

CASE STUDY 5

SeafarerHelp is Here for the Wellbeing of Seafarers

My Mind Matters

A seafarer emailed the helpline while he was at sea, wanting to talk confidentially with someone. He had been having relationship problems and was getting a divorce in a country where it was illegal. He said he had suffered emotional abuse from his wife for two years and although he was the one who had suggested the divorce, he was now feeling empty. He had lost his appetite and was only eating because he knew he needed to.

The seafarer was due to be on board for another five months and he was hiding how he felt from his crewmates. He said his parents were both dead and he was not close with his siblings back home. His wife would be keeping their apartment so he was also worried that he would have nowhere to go when he finished his contract.

Our helpline team is trained in providing emotional support. They listened to the seafarer's problems and helped him through a difficult time by suggesting ways to cope with the situation and generally giving a friendly non-judgemental ear. They suggested that he could try sharing his feelings with a crew mate, and asked what activities he enjoyed that could help him feel better while he was still on board. The team also provided links to ISWAN's Good Mental Health Guides for Seafarers and other seafarers' health resources available on the SeafarerHelp website, which could help him manage his emotions and take care of his mental wellbeing.

The seafarer contacted SeafarerHelp six times over the space of two months. He later contacted the team to thank them for the time they had spent helping and supporting him. He had started a new hobby, creative writing, and was now looking for a place to stay when he finished his contract.

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

