

What is mental health? (Adult reflections, myths vs. facts)

Welcome, Seafarer. Let's Begin

You wake up. Another day at sea.

Same shift. Same sounds. Same duties

But somewhere inside, something feels... heavy. Or restless. Or just a little off.

You're not sick. You're doing your job. You're still showing up.

But maybe just maybe something emotional is going on.

That's what we're here to talk about today. Not a weakness. Not problems. Just *mental health* — the part of you that holds your thoughts, emotions, and energy. You've taken care of machines, cargo, safety, and schedules. Now it's time to check in with the one person who runs it all: *you*.

CEO speech -ADD VIDEO

WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS AT SEA

Let's break it down:

You work under pressure — quick decisions, long hours, safety risks.

You're far from family — you miss moments that matter.

You're expected to stay strong — but who checks on the checker?

Your life is routine-heavy — eat, work, sleep, repeat. It gets to your mind.

Mental health isn't about being "*happy all the time*."

It's about handling stress, processing emotions, staying focused, and feeling connected — especially during long voyages.

LET'S REFLECT

Have you ever...

Felt irritated for no clear reason?

Found it hard to sleep even when tired?

Avoided calls or chats, even from loved ones?

Felt like you were "shutting down" emotionally?

If yes — you're not alone.
These can be signs that your mind is asking for support.

MENTAL HEALTH IS MAINTENANCE

Think of your mind like a machine:
It runs daily

It powers everything you do

It needs regular check-ups

When something feels off — it's not a breakdown.
It's just a signal: *"Hey, I need some attention."*
And good news? You can maintain it.
Even small habits help — talking, writing, resting, laughing, breathing.

MYTHS WE NEED TO DROP

Let's be real

MYTHS WE NEED TO DROP – For Seafarers' Mental Health

1. "Mental health problems are just in your head — ignore them and they'll go away."

Mental health challenges are real and need attention, just like physical injuries. Ignoring them can make things worse.

2. "Only people who are mentally weak need help."

Seeking support is a sign of courage and responsibility — not weakness.

3. "Asking for help will ruin my career."

Getting help early protects your performance and career — it doesn't end it.

4. "I should always be tough and handle everything alone."

Teamwork includes emotional support. Talking to someone can lighten the burden.

5. "Sleep and rest aren't that important — I'll catch up later."

Long-term sleep deprivation directly affects your mood, safety, and decision-making.

6. "If I open up, others will judge me or gossip."

Many will respect your honesty — and may even relate. You're not alone.

7. "Homesickness and sadness mean I'm not strong enough for sea life."

These feelings are natural. Recognizing them helps you manage and adapt better.

8. “There’s no time for mental health onboard – we’ve got work to do.”

Investing a little time in mental well-being helps you work safer and more effectively.

9. “Mental health is not my responsibility — it’s the company’s job.”

It’s a shared responsibility. Start with simple self-checks, rest, and crew connection.

10. “Talking about feelings is not for men.”

Emotions are part of being human — not a gender issue. Real strength is in facing them.

SELF-CHECK (YES/NO)

Have you felt emotionally tired, even when physically rested?

Do you sometimes feel numb or disconnected from yourself or others?

Have you avoided talking about how you really feel?

Have work pressures affected your sleep or mood recently?

Do you want to feel better, but don’t know where to start?

If you answered “yes” to two or more, your mental health might need attention — and that’s perfectly okay.

OUR GOAL IN THIS TRAINING

By the end of this mental health module, you’ll be able to:

Understand what mental health means — and why it’s important

Recognize signs of emotional fatigue and stress

Use simple, practical tools to feel more balanced

Support yourself and others onboard without judgment

This isn’t therapy.

It’s just real talk — tools, stories, and support for real seafarers like you.

QUIET REFLECTION

Before We Sign Off

Seafarers, before we close this session, I want to leave you with something simple, but important.

Out here at sea, we train for every emergency — fire, flooding, equipment failure.
But we often forget to prepare for the storms inside our own minds.

Mental health isn't a topic we tick off a checklist.
It's something we live with, manage, and protect — day after day, voyage after voyage.

So here's what I hope you take with you:

You are not alone.

You don't have to be perfect to be strong.

And asking for help doesn't make you weak — it makes you wise.

Check in with yourself the same way you check your equipment — regularly, gently, and with care.

And if something feels off — talk to someone. One small conversation can shift everything.

Thank you for showing up today — for yourself and for your crew.

That's leadership. That's resilience.

And that's how we make mental health a normal, everyday part of life at sea.

We're proud of you for starting this journey.

What You Might Start to Notice

At first, you might think it's just loneliness — missing home, your family, the comfort of familiar routines.

But over time, you may notice it starts to grow into something more.

