

# Research on Psychological Resilience of Seafarers and Emergency Management

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**Abstract:** Seafarers are a unique group of workers who face a variety of challenges in their daily lives. Difficult working conditions may lead to mental and physical problems. Enterprises may take some measures and policies to avoid them. This paper expounds the necessity of improving seafarers' resilience, and putting forward emergency management advice.

**Key words:** Seafarers; Sudden Psychological Problems; Emergency Management

Seafarers are a unique group of workers who face a variety of challenges in their daily lives. They have to endure separation from family, burnout, time pressure, dealing with checks, workplace noise, sleep deprivation, cross-cultural communication, recreation scarcity, interpersonal stress, physiological needs, and heat during navigation. Due to the stressors, seafarers are subject to impact on mental health, including depression, anxiety, suicide, and alcohol or drug dependence, which is a growing concern. Regarding of this, we discussed how to help solve seafarers' sudden mental problems and improve their resilience.

## 1. The Causes of Seafarers' Psychological Problems

Seafarers' mental health is an important issue that needs to be addressed. Mental health issues can arise from long periods of isolation, difficult working conditions, and physical and psychological demands of the job. It is important for seafarers to have access to mental health support and resources to help them cope with the unique challenges of their job.

Many studies have shown working conditions on board ships can have a significant impact on the mental health of seafarers. Long hours, isolation, and the physical and psychological demands of the job can all contribute to mental health issues. Studies have found that seafarers are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues due to the lack of social support and contact with others. Seafarers may also experience difficulty in adjusting to the new environment and culture, resulting in feelings of alienation and depression. The physical demands of the job can also be taxing, with seafarers often working long hours in cramped and uncomfortable conditions, resulting in fatigue, stress, and anxiety. Furthermore, the lack of access to medical care and mental health services can make it difficult for seafarers to cope with their mental health issues. The physical environment of a ship can also affect mental health. The confined spaces, long hours, extreme weather, rough seas, and dangerous cargo, lack of privacy can lead to feelings of claustrophobia, fatigue and stress. And the lack of natural light and fresh air can lead to depression and anxiety.

Additionally, the mental health of seafarers can also be affected by the lack of access to mental health services. Seafarers often have limited access to mental health professionals, and this can make it difficult to get the help they need. And the stigma associated with mental health issues can make it difficult for seafarers to seek help.

The lack of access to recreational activities can also have a negative impact on the mental health of seafarers. Without access to activities such as sports, movies, or other forms of entertainment, seafarers may become bored and frustrated. Additionally, the lack of access to social activities can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which can further contribute to mental health issues.

The lack of access to proper nutrition can also affect the mental health of seafarers negatively. Without access to proper nutrition, seafarers may become malnourished. Additionally, the lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables can lead to deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals, which can further contribute to mental health issues.

To date, the high-paying jobs are on the rise on land with the development of China's economy. However, social commitment of seafarers as a profession has declined. Many seafarers decided to quit their jobs, and other seafarers may have also experienced stress due to the loss of their companions.

## 2. the Necessity of Focusing the Research on the Psychological Resilience of the Crew

Focusing the research on the psychological resilience of the crew may contribute to meeting seafarers' job demands, but also keep shipping safety.

### 1. Help Seafarers in Their Work

The data on suicides has shown that mental health of seafarers in many cases continues to be very poor and often fatal. With deaths aboard merchant ships resulting from depression leading to suicide being widely reported, the damage to the seafarers, their families, and ship owners cannot be ignored. It strongly demonstrates the need for everyone connected with the international maritime shipping industry to do something about it.

The mental state directly affects seafarers' life and work obviously. Unexpected situations and complex problems during navigation will not be dealt with effectively unless seafarers keep mental health. It's important to conduct researches on seafarers' mental health and develop resources to improve it. The current mental state of seafarers and the factors which may affect mental health of seafarers will be known after the investigation. Also, the measures and policies can be put forward to improve it according to the research, which benefits seafarers to be

engaged in their work and meet their job demands and duties.

## 2. Contribute to Safety of Shipping

Seafarer is considered to be a highly stressful and high-risk occupation in terms of physical and mental exhaustion. Shipping companies need to take measures to enhance seafarers' mental health, otherwise it may increase the accident rate and impact shipping safety seriously. However, if seafarers can detect mental illness in themselves and others in time and know what they should do, it would be helpful. Also, regular exercises and psychological counseling service can contribute to enhancing seafarers' mental health and resilience. Further, it is essential for seafarers to participate emotion regulation training, so that seafarers will keep calm or ease their stress when facing danger or other crisis.

## 3. Emergency Measures on Improving Seafarers' Resilience

Crises can negatively affect psychological outcomes. Numerous studies have also highlighted the importance of resilience as a psychological buffer against the negative consequences of crises. Positive psychology interventions are effective in enhancing subjective well-being, psychological well and reducing depression. Interventions developed from this investigation can be used to complement current government-led health initiatives and policies.

