



## Employer Case Study: *Union Gospel Mission*

*Union Gospel Mission is in the heart of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Committed to transforming communities "by overcoming poverty, homelessness and addiction one life at a time", the employees at UGM work in a rewarding yet psychologically challenging environment. And sometimes this work takes a toll on their mental health and overall wellbeing.*

*UGM took an innovative approach to supporting those employees who needed a break from emotionally taxing work on the streets of Canada's poorest neighbourhood. **They created a respite program that provides employees with the opportunity, if they need it, to transfer to a one-year position that works inside UGM.** This program gives employees who are deeply committed to the work and mission of UGM a sometimes much needed chance to "catch their breath." In addition, this practice leads to higher employee retention, as opposed to the employee leaving due to burnout, which can often be the #1 reason for people who work in caring occupations to leave their employer.*

*Taking employee health and self-care seriously is a priority. All UGM employees also receive nonviolent crisis intervention training, which equips them with the knowledge and skills to safely handle difficult situations. This type of training acts as a preventative measure because it **decreases the likelihood of them becoming overwhelmed with stress or even fear** if such situations arise in the future. UGM also runs a coaching program, where **employees can meet with professional coaches in a safe space to talk through or receive professional insight on various matters.***