When you carry that feeling too long, it can leave you drained — not just emotionally, but physically too. You might feel like you're running on empty, even when you've slept. You might lose interest in things you used to enjoy. That's often how burnout begins.

Then there are those unexpected moments when your heart races for no clear reason, your breathing changes, and it feels like everything's too much. That could be a panic response.

And even when things seem fine on the outside, you might feel like you're always on edge, waiting for something to go wrong. That's anxiety, quiet, constant, and exhausting.

What's important to know is this: these feelings are connected.

They don't mean there's something wrong with you; they just mean your mind and body are asking for attention.

So in the next part of this journey, you'll explore what burnout, panic, and anxiety really look and feel like.

You'll learn how to spot them, understand them, and most importantly, manage them.

Because the more you understand what's happening inside, the stronger and more prepared you'll be, not just for yourself, but for your crew too.

Let's take that next step together.

Topic 2

Understanding and Managing Loneliness Onboard

Welcome Seafarer, Let's Begin

Loneliness at Sea

*A thousand waves, yet not one voice near,
The stars above, but no one to hear.
Steel walls echo, but not the heart's cry,
Days drift on, as the soul wonders why.
In the vast blue, even strong men sigh.*

In the vast expanse of the ocean, there exists a stillness that echoes through the heart and mind of every seafarer. It's a peculiar kind of silence, one that is not mere absence of sound, but rather a profound stillness that invites introspection. As you navigate the deep blue waters, surrounded by the endless horizon, the routine of daily tasks can often veil deeper emotions.

you might find yourself working through the motions, your hands busy with the demands of the job, the engine's hum providing a comforting backdrop to your days. Yet, when the rhythm of the sea begins to quiet, a different feeling might emerge. It's not boredom or fatigue; it's a haunting emptiness that settles like a heavy fog.

In those quiet moments, it's important to acknowledge that what you feel is real and valid.

This sense of loneliness and solitude is a common thread that many of us weave into our lives at sea. You may look around at your fellow crew members and see smiles, hear laughter, but deep down inside, there can be an aching stillness that only you recognize.

Before we go any further, I want to create a space where you can express those feelings without fear of judgment or misunderstanding. If any part of this resonates with you, know that you are not alone. So many of us have felt that loneliness, that emptiness that seeps in during quiet hours.

Let's open up a dialogue. Share your thoughts about loneliness; it can be a powerful step towards relief. Whether this is a familiar experience or something you are grappling with right now, your feelings matter. Remember, there's strength in vulnerability. By voicing your experiences, you might find others in this room share your sentiments, creating a bond that lightens the burden we sometimes carry alone.

Your journey at sea is filled with challenges, both external and internal. Embracing those feelings is the first step toward understanding and connection—even amidst the vast, lonely waves. You are not just a sailor, but part of a community that navigates the waters of life together. oo."

"Let's hear what our trainer has to say about loneliness."

CEO speech -ADD VIDEO

Have you experienced this kind of loneliness before?

Let's take a moment to watch this video on loneliness. It explores why seafarers may feel loneliness, even in a busy crew. You'll hear real insights and reflections from life at sea. Understanding is the first step toward connection.

You might find yourself scrolling through your phone, lying in your cabin, or gazing out at the endless sea. And even with others around, there's a sense of distance — as if you're stranded on an island no one else can touch.

Feels like something's missing? That's loneliness, plain and simple.

It's not something we often talk about. Not on ships. Not between shifts. But the truth is — many seafarers feel it. Some carry it quietly for weeks. Others push it aside with work and distraction.

In this lesson, we're going to talk about it — honestly, without judgment. Not because something is wrong with you, but because loneliness is part of this life sometimes, and understanding it is the first step toward handling it.

You don't have to fight it alone.

Let's do a checklist to learn more about ourselves.

"Alright, so once you've finished going through the loneliness checklist, you'll get a simple summary of where you stand — and don't worry, it's not about right or wrong. It's just about understanding how you're really feeling.

If your result shows a Mild level of loneliness, that's a good sign. You're doing okay! But it's still important to stay connected with others and keep checking in with yourself now and then.

If you land in the Moderate range, it means you might be starting to feel a bit disconnected or isolated. And that's totally normal in this line of work. It just means it might be time to take small steps — like having a real chat with a crewmate or reaching out to someone you trust.

Now, if your result is in the High range, that's a sign you might be struggling a bit more emotionally. And you know what? That's okay too. It's not a weakness — it's just your mind's way of saying it needs some care. That could mean talking to someone, using support services, or even just letting a trusted person know how you're feeling.

Whatever the result, it's a starting point — not a label. And we're here to support you through every part of it."

Check List

[Loneliness at Sea: Check Your Emotional Signals](#)

Let's Take a Look at Your Result

✅ [2/10] – **You're doing great!**

"Looks like you're feeling pretty connected and in a good headspace — that's fantastic! Keep nurturing those connections around you and don't forget to check in with others too. Sometimes, just being there for someone else makes a world of difference. Keep it up!"

