

THE CREW COACH  
ON MENTAL HEALTH



# THE CREW COACH

## SUICIDE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

### FEELINGS

Hopelessness  
Helplessness  
Loneliness  
Disconnection  
Worthlessness  
Powerlessness  
Desperation  
Irritability  
Shame  
Rejection  
Sadness  
Isolation  
Anger  
Exhaustion  
Trapped

### BEHAVIOURS

Prior suicidal behaviour  
Alcohol or drug misuse  
Withdrawal from family  
and friends  
Quitting activities which  
were previously  
important  
Putting affairs in order  
Writing suicide notes or  
goodbye letters to loved  
ones  
Self-harming  
Uncharacteristic risk-  
taking or recklessness  
Fighting and/or  
breaking the law  
Unexplained crying  
Emotional outbursts,  
mood swings

### THOUGHTS

Helplessness: "Nothing I do makes a bit of difference, it's beyond my control and no one can help me."  
Talking about suicide or death  
Planning for suicide  
Feeling trapped: "I can't see any way out of this mess."  
Feeling like a burden: "They'd be better off without me."  
Lack of belonging: "I just don't fit in anywhere."  
Hopeless: "What is the point? Things are never going to get any better."  
Guilt: "It's my fault, I'm to blame."  
Escape: "I just can't take this anymore."  
Alone: "I'm on my own... no one cares about me; no one would even notice if I was gone."  
Damaged: "I've been irreparably damaged... I'll never be the same again."



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## DEPRESSION

Depression is accompanied by a range of symptoms which subsequently impacts the individual's ability to function in everyday life.

### FEELINGS

Sadness  
Anxiety  
Guilt  
Anger  
upset/tearful  
Mood swings  
Hopelessness  
Irritability  
Worry  
low self-confidence or self-esteem  
empty and numb  
isolated and unable to relate to other people  
feeling a lack of life purpose and meaning  
suicidal

### THOUGHTS

"I am not good enough,"  
"It's all my fault,"  
"I am a burden on others"  
"I Should be able to do more"  
I am weak if I am depressed"  
"What's the point"  
"This too hard"

### BEHAVIOURS

Chronic fatigue  
Lack of energy  
Sleeping too much or too little  
Headaches  
Decreased sex drive  
Change in bowel movements  
Irregular menstrual cycle  
Weight loss or weight gain

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

Frequent self criticism  
Self blame  
Pessimism  
Impaired memory and concentration  
Indecisiveness and confusion  
Thoughts of death and suicide  
Slow in moving and thinking  
Can become agitated or have a short fuse  
Speech can be slow  
There can be a lack of interest and attention to personal hygiene and grooming  
Emotionally on edge  
Mild depression can often be hidden by the person suffering - Depression can easily be misinterpreted as laziness, self centredness. Colleagues may refer to the person experiencing depression as "not pulling their weight" , having a poor work ethic or being incompetent at their job. If colleagues believe the assumptions they are making about their employees they are likely to act out on their thoughts which will reaffirm the depressed individual's distorted feelings and beliefs about themselves.  
Severe depression is apparent



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## ANXIETY

What is anxiety?

Anxiety ranges from a spectrum from mild to severe. Anxiety is usually triggered from perceived/imagine threats to your sense of well-being

### PHYSICAL

Rapid heart beat chest  
pain, sweating hands  
Shallow breathing  
Headaches  
Tingling, numbness  
Choking, dry mouth,  
Nausea, vomiting  
Stomach pains  
diarrhoea  
Restlessness, shaking  
Muscles aches and  
pains  
insomnia

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

Feeling on edge  
Excessive worry  
Indecisiveness  
Mind blanks  
Impatience  
Anger  
Confusion  
poor concentration  
memory difficulties

### BEHAVIOURAL

Increased use of alcohol or drugs  
avoidance behaviours - not wanting  
to expose oneself to anxiety  
provoking situations

### THOUGHTS

"What if X happens?"  
"Did I say that the wrong way?"  
Why are they taking so long to  
respond to my text message?  
"Are they laughing at me?"



