

CASE STUDY 4

SeafarerHelp Supports Homesick Seafarer Feeling Low

My Mind Matters

The helpline was contacted in September 2016 by a seafarer on an oil tanker who was the only Indian on board, and on just his second contract as a deck cadet.

The seafarer felt low and anxious about his future because he thought that he was not performing tasks given by officers with total satisfaction. He was also feeling homesick and alone because he could not share his feelings and experiences with anyone. In addition, he had recently broken up with his girlfriend.

There was no free internet on board and calls were expensive. The seafarer was in contact with his family but he did not want to worry them. His friends ashore did not understand how he felt and were busy with their own lives. He had also not been ashore since he had joined the ship.

The helpline explained that cadetship is an intense period and can sometimes be discouraging but it is normal to have these feelings. The team talked to him about his work and his performance and he realised that his knowledge and skills were improving. The team also acknowledged that being the only person of his nationality on board was difficult and that his feelings of being alone were quite understandable.

The helpline team suggested that he take some personal time and that he tried exercising on board as this would probably help to make him feel better and more positive. With the team's support and understanding, the seafarer felt better and started planning projects for his holiday when he finished his contract. He wrote to the helpline: 'Your messages were really helpful to me... Nowadays I am more confident in executing my activities which is really positive.'

Source: International Seafarer's Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN)