⚠️ [5/10] – **You're somewhere in the middle.**

"Okay, so you're not at your lowest, but you're also not feeling completely connected either. And that's perfectly okay. This is your gentle reminder to pay attention to how you're feeling. Maybe try opening up to someone, or take part in something that makes you feel included — even small steps can lift your mood."

🔴 [9/10] – **You're probably feeling quite lonely right now.**

"Hey, thanks for being honest with yourself — that takes courage. If you're feeling this way, please don't carry it alone. Talk to someone you trust, reach out to your welfare officer, or even just start a casual conversation with a crewmate. You're not alone, and support is always closer than you think."

"Alright, let's talk honestly for a minute... What *does* loneliness at sea feel like?

You might not even call it loneliness at first.

Maybe it starts during the quiet moments — a slight feeling that you just want to be around someone or talk to someone.

Or you notice you've stopped calling home as often.

Or that even when you laugh with your crewmates, something inside still feels distant.

"Let me ask you something—and be honest with yourself. Have you ever been in a room full of people but still felt kind of... alone? Like you're there, but not really connected?"

Or maybe you've had days where your body feels rested, but mentally—you're just drained. No spark, no drive.

Sometimes, we even find ourselves avoiding real conversations. Not because we're shy, but because... well, what's the point, right? It can feel like nobody *really* gets what we're going through.

If any of that sounds familiar to you—just know, you're not alone. These are actually common signs that your mental well-being might need a bit of attention. And that's exactly why we're here today—to talk about it openly, without judgment."

Sound familiar?

These feelings are more common than you think. It's just that not many people talk about them.

"You know, you're definitely not the only one who's ever felt lonely at sea. In fact, a study done in 2021 by ISWAN — that's the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network — talked to around 1,500 seafarers. And guess what they found?

More than half of them said they felt lonely at least sometimes. And about one in eight said it was a regular thing for them. That's a lot of people feeling just like you might be — especially with the long working hours, the time away from family, and barely any shore leave.

So if you're sitting there thinking, *'Why am I feeling this way?'* — just know, you're not alone in this. Not even close."

WHY DOES LONELINESS HAPPEN — EVEN ON A BUSY SHIP?

Let's be real — the sea is both beautiful and isolating.

You live where you work, with little personal space.

You're surrounded by people, yet emotional connection may be missing.

Long shifts and limited communication with loved ones add to the silence.

That's how loneliness can sneak in, even on a crowded deck.

Quick Check

What's one major reason a seafarer might feel lonely, even when surrounded by others on the ship?

- ☒ There's a lack of emotional connection
- ☐ They have too much free time
- ☐ They don't like the food
- ☐ The ship is too noisy

[Reuse](#) [Embed](#) H-P

How does being away from home contribute to loneliness?

- ☐ It improves your independence
- ☐ It gives you more focus on work
- ☐ You get more rest
- ☒ You miss out on family moments and everyday conversations

✓ Check

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H-P

Let's pause and reflect on something important.
Why do we feel lonely, even with people all around us on the ship?
It's not just about being alone — it's about feeling unseen or unheard.
Understanding this can help us support each other better at sea.

why loneliness happens



- First off, there's the **physical distance from loved ones**. You're out here doing your job, but back home, life keeps moving — birthdays, family moments, even those little daily chats. And missing out on those can leave a heavy feeling inside.



- Then there's something we call **routine fatigue**. You know what I mean — the days start to blur. Same tasks, same faces, same view of the sea. After a while, it starts to wear on you mentally.



- Also, let's be real — there's usually **very little space to talk about how we truly feel**. The focus is always on the job, and sometimes, it feels like emotions just have to wait. But they don't go away... they just pile up.



- And finally, we've got the **cultural or language gaps**. Even with the best crew, it can be tough to connect on a deeper level when everyone comes from different backgrounds. Sometimes, it feels like you're speaking the same language — but not really *connecting*.



All of these things build up quietly, and that's how loneliness finds its way in. But recognizing it? That's the first step to doing something about it."

And let's not forget — there's often pressure to be "tough."

You might tell yourself, *"Others have it worse."*

But here's a gentle reminder: **your feelings are valid, no matter what anyone else is going through.**

How to cope when you start feeling lonely

Here are some small, real ways to start feeling more connected again.

Strategy 1: Stay a Little Longer at the Mess Table

Recall Quiz: True or False – Staying Connected at Sea

Staying five minutes longer at the mess table can help build emotional connections.

☒ True

☐ False

✓ Check

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Deep, serious conversations are required to fight loneliness.

☐ True

☒ False

✓ Check

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Even small, casual chats can make a big difference.

Asking a crewmate about their favorite movie or where they're from is a good way to start a conversation.