# Anxiety Management Strategies

The key to personal recovery is finding what works for you. We are all unique and will respond to the intervention strategies differently. Here are some examples of interventions you can try:

1. Deep breathing - short and frequent breaths can in fact increase your levels of anxiety and put the body in overdrive and can cause you to panic. Oxygen is necessary to enable blood flow to the brain, by using breathing techniques you will activate the part of the nervous system responsible for relaxation and calming the body down.
2. Progressive muscle relaxation - this is a useful way to help bring you into the present moment. By focussing on tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help reduce the feelings of muscle tension that often comes with anxiety.
3. Mindfulness - anxiety can distract you from living in the present moment by focussing on fears or worries that have not materialised. Mindfulness is a terrific way to bring yourself back to the here and now. Practising meditation, adult colouring in or mindful walking are great mindfulness strategies.
4. Exercise - Keeping fit, eating balanced meals, spending time in nature, connecting with family and friends, and engaging in activities that gives you meaning are all effective in reducing anxiety and improving your wellbeing needs.
5. Small acts of courage - instead of avoiding situations or people that make you feel anxious try and address these anxieties by approaching a situation that creates the least amount of anxiety for you. This is called systematic desensitization - the purpose of this method is for you to gradually confront your fears thereby increasing your sense of confidence to challenge your biggest fears. I recommend that you seek the guidance of a qualified mental health practitioner. The Crew Coach offers a counselling service which you find here alternatively contact your local gp for further recommendations.
6. Challenge negative self-talk - how you think influences how you feel and the choices you make. Search for the evidence to dispute your unhelpful thoughts.
7. Allocate worry time - dedicate a certain amount of time for worry. It is impossible to be completely worry free. Use your worry time productively by writing down all your fears and worries. You'll find that our worries circulate repeatedly in our heads by getting them down on paper reduces the inundation of thoughts.
8. Build a relationship with your anxiety. Keep a journal of when you feel anxious and think back to what triggers the onset of your anxiety. This is an effective way of exploring any patterns that may be occurring and is also useful if you are or intend to work with a counsellor in the future. Mental health professionals will help and support you in learning strategies to combat anxiety independently. By approaching anxiety with curiosity rather than fear you are likely to build on your sense of resilience and are in a better position to manage diversity.
9. Find a support group - talking with others who also experience anxiety or who are going through something similar to you can inspire connectedness, understanding and help you feel less alone.
10. Self-care equals self-love. Remember that you are not less than anyone else because you have anxiety. You are not ill. Anxiety is a part of life that comes and goes.



# THE CREW COACH

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID PLAN

When we are feeling overwhelmed, anxious or stressed it is often to do with worrying about the future. When we give power to worry, we allow for it to take control; when it gets to this stage it is very difficult to regain our power.

Having a mental health safety plan will put you in a better position to manage your mental health issues.

A mental health plan is designed to be your life line when you can sense that your well-being needs are at risk. The most important part of the plan is that you make it your own and is personalised to meet your needs, if not, you are unlikely to use it and it will simply be ineffective.

Where to start -

Create a working document - This means that you will continuously refer back to your plan and make changes when needed, you will find that your triggers and coping strategies will change with time, therefore it is important to make changes when required. The purpose of the plan is to manage difficult emotions and ideally prevent them from manifesting where it threatens your well-being. When you have finalised your plan, transfer it to a medium that is easily accessible, i.e your phone or a sheet of paper that is kept in your wallet. Below I have given you a step by step guide on how you can develop your own mental health plan.

### 1. Identify early warning signs:

Start off by identifying that situations or events that can trigger you in feeling overwhelmed, we call these early warning signs.

For the purpose of this blog let's imagine there is a crew member named Jane. Jane feels anxious and stressed come post and pre-season when she is responsible for managing the yacht's inventories.

### 2. Think about triggers:

Following step 1, think about what triggers your warning signs. Triggers for Jane for example, could be upcoming deadlines, taking on too much, poor time management or a resistance to asking for help.

Jane is feeling incredibly anxious and stressed because she thinks that she can't reach out for support and is likely to make mistakes with the inventories as she is so exhausted by her sheer workload. Jane has identified her triggers as not taking time to self-care and her inability to delegate work to her peers.

