

A case of PTSD

A GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH AT SEA



MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT SOLUTIONS

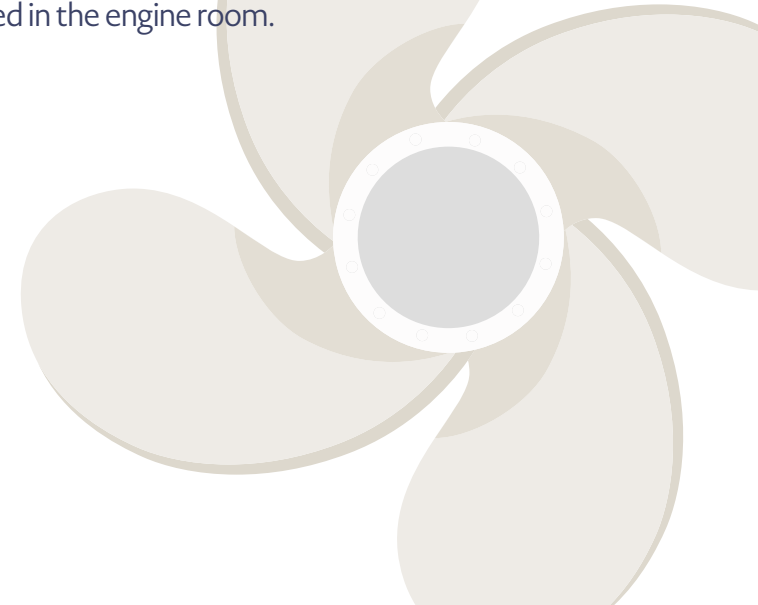


Steamship
Mutual

A case of PTSD ...

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Filipo, the captain, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder due to his reaction of a fire that happened in the engine room.





Filipo - The Captain

- He is Filipino, living in Bacolod
- 52 years old
- He has a wife, 3 kids and 2 dogs
- He likes to listen to rock music
- He loves to play chess and the guitar
- His favorite food is Kaldereta



Ivan - The Chief Engineer

- He is Russian, living in Naples
- 46 years old
- He is a single father
- He has a 14 years old son
- He likes to sail
- He enjoys to repair old cars



Caven - The Electrician

- He is American, living in Hamburg
- 28 years old
- Newly married
- He is a cat-person
- He likes to build 3D puzzles
- He is a huge bicycle fan



Athena - The Chief Officer

- She is Greek, living in Crete
- 43 years old
- She is a single mother of 2 kids
- Her son is about to start college
- She likes meditation and yoga
- Her favorite food is Noori's mushroom soup



Noori - The Cook

- He is Indian, living in Delhi
- 44 years old
- His wife recently passed away
- He has a daughter and grandchildren
- His favorite dish is Biryani
- He is a fan of the Lord of the Rings



Ginto - The Able Bodied Seaman

- He is Filipino, living in Tandag
- 25 years old
- He has a wife and 2 kids
- He likes playing video games
- He loves bringing back refrigerator magnets from around the world
- He enjoys playing the saxophone



Indica - The Third Engineer

- She is Indian, living in Chicago
- 26 years old
- She is single
- She loves to watch basketball games
- Her favorite basketball player is Breanna Stewart
- She is a Motorbike fan

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The captain, Filippo, dreamed that he was in the fire area, but in reality, he carried out the operation from the bridge.

Filipo was able to sleep only a few hours before he would wake up screaming due to a nightmare he had about the fire which had happened on the ship a month ago. In his nightmare, he was constantly trying to save the oiler who had been heavily injured in the fire and he blamed himself for all of this.



The man, who had always joked and laughed, had changed drastically after this accident. Now, he was always isolating himself and was constantly worrying. He didn't want to talk to anyone anymore. Every evening he secretly drank alcohol.



Filipo felt like he was losing his bearings and was unable to function and he was trying to hide this situation from everyone because he had responsibilities as a captain. This was causing him even more anxiety. He started to lose hope about a better future.



The captain's lack of sleep was making him very angry. His tolerance for errors began to be low. Athena, the chief officer, thought that this was a rather unusual behavior for Filippo. She could smell the alcohol from two meters away.



Athena realized that Filippo was very silent, didn't join them after dinner any more, and was looking really tired.

She shared her worries with Caven, the electrician. They decided to speak with the captain together.



The captain opened up to Athena and Caven. He talked about his guilt and remorse.

There was still the oiler visiting his dreams and his guilt about him getting hurt. Filippo shared his nightmares, his anxiety and his fears with Athena and Caven. He mentioned that he didn't think of himself as sufficiently competent to do his job and talks about the overwhelming guilt he feels about the accident.



He wasn't sure he could still do his job of a captain. When he talked to his wife on the phone, he pretended that everything was okay so she wouldn't worry.