☒ True

☐ False

✓ Check

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You should only talk to people if they start the conversation first.

☐ True

☒ False

✓ Check

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Taking the first step yourself shows openness and can help others feel welcome.

Reflecting at the end of the day helps you stay aware of your social connections.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

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H-P

Have you added any personal item, like a photo or a quote, to your cabin space.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

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H-P

Do you think seeing something familiar in your cabin helps you feel more connected to home.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

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H-P

Strategy 3: Use Music to Bring You Home

Quick Check

What is one song or type of music that reminds you of home, and why does it feel special to you?

Purpose: Encourages emotional connection and sharing personal experiences among the crew.

When do you usually listen to music onboard, and how does it affect your mood or energy during the day?

Purpose: Helps individuals reflect on the positive impact of music in their daily routine at sea.

Strategy 4: Be There for Someone Else — Even Quietly

Sitting beside someone and simply being present can be more powerful than forcing a conversation.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

Reuse Embed

H-P

Is it helpful to notice changes in someone's behavior, like being more quiet than usual, as a sign they might be feeling lonely.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

Reuse Embed

H-P

Strategy 5: Write Down What You Can't Say Out Loud

Quick Check

Have you ever tried writing down your thoughts during a stressful or lonely time? What did you notice about how it made you feel afterward?

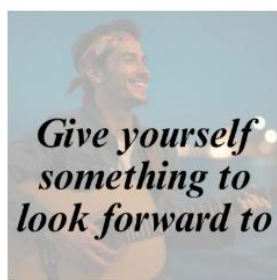
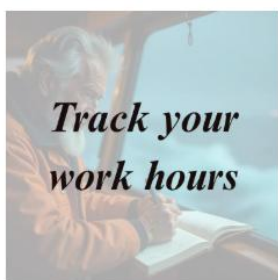
Purpose: Encourages self-reflection and connects the activity to emotional release.

If you were to start with "Right now, I feel...", what kinds of things might come out? What would you want to express just for yourself?

Strategy 6: Create Simple Rituals to Mark Time

Dropdown Activity: Match the Step with Its Purpose

Create a Weekly Highlight
Purpose:



Start a Simple Countdown or Tracker
Purpose:



*Keep a log of
meals*



*Show visual
progress and
time passing*

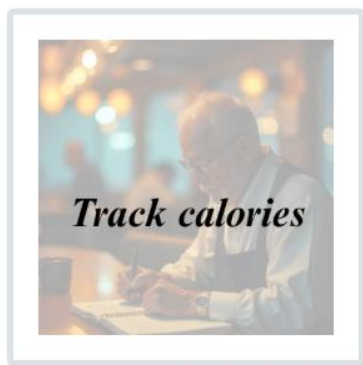


*Improve artistic
skills*



*Plan onboard
events*

Write Just One Sentence a Day
Purpose:



✓ Check

Strategy 7: Reach Out Before It Builds Up

Saying “I’m not feeling like myself” is a good first step when you’re struggling emotionally.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

[Reuse](#) [Embed](#)

H-P

Who is one person you feel comfortable reaching out to when things feel heavy – and what makes them easy to talk to?

Purpose: Encourages reflection and helps learners identify their personal support system before a crisis arises.

Strategy 8: Working Together Across Cultures and Ages — Crew Harmony at Sea

Test your understanding of teamwork across cultures and generations.

Respecting someone’s background and culture improves work relationships.

☒ True

☐ False

☒ Check

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Younger seafarers always prefer to stay silent rather than speak up.

☐ True

☒ False

☒ Check

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H-P

Learning how a crewmate expresses stress can improve your support.

☐ True

☐ False

✓ Check

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H-P

Crew Harmony at Sea

What is the primary message of “Working Together Across Cultures and Ages”.

☐ Only crew members with similar backgrounds work well together.

☐ Diversity in age and culture can be a source of strength.

☐ Following orders is more important than understanding each other.

☐ We must all speak the same language.

✓ Check

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According to the theme, what matters most on a ship.



☒ Shared human connection

☐ Enforcing one culture's rules

☐ Focusing solely on technical skills

☐ Individual performance above all

 Check

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Which approach helps avoid misunderstandings onboard.

☐ Ignoring cultural differences

☐ Learning about each other's backgrounds and preferences

☐ Avoiding group conversations

☐ Forcing everyone to adopt a single work method

 Check

You Don't Have to Do It All. Just Start with One.

Whether it's a photo on your wall, a five-minute chat, or a line in your notebook — these aren't small things. They're lifelines.

Pick one. Try it today.

Loneliness may visit, but it doesn't have to stay.

A QUIET REFLECTION (FOR YOU, NOT FOR ANYONE ELSE)

Before we end this lesson, ask yourself — gently:

"When during the day do I feel most lonely?"

