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## Supporting Seafarers' Mental Wellbeing

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Last November, Steamship Mutual was announced as the new sponsor of the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network's (ISWAN) mental health resources for seafarers which can be accessed [here](#).

ISWAN, an international charity which works to promote and support the welfare of seafarers all over the world, developed these self-help resources in response to the challenges faced by seafarers. The resources comprise a series of three Good Mental Health Guides available in a number of different languages, accompanied by a range of infographics and an audio relaxation exercise.

Working at sea away from family and friends with limited communication may mean that a seafarer is less likely to talk about a low mood or feelings of unhappiness than someone ashore who sees their loved ones every day. Limited or no shore leave, monotonous routines, long working hours, shift working and few opportunities for exercising or socialising can also affect a seafarer's mental wellbeing.

Since it can be difficult for seafarers to access the emotional support they might need, ISWAN's self-help resources contain skills, exercises and coping strategies for managing and coping with low mood, stress and fatigue, and maximising wellbeing while working at sea.

With the support of Steamship Mutual, ISWAN has initiated a large print and distribution of its mental health resources in the Philippines, where the organisation's Regional Programme provides humanitarian support to seafarers. The Philippines is one of the largest supply countries for seafarers, with over 449,000 Filipino seafarers reported to have been deployed in 2017<sup>1</sup>. Steamship Mutual's sponsorship has enabled ISWAN to provide these seafarers with valuable information on how to improve their wellbeing, and to develop a new guide in the series which ISWAN hopes to release later in 2020.

These mental health resources complement ISWAN's free, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families, SeafarerHelp. The helpline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and its operators are trained in providing emotional support and suicide risk assessment. Seafarers can call +44 20 7323 2737 or find further contact details and a 24/7 live web chat at: [www.seafarerhelp.org](http://www.seafarerhelp.org)

The helpline team works closely with ISWAN's regional representatives in the Philippines, India and Nigeria to support and assist seafarers and seafarers' families in need all over the world.

The mental wellbeing of seafarers is a key issue for the maritime industry and ISWAN is delighted to be partnering with Steamship Mutual. The Club has long recognised the importance of crew wellbeing on safety – the safe and effective operation of its Members' vessels relies very heavily upon their seafarers being fit, physically and mentally, for the pressures of a seagoing career. Steamship Mutual's sponsorship will help ISWAN reach even more seafarers around the world and give them the support to ensure their time at sea is a safe and positive experience.



<sup>1</sup> Deployed Overseas Filipino Workers By Country/Destination data