

CASE STUDY 3

Seafarer Builds Confidence at Sea

My Mind Matters

In October 2016 the helpline was contacted by a Ukrainian seafarer on his first contract as a deck cadet who was having doubts about his performance at work and struggling with life at sea.

The crew on board were mixed, with Russian management and Filipino ratings, and although they all seemed very nice to the seafarer, he was shy and found it difficult to engage with the other crew. The seafarer missed his family but was unable to call home very often as it was too expensive. He was an only child and had never been so far away from home for so long.

The seafarer said that the food on board was good but he hated the fish, and did not want to offend the cook by saying that he would prefer meat. The shore leave was also unattractive most of the time because the ship never visited big ports and it was either too expensive or unsafe for him to go ashore.

The seafarer was supervised by the boson who seemed to be satisfied with him. He enjoyed the physical work and found his days easy, but they sometimes seemed too short because he did not manage to study enough for his exams. He said he was struggling and found it hard to learn theory without practice, and was afraid in case he got an unsatisfactory evaluation at the end of his contract.

The helpline team listened to the seafarer's concerns and talked them through with him. We also provided him with some tips for time management to help with his studies.

The seafarer stayed in contact – he seemed more confident and motivated towards the end of his contract, and was looking forward to going home. After his time at sea ended, the seafarer reported that he would be joining another ship after two months at school – in the meantime, he planned to study and enjoy shore life.

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