### 3. Prepare a strategy:

Think about strategies that might help ease the stressful situation/s, what was helpful or unhelpful for you in the past?

Then write down the links between warning signs and triggers followed by possible strategies. Jane called a meeting in the crew mess which involved the crew in brainstorming ideas on ways to tackle the inventories to ensure that it is completed as effectively and efficiently as possible. The crew were very excited to have shared responsibility and they left feeling valued and empowered. Jane felt as if a huge weight was lifted off her shoulders and now instead of wasting time worrying about inventories she used that time to organise her personal and professional life.

### 4. Use a support network:

Ensure you have a positive support network in place – friends, family members or professionals you can reach out to for support when necessary. Reaching out for support is invaluable, if you struggle with asking for help I highly suggest you explore that on a deeper level as you will be disadvantaged if you don't address it. Here is briefly why I am confident in reaching out for help -

I don't know everything and I never will. By outsourcing my weaknesses and using my resources and contacts wisely, I can increase my chances of learning and fast track my success.

Asking for help promotes a growth mindset - growth means expansion if you have a fixed mindset you will only feel stuck and more frustrated. A growth mindset comes with vulnerability and courage. Challenge your belief system around asking for help - are your reasons justified?

Asking for help strengthens relationships - People have more respect for others who can admit to their vulnerabilities or weaknesses. If you want to build real connections and be an admirable leader be genuine.

Share your support plan with your support network - your support network plays a key role in ensuring you are able to carry out your plan. They are likely to pick you up when you fall and walk alongside you until you are confident to carry out your plan independently. In this case, Jane talked with her second steward and articulated what support she needed from her and how she intends to communicate her needs.

Many people find that having such strategies in place enables them to feel more at ease knowing they have a support plan in place that has proven to work. The Crew Coach provides counselling where they can help you to explore potential warning signs that you may not be conscious of as yet and curate new strategies to remedy them.

If you ever find yourself in a situation where things do get a bit much or if you need further support please reach out to your support network or seek professional advice.



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## HOW YOU CAN HELP

### Action Plan

What can you do if someone is experiencing a mental health issue:

1. Find a suitable time and place to approach the individual - (i.e. do not approach the individual in the crew mess where other crew are able to listen in or don't approach when yourself and the crew are flat out with guests.
2. Voice your concerns - If the individual appears to be closed off and not wanting to talk, initiate a conversation where you can point out some observable behaviours that have been brought to your attention. For example, I have noticed that you haven't been eating meal in the crew mess and that you have been spending a lot more time in your cabin rather than joining crew on social outings... by naming behaviours is a great segway to opening up a conversation. that will provide them with an opportunity to share what is going on for them as well as reach out to you for support.

If the individual does open up to you ensure that you actively listen and avoid judgement. The skills of empathy, asking open questions and being non-judgemental are skills that you will learn in The Crew Coach's course, Psychological Safety at Sea. Please email [info@thecrewcoach.com](mailto:info@thecrewcoach.com) for further details.

Once the individual feels comfortable with opening up to you then you are in a better position to provide informational, educative and emotional support.

Emotional support is your ability to provide a safe, supportive space for the individual to talk. Informational support is providing the individual with a list of contact numbers that they can reach out to for professional assistance.

If you are concerned that the individual may be at risk of self harm or harming others you are required to report it as soon as possible to your direct line manager (HOD) then they will take the necessary actions to keep the individual safe and seek out further support. Educative support is information that is from a reputable source and given to the individual so that they can increase their knowledge around the potential mental health issue that they are experiencing.

