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LET'S TALK

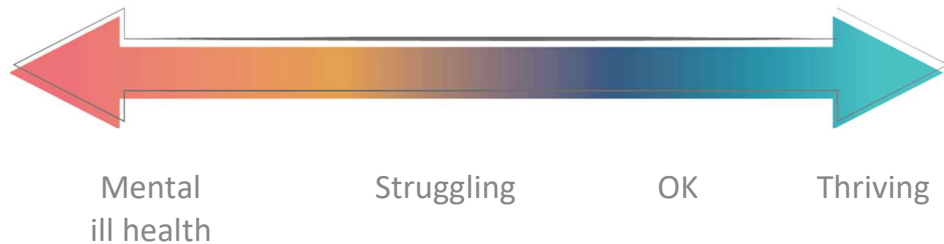
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Mental health is increasingly recognised within the shipping industry as an important issue. There is a growing awareness that our seafarers suffer a higher level of mental ill health and suicide compared to land-based workers. However, we may find mental health issues difficult to talk about.

The truth is though, that everyone exists on a scale of mental health. You move up and down the scale all the time, we all do.



Mental Health Champion

Do

- Ask "Are you ok mate?";
- Be a non-judgmental listener;
- Guide them to the right help;
- Promote the ALL ACT approach and positive mental health in the workplace.

Don't

- Diagnose mental health issues;
- Become a counselor;
- Think you have to do it by yourself.

Remember your personal limitations: what you can and can't do, trust and confidentiality and being able to seek help if you feel the situation is beyond your abilities.

Take care of yourself

Do

- Spend some time taking care of yourself so that you are able to help others
- Use support systems yourself
- Keep listening to them and let them know they have been heard and acknowledged

Don't

- Take on responsibility for fixing someone else's problem. Involve someone else or refer to a professional if you need to.

Notes:

ISWAN

<http://seafarerswelfare.org/>

Stella Maris (formerly Apostleship of the sea)

<https://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/our-work-supporting-seafarers>

Sailors' Society

<https://www.sailors-society.org/ourprojects/crisis>

Campaign Against Living Miserably

<https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

SeafarerHelp

<https://www.seafarerhelp.org/en/>

Check back in

Do

- Let them know you are open to having another conversation;
- Agree on another time to catch up and see how they are doing.

Don't

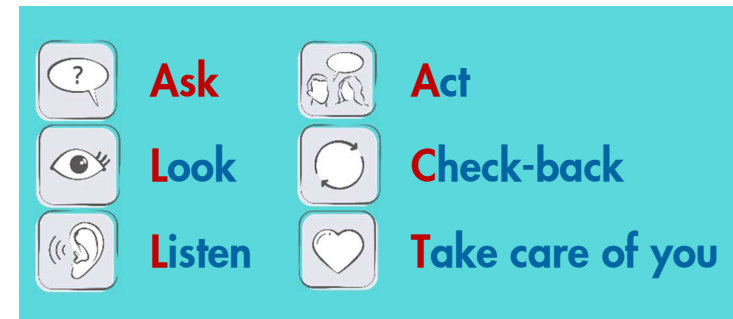
- Leave it too late before talking to them again. A few days is ok, a few weeks may be too long;
- Don't nag or harass to avoid irritation.

Recognising when a colleague might be struggling

A change in any of the following may indicate someone is in distress:

- Eating habits and appetite.
- Moods e.g. withdrawn, anxious, angry.
- Decision-making abilities.
- Appearance e.g. looking tired or less tidy than usual.

The ALL ACT approach



Ask

Do

- Find somewhere private at a time you will not be interrupted;
- Start right, with simple, non-judgmental questions such as "How are you at the moment?";
- Give them space to talk without interruption.

Don't

- Make assumptions about how they are feeling or what is happening;
- Try to diagnose.

Look

Do

- Be aware that people may say they are ok, but appear distressed, disinterested, distracted or disheveled.

Don't

- Comment on their appearance;
- Give up on the conversation if they appear distracted, as they may be thinking of how to respond or struggling to take in what you are saying.

Listen

Do

- Stay focused and pay attention;
- Respond flexibly and sensitively;
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand what they are saying;
- Use sensitive language to recap what they have told you, to show you understand and acknowledge what they have told you.

Don't

- Leave them if they are distressed, just sit with them until they calm down, and start to talk again when they are ready.

Act

Do

- Let them know you care;
- Ask them what you can do to help;
- Remind them of the help and support available to them;
- Help them access the help if they are uncertain how.

Don't

- Make assumptions about how you can help.
- Try to diagnose.
- Trust Google for advice.

Sources of support and advice

Personal networks:

e.g. family, friends, colleagues etc.

Company support systems:

On the vessel e.g. Captain, SMT, Medical Officer etc.
Onshore e.g. DPA, crewing agency, Company-provided professional care etc.

Industry partners:

e.g. charities, unions, associations etc.