staff or make their work challenging, tell them. Allowing them to process and plan builds resilience.

Example: "Tomorrow, just wanting to let you know, we have X number of covers, a big guest table, etc."

Offload Ritual Reminder

Reminders, especially from leaders, help this process become normal and expected, not optional 'self-care fluff'.

Each team member should have built their **Offload Ritual** using the tool-builder.

Example: "Thanks for showing up and sharing — now take care of yourselves, please use your Offloading Rituals."

Close with Deep Breaths Together

A moment of unity and reset before leaving the kitchen or floor.

- Do 3, large, deep breaths - in the nose and out the mouth. This lowers stress and narrows focus.