"What's one thing I can do — today — that helps me feel a little more connected?"

"Out of these strategies, which one do you think you'd try first?"

"You don't need to fix everything right now. You just need to start noticing what's going on inside."

MOVING FORWARD WITH STRENGTH AND SUPPORT

While loneliness is a quiet struggle, it's often only one part of a deeper emotional storm faced at sea. Life onboard can test the limits of your mind and spirit. As days stretch into weeks, many seafarers begin to feel burnout from nonstop duties and lack of rest. Others battle homesickness, missing their loved ones, familiar surroundings, or even simple routines from home. Sometimes, unexpected waves of panic or anxiety strike, even when everything seems calm. These feelings are not signs of weakness they are human responses to intense, isolated conditions. Understanding them is the first step toward healing. In the next section, we will dive deeper into each of these challenges. You'll learn how to recognise their signs, hear real-life stories, and explore practical tools to cope. Remember, you're not alone on this journey; others have walked this path too. Let's navigate it together, one emotion at a time. Gear up, we're diving into real seafarer experiences that may reshape your journey at sea. It's time to explore, understand, and rise stronger together.

Topic 3

Common Seafarer-Specific Issues (burnout, homesickness, panic)

Back on Deck — Great to See You!

Welcome aboard this learning journey. Before we dive into the lessons ahead, take a moment not for your duties, not for your reports, but for your

Common Emotional Challenges faced at Sea:



- **Burnout:** When exhaustion builds over time and starts stealing your energy and focus
- **Homesickness:** The quiet ache of missing family, culture, and comfort
- **Panic and Anxiety:** The racing thoughts, the tight chest, the moments that feel overwhelming



These aren't signs of weakness. They're signs that you've been doing a lot. They're reminders to pause, breathe, and reconnect with your own strength.

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H-P

Each lesson in this course is here to help you

- Understand what you're feeling
- Find ways to manage it
- And support your crewmates along the way

We don't talk about these things enough at sea. But it's time we do. You deserve care just as much as you give it.

Let's begin.

CEO Speech

Self-Checklist

Feeling Drained? Let's Talk Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged stress. It doesn't happen overnight. It builds slowly, shift after shift, month after month.

For seafarers, burnout is often hidden behind routine, responsibility, and the pressure to "stay sharp."

Common Signs of Burnout at Sea

- Feeling tired all the time, even after rest
- No motivation or energy to do tasks you once managed easily
- Emotional numbness or irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Increased mistakes or forgetfulness
- Withdrawing from others
- Feeling like you're just going through the motions

Why Burnout Is Common Among Seafarers

- **Repetitive routines** with little variety
- **Long working hours** without clear rest periods
- **Emotional isolation** despite being in a crew
- **High expectations** to stay alert, responsible, and productive
- **Physical strain** with limited recovery time
- **Lack of mental health conversations** onboard

Simple Tools That Help

- **Micro-breaks** – Even 5 minutes of silence, fresh air, or stretching can reset your brain.
- **Name what you're feeling** – Sometimes just saying “I’m overwhelmed” out loud to a crewmate helps release pressure.
- **One-Task Focus** – Instead of juggling multiple tasks, slow down and complete one thing at a time.
- **Movement** – A short walk on deck, light exercise, or even pacing can improve energy.
- **Connect** – Even a short chat with someone you trust can refill your emotional tank.

Open box questions

Try This Today

- Take one intentional 5-minute break.
- Share honestly with one crewmate how you're feeling.
- Choose rest when you can, even if it's brief.

Unscramble the following words related to burnout management

Fill in the missing words

RSTBAE – (Tip: You take them to rest your mind during work)

PLEEHS – (Most important for recovery)

VOMTEEMN – (Keeps you moving and boosts energy)

SLFE-TKLA – (What you say to yourself)

TRISLAU – (Small daily habits that bring comfort)

✓ Check

Something to Reflect On

- Burnout doesn't mean you're weak. It means you've been strong for too long without a pause.
- This sea demands a lot from you — but your well-being matters just as much as your work.
- You don't have to wait until you break. Start by checking in with yourself today.
- You deserve rest. You deserve care. You deserve to feel whole again.

Let's keep going, together.

HOMESICKNESS — CARRYING HOME IN YOUR HEART

*Let's talk about something many of us feel but few of us admit: **homesickness**.*

You might be sitting in your cabin, scrolling through your phone, and suddenly a photo from home pops up: your mom's cooking, your child's drawing, a family celebration. And in that moment, something in your chest tightens. It's not exactly sadness. It's more like a soft ache.

That's homesickness. And it's more common than we think.