He had been unable to find a solution on his own and his self-confidence was shaken.

Athena and Caven understood the seriousness of the situation and the captain's mental health struggle.



The captain decided that he needed to take time off to deal with his current flashbacks and nightmares. He followed Athena's advise and opened up to his wife who was very supportive.

After a long chat with his wife, the captain is decided to get help from a maritime psychologist and worked on staying calm until he could disembark.



After a week, Filippo returned to his home and started visiting a local psychologist.

Nowadays, he is feeling a lot better. He has no more nightmares and has taken over control again. Also, he got rid of the alcoholic problem with help of the psychologist and his supportive wife.

He is telling Caven and Athena about his next contract which will start in two months. He is grateful for the support he received from them.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a mental trauma or mental health condition that is extremely frightening and terrifying. Often it is triggered by unusual and unexpected events, and it can be diagnosed by professionals.

Many people think that PTSD can happen only when you have a big traumatic event like going to a war, natural disaster, or having a near-death experience. However, it can happen after a divorce, breakup, small accidents, losing someone close to you (even in animals), having an illness like cancer, or hearing stories about other people being hurt or killed.



Signs and symptoms may vary over time or vary from person to person.

- Flashbacks or intrusive thoughts about the traumatic event
- Intense physical or emotional reactions to reminders of the event
- Nightmares
- Avoiding people, places, activities or sensations that remind you of the trauma
- Changes in physical and emotional reactions
 - Easily frightened or afraid
 - Always alert to danger
 - Self-harming behaviors such as consuming too much alcohol or driving too fast
 - Sleep difficulties
 - Concentration difficulties
 - Anger and aggressive behavior, extreme feelings of guilt or shame.



How to deal with PTSD ?

1. If you realize that you or someone else is suffering from symptoms related to PTSD, please reach out to a friend, coworker or a psychologist for help.
2. Remember that others care about you and will be there for you when you need them.
3. Discuss the experience and your emotions with someone you trust and empathic to you instead of using alcohol or drugs to hide the way you feel.



4. Share your concerns and stay connected to friends and other important people.

5. Try to identify and eliminate negative thoughts and replacing them with more positive ones. Writing is always a good idea to clear your mind and collect your thoughts.

6. You may need time off work. Remember, work accidents and mistakes happen more often when you are suffering from mental exhaustion. Take care of yourself by allowing yourself time to heal.



Tips to help a friend who is suffering from PTSD

1. Be part of their social support system: reach out and check in, even if they say there is no need, sometimes even offering an apple and watching TV will be enough. Sometimes in PTSD, it's okay to be there and not try to fix them, just be there, just not being alone might be enough.
2. Learn their triggers and avoid them as much as possible.
3. Be consistent with the support system. Please don't ask them how it is going only once, create a ritual, show up for them, and try to build trust.



4. Be calm. They can feel constantly on the edge and easily upset, leading to anger outbursts, rage, or extreme moodiness. We need to stay calm and not react to their anger. Give them some space so no one gets hurt.

Anger is the secondary emotion that comes to protect us from what we feel. If someone acts out of anger, it is usually because they are hurt, scared, or overwhelmed. Anger feels like a safer emotion to express. They are just trying to protect themselves.

5. Let them tell you what it is like to feel this. Please don't bring your experience, learn from their experience. Don't assume what they are going through.



Lastly, do not forget that disorders do not define the person. You are way much more than just a mental illness. You are you, and you matter.

Always keep in mind

- ✿ Being aware of our breathing helps us stay focussed in the present moment.
- ✿ Staying connected to family and friends can really help us stay calm.
- ✿ Staying hydrated helps us focus and can prevent headaches.
- ✿ Make sure you know the dangers of alcohol abuse.
- ✿ Your mind and body work together to form a strong team.
- ✿ Worrying can be ended by taking action or letting the thoughts go.
- ✿ Social activities help us stay connected with our colleagues.
- ✿ Find time for stillness, meditation, praying or simply quiet time.
- ✿ Talking about our emotions helps our body and mind deal with them.
- ✿ Don't distract yourself with your mobile when working. Stay safe.
- ✿ Monitor your screen time and limit your surfing on the web.
- ✿ Sleep is the foundation of resilience and mental health.
- ✿ When we share our issues or help others, hormones decrease our stress levels.
- ✿ Help colleagues in need and watch out for sad or anxious behaviour.
- ✿ We all go through hard times. It is part of the shared human experience.
- ✿ Try to be as understanding as you can about people's problems and listen to them without judgment.

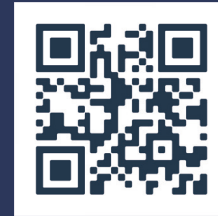


The bravest thing you can
do is ask for help!



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support you, your colleagues and your organisation.

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