



Wellness at Sea
FROM SAILORS' SOCIETY



CYCLE 5 EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Depression, anxiety and mental health: Recognising the signs and symptoms and simple things that you can do to keep mentally healthy.



WELCOME TO WELLNESS AT SEA CYCLE 5: WEEKS 13-15



Dear Friend,

How are you doing? I trust that you've found the information that we've shared up to now as part of the Wellness at Sea Awareness Campaign, meaningful.

Previously, we've discussed the difference between mental health and mental illness and also talked about the many myths that are so often associated with mental health. In this next cycle, we're digging deeper and exploring a bit more about depression and anxiety and what you can do to cope with life at sea.

As I've said before, these are challenging times for us all. After the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the rapid worldwide spread of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) to be a pandemic, there has been a dramatic rise in the prevalence of mental health problems, both nationally and globally.

Besides patients with COVID-19, negative emotions and psychosocial distress may occur among the general population due to the wider social impact and public health and governmental response, including strict infection control, quarantine, physical distancing, and national lockdowns.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, several mental health and psychosocial problems, including depressive symptoms, anxiety, stress, post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) and sleep problems, are of increasing concern and likely to be significant. Now, more than ever, every one of us needs to look after our mental health. In this booklet we discuss a few everyday things that can assist you to take care of yourself.

These include:

- knowing the signs so that you can take action should you or a friend, family member or co-worker get depressed
- a depression test you can take when you are worried about yourself
- top tips for keeping mentally healthy

The action for Cycle 5 involves you taking the depression test. It is something that you can do by yourself in a comfortable place. Please note, this test does not diagnose you, but instead raises any red flags and assists you to know when to seek help. We've been talking a lot about where to get help and I want to again remind you that the Sailors' Society team is there for you. If you are feeling anxious or depressed, reach out for a confidential chat today!

Keep well and healthy,



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

Need help?

Email crisis@sailors-society.org visit
www.facebook.com/SailorsSocietyCRN,
go to www.sailors-society.org/helpline
or call +1-938-222-8181

SOURCES:

Mahase, E. Covid-19: WHO declares pandemic because of "alarming levels" of spread, severity, and inaction. BMJ 368, m1036 (2020)
Pfefferbaum, B. & North, C. S. Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. N. Engl. J. Med. 383, 510-512 (2020).

DEPRESSION: KNOW THE SIGNS

Depression is the leading cause of mental health issues – and recognising it is the first step to getting help.

All of us have bad days, but the key to recognising there may be a more serious problem is the frequency of the symptoms below. Understanding the signs can help you know whether to seek professional advice.

EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS



- Displaying unusual behaviour or changes in usual behaviour
- Being withdrawn
- Aggression or tearfulness
- Loss of humour
- Loss of confidence
- Disruptive behaviour
- Inability to concentrate on tasks, increased errors, missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and/or sedatives
- Difficulty remembering things
- Poor job performance
- Becoming withdrawn, not participating in conversations or social activities and spending increasing amounts of time alone in cabins
- An employee who is normally punctual frequently arriving late



FEELINGS

- Irritable
- Anxious
- Overwhelmed
- Worthless
- Frustrated
- Unhappy
- Disappointed
- Sad
- Indecisive
- Unmotivated



PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Suffering from frequent minor illnesses, headaches or stomach upsets
- Difficulty sleeping or constant tiredness or feeling of fatigue
- Lack of care over appearance
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Minor physical ailments
- Displaying unusual behavior or marked changes in behavior



THOUGHTS

- 'I am a failure'
- 'It's my fault'
- 'Nothing good ever happens to me'
- 'I'm worthless'
- 'Life is not worth living'

DEPRESSION: SHOULD YOU GET HELP?

Depression is the leading cause of mental health issues – and recognising it is the first step to getting better. The simple checklist below can help you know whether you should seek professional support.

FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS HAVE YOU:

1. Felt sad, down or miserable most of the time?
2. Lost interest or pleasure in most of your usual activities?

If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, complete the symptom checklist below. If you did not answer “yes” to either of these questions, it is unlikely that you have a depressive illness.

3. Lost or gained a lot of weight or had a decrease OR increase in appetite?
4. Had sleep disturbance?
5. Felt slowed down, restless or excessively busy?
6. Felt tired or had no energy
7. Felt worthless? OR Felt excessively guilty? OR Felt guilty about things you should not have been feeling guilty about?
8. Had poor concentration? OR Had difficulties thinking? OR Been very indecisive?
9. Had recurrent thoughts of death?

Add up the number of ticks to questions 3 – 9 for your total score:

What does your score mean?

(assuming you answered “yes” to question 1 and/or question 2)

4 or less: unlikely to have a depressive illness.

5 or more: likely to have a depressive illness.

For further assessment, or if you are concerned about any of these symptoms, please call our confidential 24/7 helpline on +1-938-222-8181 or instant chat via: [sailors-society.org/wellness](https://www.sailors-society.org/wellness)

Remember, depression is treatable and effective treatments are available – the earlier you seek help, the better.

Please note, this test does not diagnose you, but instead raises any red flags and assists you to know when to seek help. We've been talking a lot about where to get help and I want to again remind you that Sailors' Society's team is there for you.

TOP TIPS TO KEEP MENTALLY FIT



SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS

Talking about your feelings is a positive step towards good mental health. Try to talk to people you trust about your experiences and emotions. If all else fails try to write your emotions and feelings in a diary and reflect on previous days and your general mood.



EAT HEALTHILY

There is a strong link between what we eat and how we feel. Make sure that you are comfortable with your diet and be on the lookout for food that triggers certain emotions.



LOOK OUT FOR OTHERS

Caring for others is often an important part of keeping up relationships with people close to you. It can even bring you closer together. You now have the knowledge to see the signs of poor mental health in someone else – reach out, and give a helping hand where you can.



STAY IN TOUCH

Friends and family can make you feel included and cared for. They can offer different views from whatever is going on in your own head. It is sometimes difficult to keep in touch when your loved one is at sea. Make 'remember notes' on important stories you want to tell the people you care for.



KEEP FIT

Experts believe that exercise releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good. Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem and help you concentrate, sleep, look and feel better. Exercise also keeps the brain and your other vital organs healthy. Work out a fitness routine that will fit in with your weekly schedule.

TOP TIPS TO KEEP MENTALLY FIT



LEARN TO BE COMFORTABLE IN YOUR OWN SKIN

Some of us make people laugh, some are good at maths while others cook fantastic meals. Some of us share our lifestyle with the people who live close to us, others live very differently. We're all different. Accept that you are a unique human being, unlike anyone else out there.



HAVE A REST

A change of scene or a change of pace is good for your mental health. It could be a five minute pause from the task you are busy with or a half hour lunch break in a different location. A few minutes can be enough to de-stress you



ASK FOR HELP

None of us are superhuman. We all get tired or overwhelmed by how we feel, or when things go wrong. If things are getting too much for you and you feel you can't cope, ask for help.

You can call Sailors' Society's helpline on +1-938-222-8181 or instant chat via: [sailors-society.org/helpline](https://www.sailors-society.org/helpline) any time for a confidential chat.



DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY

What do you love doing? What activities can you lose yourself in? What did you love doing in the past? Enjoying yourself helps beat stress. Doing an activity you enjoy probably means you're good at it and achieving something boosts your self-esteem.



sailors-society.org/wellness

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