Open Quiz

Playlist Builder: Songs That Sound Like Home

Practical Tools That Help

- **Create a weekly home ritual** – Call family every Sunday. Play a game you used to play back home. Cook something simple from your region.
- **Write a letter (even if you don't send it)** – Just writing to someone you miss helps process emotions.
- **Use visuals** – Mark festivals on a calendar. Add stickers for each day passed. Celebrate small wins.

Open Quiz

Reflection Point

- Missing home doesn't make you soft. It makes you *human*.
- You carry your home inside you. And every small effort, every song, photo, or memory you bring into your day helps you feel less far away.
- You're not alone in this feeling. And you're stronger than you think.

Topic 4

Real Stories: Case Studies and Seafarers' Testimonials

"Ahoy, Seafarer — Let's Begin the Journey Within."

Let's Begin — Not With Rules, But With Realness

Today, we're not starting with slides or definitions.

*We're starting with something more powerful: **real voices**.*

*Not from textbooks but from **people just like you**.*

Seafarers who've stood on the same decks, watched the same sunsets, and faced the same emotional waves you might be feeling right now.

Yes, advice is useful.

*But sometimes, it's **a shared story** that stays with you the longest.*

A moment of truth from someone else can echo your own and help you realise:

You're not alone in this.

So in this session, we'll listen.

To stories of quiet strength, of tough days and turning points, of how real seafarers made it through the fog — and how you can, too.

Because this isn't just learning.

This is connecting.

This is healing.

This is for you.

*Not from textbooks but from **people just like you**.*

Seafarers who've stood on the same decks, watched the same sunsets, and faced the same emotional waves you might be feeling right now.

CEO TALK

THE ENGINE ROOM & THE SILENT TEAR

Shared by: A Chief Engineer, 15 years at sea

Late one night, I found myself in the dimly lit engine room, just like any other evening, conducting my usual rounds. Everything seemed to be operating smoothly, the hum of machinery like a comforting lullaby in the background. But then, out of nowhere, an overwhelming wave of sadness washed over me. It wasn't about the work; I was accustomed to the long hours and the tough environment. No, this was something deeper, something that gripped my heart and made it heavy.

I couldn't shake the thought of my daughter's birthday, a moment I had missed while out at sea, and it felt like a physical ache in my chest. The guilt mingled with my longing for her laughter and the joy of celebrating her special day. Suddenly, without any warning, a single tear escaped and traced a path down my cheek. In that instant, I was reminded of how vulnerable I really was, how our emotions can sneak up on us, demanding to be acknowledged, regardless of where we are or what we're doing.

I quickly wiped the tear away, hoping no one would notice the crack in my stoic exterior, but it was too late. That moment lingered with me long after, shifting my perspective in ways I couldn't yet fully

grasp. I learned that emotions don't adhere to schedules or protocols; they come rushing in when we least expect them to.

From that point on, I made it a priority to connect with home, to hear my daughter's voice and share in her life, even from a distance. No matter how drained or weary I felt, I promised myself to call home once a week. It became more than just a routine; it transformed into a lifeline, a way to keep my heart anchored amidst the chaos of my job. Embracing those emotions, no matter how heavy, became a source of strength, reminding me of what truly mattered.

[ADD OPEN BOX QUESTIONS]

Read the following prompts based on the real-life case studies of Captain Elena, Chief Officer Rajesh, and Captain Liam.

Respond thoughtfully, demonstrating your understanding of mental health challenges and management strategies at sea.

Your answers will not be automatically graded but can be reviewed by your instructor for feedback and reflection.

If you were in a situation similar to one of the above whether burnout, anxiety, or personal crisis what actions would you take to protect your mental health?

saved

✓ Check

TESTIMONIAL: "That One Message Saved Me"

The text describes a powerful moment experienced by a Junior Deck Cadet during their first voyage, highlighting themes of loneliness, connection, and the impact of small gestures.

The cadet shares their initial feelings of isolation and shyness, which made it difficult for them to engage with others on the ship. This suggests that they were struggling to adapt to a new environment, which can be a common experience for individuals who are new to a team or a challenging situation.

The turning point occurs when a senior colleague reaches out with a simple message: "Doing okay?" This concise inquiry opened a door of communication and showed the cadet that someone was

aware of their presence and well-being. The emotional response the tears shed upon reading the message indicates how deeply this small act of kindness resonated with the cadet. It served as a reminder that they were not invisible; someone cared enough to check in on them.

Furthermore, the statement about being saved from a spiral reflects the cadet's internal struggle, which they might not have fully recognized at the time. This implies that feelings of vulnerability and despair can often linger silently, and that proactive outreach even in the form of a brief text can have a significant and positive impact on someone's mental state.

Overall, this experience underscores the importance of looking out for one another and highlights how a small, caring gesture can profoundly affect someone who may be feeling lost or alone. It serves as a reminder of the power of empathy and connection in fostering a supportive community, especially in challenging circumstances.

[ADD OPEN BOX QUESTIONS]

Real stories only matter if they come from senior officers.

