

CASE STUDY 8

Stressed Seafarer Given Support

My Mind Matters

An Indian seafarer was feeling very stressed and contacted the helpline via Live Chat. He was unhappy that he wasn't making progress in his job as a 4th Engineer while his peers were being promoted to better positions. He explained that he earned decent wages but was unable to spend them on himself as his family were taking all the money in preparation for his younger sister's wedding.

The seafarer wanted to get married but couldn't seem to hold on to a steady relationship. He was also worried about losing his hair. Although he had visited a famous doctor in India for hair loss treatment, it was difficult to follow the treatment while he was away at sea for long periods at a time. He was wary of confiding in the other crew members on his ship as he believed that they would make an issue out of his worries and be unsympathetic.

A helpline officer chatted with the seafarer at length, offering him emotional support and suggesting he spoke to a counsellor who could help him deal with his emotions. However the seafarer was not keen on the idea. As an alternative the helpline officer suggested that he speak to ISWAN's Regional Representative based in India, Chirag Bahri, who as a former seafarer understood how such issues could build up and become a real problem when at sea.

The seafarer agreed and his case was referred to Chirag. Chirag contacted the seafarer via WhatsApp and had a long candid chat with him. He put the seafarer at ease as he identified with the issues that the seafarer was facing, having experienced life at sea himself. Over the next few days, Chirag encouraged the seafarer to talk about the things that were worrying him and suggested lifestyle changes such as exercising, healthy eating habits, giving up smoking and making time to socialise with the other crew members. The seafarer took the suggestions on board and appeared to be a lot better than when he initially contacted the helpline.

Chirag will continue to keep in touch with the seafarer to see how he is doing.

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

