



MHSS SAFETY CIRCULAR ISSUE 2 JULY 2021

1. Mental Health Support Solution (MHSS) operates a 24/7 Crisis Support Line – connecting users confidentially and directly with multi-lingual maritime psychologists.
2. From the period March 2021 – June 2021, we have identified the following trends from insights collected through the Crisis Support Line and other information sources:

- **THE NUMBER OF INTERACTIONS HAS INCREASED BY 60%**

MHSS Comment: It is now imperative that every individual has access to independent, professional psychological support – onshore or at sea.

- **THE NUMBER OF HIGH-RISK / CRITICAL-RISK INCIDENTS HAS INCREASED**

Every interaction MHSS handle today is likely to involve a serious safety risk - to the person interacting, to third parties, to the vessel and her cargo.

MHSS Comment: It is critical that every interaction is treated as a psycho-medical emergency (unless a qualified professional determines otherwise).



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- **USERS DEMAND ACCESS TO PSYCHO-MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS**

The number of users contacting MHSS because they feel that the listening/counselling service offered by their organization or third parties is inadequate for the demands they face has increased.

Senior staff are increasingly contacting MHSS (i.e. Masters, onshore managers) because COVID now requires them to handle high-stress situations without adequate training, and access to ongoing and post-incident support.

MHSS Comment: Users are calling for direct access to psychological professionals. A listening/volunteer service is no longer sufficient to support users' needs – especially where the severity level is likely to be high/critical.

- **THE NUMBER OF USERS SEEKING SUPPORT FOR OTHERS HAS INCREASED**

Managers (i.e. Masters, those in positions of responsibility) are increasingly using the 24/7 Crisis Support Line for advice on how to identify, diffuse and manage issues in other people.

MHSS Comment: A sustained and systematic roll-out programme creates an environment where users proactively and preemptively issue-spot in others.



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- **MHSS' CONTRIBUTIONS IN Q2 ARE NOW QUANTIFIABLE**

- Over >85% of MHSS partners have used MHSS' services.
- MHSS' services have avoided costs to the maritime industry of over USD\$1,000,000 (short/medium/long-term incident prevention, incident reduction and preventative care delivered at an early stage) during Q2.
- Value of services delivered by MHSS during Q2: > EUR2,000,000.
- Medium-to-long term psychological harm has been prevented in over 40 individuals through MHSS' services.

MHSS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Access to an independent crisis support line (and staffed by professional maritime psychologists) must be provided to all personnel**
- 2. All senior staff must receive training to identify at-risk persons**
- 3. „First contact“ staff (i.e. Masters, officers, managers and mental health first-aiders) must have access to psychological professionals to ease the burden they bear post-event**



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Case Study One

A Master interacted with MHSS because of his/her fear for the behaviour of a fellow crew-member, who had become increasingly erratic as a result of the death of a family-member.

MHSS provided the Master with on-site risk identification training; carried out a detailed situational assessment of the crew-member and (with permission) administered psychological first-aid to the crew-member. Repeated follow-ups took place (by the MHSS staff member) to confirm the situation was resolved.

Outcome: Crew-member safe; situation de-escalated and safety situation avoided.

Case Study Two

An (office) staff-member interacted with MHSS – noting that he/she was unable to concentrate and was prone to making mistakes which were becoming increasingly serious.

He/she was concerned that raising the issue within the organization would have serious consequences for their career; however professional help was required as their mistakes were causing him/her serious anxiety and a feeling of guilt.

Outcome: MHSS staff assessed the staff member; provided education on active concentration and communication strategies; MHSS (same psychologist) continued a course of ongoing interaction to monitor performance improvement.



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