☐ True

☐ False

✓ Check

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H:P

Seafarers often keep emotions inside because of work culture.

☐ True

☐ False

✓ Check

Reuse <> Embed

H:P

Talking about struggles is a sign of weakness.

☐ True

☐ False

✓ Check

Reuse <> Embed

H:P

[ADD OPEN BOX QUESTIONS]

Stories weave the very fabric of our lives, creating connections that bind us together in ways we often overlook. Whether it's a sudden issue in the engine room that sparks a flurry of activity or a simple text message that offers a moment of comfort, each experience adds a unique thread to our shared journey aboard. You are not merely a title or rank; you are a living narrative, a story in

constant motion. One day, your journey might resonate deeply with someone else, providing them with the courage they didn't know they needed.

But take a moment to reflect that your story carries weight beyond your own experience. The emotions you carry each joy and sorrow spill over into your work and interactions. How you navigate your feelings can profoundly influence your reactions to challenges, your ability to perform under pressure, and the support you offer your crewmates in times of need.

In our next lesson, we'll delve into a crucial aspect of maritime life that every seafarer must understand: the profound effect of mental health on safety, performance, and the spirit of teamwork that holds us together at sea. It's essential to recognise that when one person struggles in silence, that hardship reverberates throughout the ship, affecting everyone on board. Conversely, when someone finds a way to achieve balance and clarity, that newfound strength radiates outward, inspiring others to find their own stability.

Are you ready to uncover how your well-being can shape not just your personal voyage but the entire crew's experience? Let's embark on this exploration together.

Topic 5

Impact of Mental Health on Safety, Performance, and Teamwork

"A warm welcome, Seafarer — your story matters. Let's talk."

Today's lesson dives deep into a topic that touches every aspect of our daily operations mental health. It's an often overlooked element that influences every valve we turn, every checklist we complete, and the dynamics of every team we collaborate with.

On a chemical or oil vessel, where the stakes are high and precision is critical, the importance of mental well-being cannot be overstated. Your state of mind is not just a personal matter; it reverberates throughout the entire ship.

Imagine going through the motions of your tasks, executing them with technical proficiency, yet feeling worn out inside. You might find yourself snapping at a colleague over a minor mistake or feeling an unsettling sense of disconnection from your surroundings. These feelings might not be visible on the surface, but they have a profound impact on your performance and the safety of the crew. It's a silent struggle that many face, and it's crucial to acknowledge that mental health can often be invisible.

*We often associate mental health struggles with **visible signs like someone visibly upset or withdrawn**. However, it frequently manifests in more subtle ways. You can appear completely fine on the outside while feeling **overwhelmed**, fatigued, and emotionally drained inside. This disconnect can lead to a cycle of **self-doubt**, increased stress, and **hindered communication** with those around you. The effects of this are far-reaching, influencing not just your work performance but also your ability to bond with your crew.*

Understanding and addressing mental health is not merely about individual well-being; it's about recognizing how our emotions and mental states impact our collective safety. When we foster an environment where mental health is prioritized, everyone benefits. Team members feel more

connected, communication flows more freely, and safety incidents can decrease significantly when everyone is mentally engaged and present.

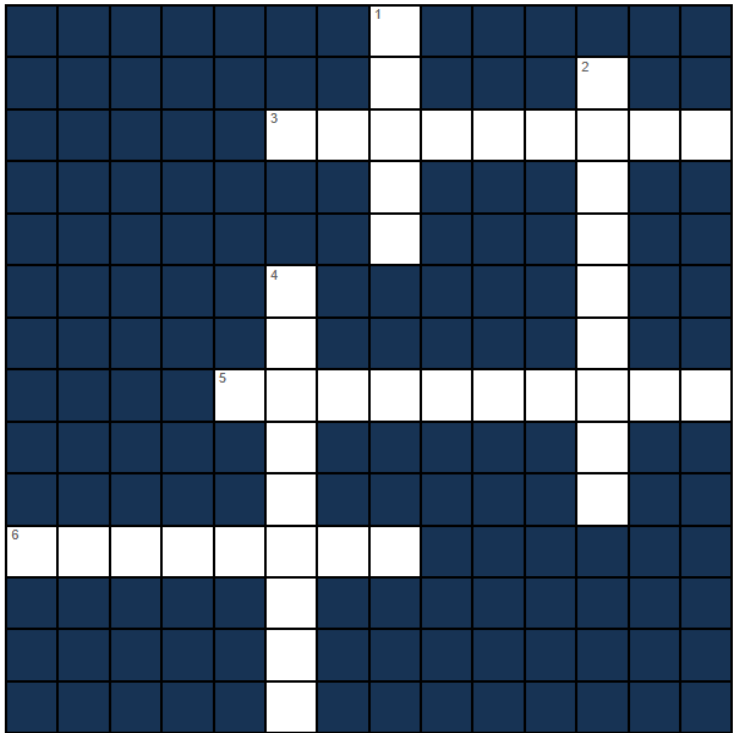
As we navigate through tasks and interact with one another, let's remember that emotional strain does not equate to weakness. It requires strength to acknowledge when we are struggling and to seek support. The commitment to mental health is a collective effort; it means looking out for one another, checking in, and being willing to have honest conversations. Together, we can create a culture where mental well-being is valued, leading to safer operations and stronger bonds within the crew. Let's not just operate as individuals but as a unified team that champions both emotional and physical safety on the vessel.