Please note that the advice given here is very basic and there is formalised training on how you can deliver Psychological Safety at Sea which would go into these steps into greater detail. This course will soon be available through The Crew Coach learning portal. For further information contact [info@thecrewcoach.com](mailto:info@thecrewcoach.com)

### What it is NOT supportive

- Don't shame or make the individual feel guilty
- Don't take mental health conditions lightly - telling someone to get over it will only further add to their feelings of helplessness and loneliness
- Don't down play their experience - we are all unique and will respond to situations/events differently
- Don't play the expert - if you are not a trained mental health practitioner you can in fact aggravate the issue even though your intentions are to do good.
- Don't dismiss the person's feelings i.e don't "worry this will pass"

### What is Psychological Safety at sea

Psychological Safety at Sea is a course that provides individuals who don't have a clinical background the skills and knowledge to administer support in an effort to help individuals who are developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Upon completion of the course you will be able to deliver mental health first aid until professional help is received. This is a 6 weeks correspondence course where you get individual one on one support. This course is currently running at a once off intro fee of €1200. For more info please email [info@thecrewcoach.com](mailto:info@thecrewcoach.com)

The aims of the course are:

- Preserve life
- Prevent further harm
- Promote Recovery
- Provide comfort to the person who is ill or injured



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## ON MENTAL HEALTH

### *Defining and Understanding Assault*

The term Sexual Assault has received increased media attention since the 'me too' hash tag. This has likely to have sparked conversations within the yachting industry and encouraged victims to speak up about their experiences.

Sexual assault is a term used to describe a range of criminal acts that are sexual in nature; this can include unwanted touching, kissing or forcing the victim to touch the perpetrator in sexual ways.

Sexual Harassment on the other hand is a broader term that can be broken down into three core areas.

1. Sexual Coercion - this is when the perpetrator manipulates the victim either implicitly or explicitly as a means to make work conditions contingent on sexual co-operation. (Karine - described how a stew was ordered to detail the engine room until 3 am as the victim did not comply to the sexual demands from the perpetrator)
2. Unwanted sexual attention - including unwanted kissing, groping, hugging, touching, AND ongoing pressure for dates. When it becomes a criminal offence, it must be unpleasant and unwelcome to the recipient.
3. Gender Harassment - This is conduct that discriminates based on gender and can include the use of crude sexual terms and images. ( Be mindful how you talk to each other in the crew mess etc and the content of your emails)

It is apparent that sexual harassment and discrimination along with bullying is a prevalent issue within the industry and needs to be addressed with the utmost priority.

According to the World Health Organisation, "Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential; can cope with the normal stresses of life; can work productively and fruitfully; and is able to make a contribution to her or his community". This definition really encapsulates how difficult it is to achieve optimal mental health on a daily basis and how abhorrent acts such as bullying through to sexual assault can have a critical impact on crews' mental health.

#### **Common mental health issues as a result of bullying and sexual assault can include:**

Depression  
Anxiety  
OCD  
PTSD  
Personality Disorder  
Substance Abuse





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## ON MENTAL HEALTH

### *Defining and Understanding Assault*

We need to take care of each other and be aware of any changes in behaviour in crew and address it accordingly.

Alcohol and Drug abuse is not only putting the individual at risk but it is a huge safety issue for others on board. These incidences need to be handled sensitively and crew should be supported in getting the attention and care that they need. This is called duty of care.

Working in isolating industries whether it be the navy, defence force, fifo to yachting - Mental health issues not only impact the individual but impacts entire teams as well as the existing culture.

### *What protective measures can we put into place?*

We need to create a safe space where crew can feel comfortable in expressing their feelings and where they are at with their mental health.

Having a go to person to speak to - doesn't need to be someone from HOD it needs to be a person who is approachable and that the crew member feels comfortable in talking to- (It would be advantageous to train a nominated crew member in mental health first aid)

Having clear procedures around harassment and bullying.

Education around how to build a culture that doesn't tolerate bullying and harassment. (TCC)

Changes in recruitment processes - educating HODs' on how to hire crew with a focus on soft skills. The Crew Coach will be opening a recruitment division soon. Karine is an accredited profile assessor in DISC which focusses on human behaviour within the work place. She also uses her psychology background to screen candidates.

Investing in professional development training for crew in interpersonal skills. (TCC, Crew Glue?)

Doing performance appraisals and exit strategies correctly. (TCC)

Counselling services especially for crew (ISWAN is great as they have counsellors who can speak different languages, Medair provide a certain number of free calls per year, TCC provides an ongoing counselling service for crew, you only need to tell your story once and can reengage with the service at any point in your career) Karine is not only a qualified counsellor but has worked on board yachts so can empathise with her clients which is a core counselling skill.

