

Focusing on Seafarer Wellbeing - Socialisation

Seafarer wellbeing has been a focal topic for The Standard Club's Loss Prevention team, particularly in recent years. Seafarer wellbeing is a holistic concept combining physical, mental, and social wellbeing. People often forget how mental and physical wellbeing are linked. You can only be as happy as you are healthy, in body and mind!

This article focuses on socialisation.

When you set sail back in the 1990s, keeping in touch with family and friends usually meant a brief but expensive long-distance telephone call from port every few weeks or receiving a stack of 'snailmail' once a month. Socialising on board was not just limited to a drink with other crewmembers in the bar before dinner, but also included a video or ping-pong match afterwards. Not to forget about karaoke!

But following the installation of on-board wi-fi, you can now stay in constant contact with your loved ones back at home, watch television and download new books, music, films and games without leaving your cabin.

As a result, this digital connection often means seafarers have less time, and less motivation to interact with each other and find themselves spending more time on their own. This can stop crews socialising, forming friendships and building camaraderie, which often means that people don't feel able or willing to share their worries or news with each other. This simple choice can lead to serious issues, such as negative feelings and ongoing isolation which then trigger mental health issues.

Instead, the onboard Wi-Fi could be used more positively, it could be used to encourage more interaction with your peers instead of less. Gather the rest of the crew to enjoy a film or television together, listen to music and play games, which is a great way of finding out the interests and hobbies of individuals. You could also use Wi-Fi to create ongoing classes or clubs, for example setting up group workouts using exercise videos or even karaoke nights. If you enjoy reading, you could set up a book club where you discuss things you have all read.

Poor signal? Socialisation doesn't have to stop when connection is poor, you can have a drink with other crewmembers in the communal area before dinner, set up a ping-pong rally with fellow seafarers, or a game of basketball.

Life is better together!

Keep a look out for the other poster sets covering mental wellbeing, healthy diet and lifestyle, and fitness and exercise. To find out more information about these elements of seafarer wellbeing, you can view the full articles on each, here: <https://www.standard-club.com/risk-management/knowledge-centre/news-and-commentary/2019/11/news-seafarer-wellbeing-poster-campaign.aspx>

To access further information, and guidance particularly for shipowners and crew, read our special edition of Standard Safety: Seafarer Wellbeing, here: <https://www.standard-club.com/media/2767887/standard-safety-seafarer-wellbeing-october-2018.pdf>