"A message from the top—your mental well-being matters to all of us."

[CEO TALK]

"See how mental health powers your work and teamwork!"

Uncover key emotional signs and struggles faced by seafarers. Each word reveals a part of the mental health journey.



Across

3 Mental ____ is as critical as physical fitness on tankers. (9)

5 A lack of ____ may cause delayed reaction during operations. (10)

6 When a crew member isolates emotionally, ____ can suffer. (8)

Down

1 Poor ____ can lead to missed safety checks. (5)

2 Emotional ____ affects how

✓ Check

👁 Show solution

↺ Retry

Take a moment to reflect—have any of these silent signs shown up in your day?"

REALITY CHECK

Which of these have you experienced recently? (Check all that apply.):

- Felt mentally drained during or after watch duty
- Lost focus during a routine safety drill
- Avoided asking for help because of pride or pressure
- Snapped at a colleague over a small issue
- Felt physically fine, but emotionally empty

If you checked any box, you're not alone. Let's see how this affects your work.

"Hidden stress can lead to safety risks."

CASE REFLECTION

Incident on MT SeaStar Dawn

A minor leak occurred during cargo discharge. The third engineer overlooked a loose flange bolt. Post-incident review revealed he was dealing with unresolved stress after learning about a family emergency but didn't want to ask for support.

This Shows:

MENTAL DISTRACTION = SAFETY RISK.

Core Message:

"MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT SEPARATE FROM YOUR JOB — IT'S PART OF IT."

"Crew voices share real lessons on mental health."

CREW TALK — WHAT THEY SAY

Bosun, 12 years on chemical tankers

"I used to think mental stress was just weakness... until I lost my temper over a busted gasket. My junior avoided me for weeks. That's when I knew — it was affecting more than just me."

2nd Officer, female, oil vessel

"When the pressure is high, we stop talking. That's when mistakes happen. When I started regular check-ins with my team, things changed."

[ADD OPEN BOX]

"Let's see how mental care strengthens safety and performance."

"You're ready—choose the right answer!"

What's one risk of emotional disconnection on board?

- ☐ Reduced safety communication
- ☐ Boredom
- ☐ Better productivity
- ☐ Delay in meals

☒ Check

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Why are mental health checks important on oil tankers?

- ☐ To reduce shore leave requests
- ☐ To fulfill company policy
- ☐ To improve gym performance
- ☐ Because the work involves high-risk cargo

☒ Check

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"You're ready—choose the right answer!"

What's one risk of emotional disconnection on board?

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☒ Check

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Snipping Tool

Screenshot copied to clipboard
Automatically saved to screen

One small step can boost your mental well-being—pick one!"

ACTION STEP

Pick one:

Start or end the day with a quick mood check

Share how you feel with a close crew member

Organize a "Talk 10" — a 10-minute mental health check-in session per week

"As we wrap up, let's reflect on why mental health matters at sea."

"Steady Minds, Safe Voyages: Mental Health at Sea"

Working on chemical and oil tankers is not just about the technical skills we've honed; it's a journey that demands a clear and steady mind. Each day, we navigate not only the vast waters but also the intricate emotional landscapes of our own well-being. The cargo we carry is essential, but our greatest treasure lies within ourselves. When we feel mentally drained, distracted, or emotionally isolated, even the best equipment and protocols can falter.

Let's remember that regular mental check-ins, honest conversations, and genuine support among crew members aren't just nice to have; they are lifelines. Our upcoming Module, focused on stress, fatigue, and isolation, addresses the silent risks that can silently creep in and impact our navigation. When fatigue seeps in, it dulls our reflexes. When stress mounts, it clouds our judgment. And when isolation takes hold, it shrinks our ability to communicate effectively.

In high-pressure situations—like cargo operations or emergency maneuvers—these challenges can compromise the safety of not just ourselves, but our entire crew. By recognizing these mental battles early on and responding with compassion and understanding, we protect not only ourselves but also the cohesiveness and safety of our whole vessel. Let's stand by each other, support one another, and remind ourselves that our mental health is as crucial as our physical safety. Together, we can navigate these waters with resilience and strength, ensuring that we all come home safely.