As individuals we need to come together to change unacceptable workplace cultures. We can all take responsibility in promoting a healthier workplace and protect the well-being needs of our crew.



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## ON MENTAL HEALTH

For treatment to be effective it is important that you develop a rapport or working relationship with your counsellor. Finding a therapist can be overwhelming so I have included some prompting questions below which should help you in sourcing a counsellor that will best meet your needs:

### *Support Services' Contact details*

#### **The Crew Coach:**

Karine comes with a wide, yet specialised skill set in the areas of psychology-counselling and strategic leadership. Her core purpose involves supporting individuals and teams to overcome personal and collective challenges whilst helping them achieve their respective aspirations. Karine utilises a combination of counselling modalities, including:

cognitive behavioural therapy

solution-focused therapy

person-centred therapy

positive psychology

The counselling services we offer and are not limited to, include:

anxiety/depression

burnout

grief counselling

relationship counselling

AOD (alcohol and drug counselling)

Fee - €120 for a 1hr online session

Phone: +61402065101

Skype: karine\_rayson

Email: [info@thecrewcoach.com](mailto:info@thecrewcoach.com)

Website: <https://thecrewcoach.com/counselling/>

#### **British Counselling Service: Sarah Heyler**

Sarah, our fully qualified English Counsellor has a certificate in Counselling Skills, a diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling and BSc (Hons) in Psychology.

Our Mission: We are fully aware of the importance of confidentiality, because as you know, here in Mallorca everyone seems to know everyone and that can be a worry when discussing sensitive personal information. However British Counselling Service work in accordance with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) code of ethics and confidentiality, as well as the British Psychological Society (BPS).

Certificados Medicos Porto Pi (Medical Centre)

188 entio,

Avinguda de Joan Miro

07015 Palma de Mallorca

Phone: +34-663-890-287

Email: [info@britishcounsellingservice.com](mailto:info@britishcounsellingservice.com)

Skype Name: britishcounsellingservice



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## ON MENTAL HEALTH

### Support Services' Contact details

#### **Martin Bell, English-speaking Psychologist, qualified at CPPD college, UK**

Manages Open Mind, Radio, Mallorca

Open Mind Mallorca is a Mental Health Awareness group run by qualified therapist and counsellor, Martin Bell, who undertook this following retiring from a successful business life in the UK. Martin works mainly with clients lacking funds to seek help. He also runs a successful Radio 1 'Open Mind' hour every Monday

Telephone: +34 626 04 43 71

Facebook: Open Mind

#### **Manda J Beaver:**

CEO, Health Educator & Inspirational Coach at Manda J Beaver

Former RN & Medical Trainer at Medical Support Offshore. Health Coach & First Aid Instructor: Bachelor in Health Science, Masters in International & Public Health. Diploma of Education & training and many more in Nutrition, Natural Medicine & Wilderness Medicine Topics. Based in Palma de Mallorca

Websites: [www.mandajbeaver.com](http://www.mandajbeaver.com)

[www.theaquadiva.com](http://www.theaquadiva.com)

[www.nursemanda.com](http://www.nursemanda.com)

#### **Belinda Carrigan, ex-Mental Health nurse, Yachting Professional, Mentor.**

Born in Scotland, Belinda was schooled and grew up in Cape Town, South Africa. She later worked and studied in both New Zealand and Australia, before joining the yachting industry as a chef in the Mediterranean in 2001.

Belinda studied as a Mental Health nurse in Perth, West Australia for 7 years, gaining life skills that have helped her enormously and which she enjoys sharing with anyone in need of her experience and inherent compassion. Her aim is to listen, to hear, to support and where necessary, to direct people to other professionals who are best suited to assist and enable anyone to be all that they can and want to be.

"Never assume that loud is strong and quiet is weak"

Telephone: +34 672 27 3927

Email: [Belinda@proprofile.com](mailto:Belinda@proprofile.com)

### References

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