



**Wellness at Sea**  
FROM SAILORS' SOCIETY

# HOW TO COPE WHEN LIFE SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL

WELLNESS AT SEA - CYCLE 2



Dear Seafarer,

I hope you are doing well? The world we currently live in is a very strange place. As a seafarer, you have a lot on your plate ... In recent times, you were not only faced with a pandemic which saw seafarers being stuck on vessels, but also with fears of possible piracy attacks, criminalisation of seafarers and most of all, worries over your family and their health and safety.

This section introduces you to Sailors' Society's Crisis Response Network and how it can help you when you are experiencing a crisis. Your company or organisation will most likely also use this cycle to highlight the resources they have at your disposal. Whether it is a traumatic event, a concern over your emotional health or if you just need a listening ear – we want you to know you are not alone!

## What happens when life spirals out of control?

From time to time an event or series of events can leave us feeling depleted and overwhelmed. If something happens to a loved-one or yourself - a sudden illness, an accident, a pandemic, an attack on your vessel or natural disaster - these are all traumatic experiences which can provoke powerful and disturbing emotions in us which generally settle in time, without needing professional help.

But we all need a helping hand from time to time. Events like this can turn into a scenario where you feel helpless and anxious and where there is a risk of harm or danger to yourself or others. **This is the time to reach out for support.**

Immediately after such an event it is common for people to feel shocked, or numb, or unable to accept what has happened. You may also be in denial – acting as if the event never occurred. Because you are so unique, you will react in a unique way. You will go through your own process to get to grips with what has happened. In this time, it is normal to experience mixed feelings. Being **scared, feeling powerless, angry, guilty, sad** or even **ashamed and embarrassed** - these are all normal. Physically you may struggle to

sleep, have night terrors, headaches, changes in appetite, fatigue and more.

**Remember, it is not you that is abnormal – it is the situation you were exposed to that are abnormal.**

**We want to invite you to: Reach out!**

**We want to assure you: YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

In this cycle look out for the following content:

- A few posters acting as a reminder of how Sailors' Society is there to support you not only in ports around the world but also remotely, through its Crisis Response Network (CRN). The CRN provides a rapid response trauma care and counselling service for survivors of piracy attacks, natural disasters and any crises at sea. **To give you peace of mind, this service is also available to your family should they experience any sort of crisis.**
- Two videos, showing how our crisis response teams were able to support seafarers on the MV Seaman Guard Ohio during a traumatic ordeal and also how we supported their families during this difficult time. Hopefully this will inspire confidence to trust us to help should you and your family ever find yourselves in a tough situation.
- A podcast exploring what you can expect when going through a traumatic experience including how it can affect your body, mind and relationships, as well as the help available to get through it.



### What is expected of you?

As explained before, every cycle will ask you to take a practical action. Remember that this journey will only be as valuable and exciting as you allow it to be. It will only be as rich an experience as the work you put into it. This campaign provides you with ample resources to improve your wellbeing, but ultimately you are the master of your own ship - responsible for your own wellbeing.

In cycle one we asked you to join the conversation and join us on social media. If you have not done this, make time for this now.

### What is the action for this cycle?

We want to ask you to sign a pledge. This may seem a futile exercise, but getting to a point where you pledge to yourself to take care of your wellbeing is extremely important. There is something powerful in taking an action, in putting your hand on paper.

If you want to share this with us on social media, go for it, but ultimately this is for you. It represents, in the simplest of ways, a choice for a mindset saying that you take responsibility for the life

you live. Part of taking responsibility, is to commit to reach out and seek help when needed. Part of this obligation is to proactively learn about places you can reach out to when things get tough. You are not alone! We are all in this together.

I hope that taking another small step on the journey will be a positive experience for you and that it will contribute to a better understanding of yourself and the maritime world. I hope that it will have some impact on your day-to-day journey – even if it's small, but even better if it is profound.

Kind regards,



Johan Smith,  
Wellness at Sea programme manager, Sailors' Society

## MY PERSONAL WELLNESS PLEDGE

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
make this pledge to myself and the people I care for.  
I will actively participate in my personal wellness because I realise that life is mine to live.

Where I fall short, I commit to making changes to grow as a person.

Where I am strong, I undertake to celebrate this strength to the benefit of myself and others as I endeavour to be the best person I can be.

I am open to new ideas that can enhance my Wellness and committed to:

- 1) honestly look at my relationships, on board and at home
- 2) investigate my emotions and recognise how my emotions affect my day-to-day life
- 3) care for my body
- 4) keep on learning
- 5) be true to myself and to the values and beliefs that guide me

When things get too much, I will reach out and seek support.

When I do not succeed, I will try again, and again!

Sign : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## REACH OUT TO US TODAY, EVEN IF IT IS JUST TO HAVE A LISTENING EAR:

**Sailors' Society's Crisis Response Network provides a rapid response trauma care and counselling service for survivors of piracy attacks, natural disasters and crises at sea.**

### REGIONAL CONTACTS:

#### AFRICA

Rev J.D. van Schalkwyk:  
0027 8330 18022

#### INDIA

Manoj Joy:  
0091 9884 140950

#### ASIA

Gavin Lim:  
0065 9222 4600

#### THE PHILIPPINES

Cathy Paeste:  
0063 9175 782 118

#### EUROPE

Marc Schippers:  
0032495 185691