### 1. Establish emergency support system to improve crew's emergency response ability.

Due to the poor seafarers' mental health, building social support dynamic system and focusing research on seafarers' mental state may reduce negative consequences of crises.

In order to reduce the possibility of medical crisis and survival crisis, it's important to store a large number of commonly used materials and provide a diversified supply of fresh vegetables for the crew.

According to the specific circumstances of emergencies, managers should promptly introduce temporary measures and grading system to ensure the safety and interests of crew members and embrace their work motivation.

Regarding the existence of unexpected events, it's necessary to let seafarers know basic psychological theories and practical methods to avoid irrational behavior. Specifically, shipping companies may regularly carry out special training on sudden psychological problems to the crew, popularize mental health knowledge to the crew, help them master the methods of relieving stress and emotional management, let them know what they should do when facing crisis.

Furthermore, managers should provide regular psychological counseling services to seafarers who are in need to help them improve their mental health. In the routine physical examination of the crew, the managers need pay attention to the mental health examination, analyze the psychological status of the crew during the voyage, communicate with the leaders on board in time, and strengthen the daily training of the political commissar's ability to deal with psychological stress. Also, it is necessary to strengthen the intervention of sudden psychological problems to improve the emergency ability of the crew.

### 2. Care about seafarers and provide a supportive atmosphere.

Due to the risk seafarers may face during navigation, it is quite significant for shipping enterprises to care about the crew and help seafarers connect with each other. Regarding the poor mental health of seafarers, it is important for employers to recognize the unique challenges seafarers face and to offer them the resources and support they need. This can include providing access to medical care and mental health services, offering flexible working hours, adequate rest and relaxation and providing a safe and comfortable working environment as well as the access to social activities, support groups and recreational activities. Additionally, employers should strive to create a culture of openness and acceptance around mental health issues, so that seafarers feel comfortable seeking help when needed.

Further, enterprises staff member need to visit the crew group and families regularly to know and meet their practical needs, and provide humanistic care to the crew and their families from salary, annual leave rest, post welfare, retirement age and treatment so that seafarers may improve work attitude and deal with the challenges on board positively.

In addition, strengthening the construction of ship communication facilities, through the introduction of wireless network, satellite television seems necessary for more crew members can interact with others online and meet their needs about continuous learning. Also, a game room, fitness room and library on board is conducive to meet the amateur entertainment needs of the crew and improve their burnout.

### 3. Dig deep into the root causes of unexpected problems and improve the emergency response system.

Due to the poor mental health of seafarers, shipping companies need to pay more attention to it. Specifically, psychological experts may be invited to carry out mental health assessment activities regularly, provide regular group counseling and case consultation services to the crew. And official WeChat accounts, online lectures, telephone hotlines, and mental health websites can be used to promote mental health knowledge and suggestions. Also, building a psychological crisis intervention platform is necessary for crew members to ask for help. The platform may also provide early warning, intervention, treatment, response and post-evaluation management of psychological problems through remote services.

Additionally, it is better for seafarers to leave the ship and seek medical treatment and psychological counseling service whenever they need so as to ensure the crew's physical and mental health and the ship's safe navigation. For every crew member who has sudden psychological problems, managers need to do a good job in psychological files and tracking services, offer them help in life and work on the premise of protecting their privacy, and maintain the safety of the crew during their work. For the crew who have not yet recovered, the relevant departments may take some measurements and adjust the working environment and posts, so as to facilitate their recovery of mental health.

#### 4. Building social psychological service system and enhance seafarers' resilience

Resilience is a psychological resource that affects individual's self-confidence and determination to deal with problems directly. Individuals with high level of resilience may not be frustrated by difficulties, and find new ways to heal themselves emotionally and move forward actively towards their goals. In order to improve the level of psychological resilience of seafarers, it is necessary for enterprises to carry out a series of psychological training and activities to guide seafarers to enhance psychological resilience gradually. Specifically, focus on self-regulation, on the basis of maintaining the law of diet and sleep, with appropriate exercise, and try to establish relationships with others. Further, guide the crew self-dialogue, let the crew live in accordance with positive values, constantly filter negative information in life, think about how to deal with difficulties, and get positive feedback. Then valuable experience could be gain during reviewing the past. And focusing on meditation training, and the crew may keep their brains calm and give themselves positive psychological cues through meditation or recreation. By sending ship information, holding online lectures and centralized training, enterprises may help the crew continuously improve the level of resilience. Also, smooth the communication between the crew and their families and leaders. Enterprises may pay more attention to mental dynamics of the crew, grasp the entry point of psychological work and help them solve problems according to their daily actions and words. Furthermore, seafarers can be allowed to communicate with friends and family members, so as to acquire comfort and enhance their sense of security.

#### 5. Conclusion.

To sum up, enhancing resilience of the crew may directly affect their working attitude and shipping safety. Enterprises may take some measures and policies to care about seafarers and provide a supportive atmosphere on board, which may contribute to the long-term development of crew and shipping.

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