

Press release

13 April 2021

**UK Club issues crew health advice on grief**

**In collaboration with I.M.E.Q., Sophia Bullard, Crew Health Director at UK P&I Club, discusses the issue of grief and its impact on crew, exploring the stages, signs and symptoms of grief, as well as coping mechanisms:**

“Loss is an inevitable, fundamental truth of life and grief is the emotional suffering we experience when we lose someone or something valuable to us. For seafarers, loss and the subsequent grief can be compounded by a sense of isolation, physical distance and impracticalities of a life at sea. That’s why it’s so important for crew to recognise these emotions when they occur, helping themselves and others to cope through their journey of healing.

“Death is not the only loss we encounter in life: divorce, break ups, illness, a miscarriage, the loss of a job, or even letting go of our dreams and hopes may evoke powerful feelings of grief. The loss of normalcy, social connections and safety we are currently experiencing because of the pandemic has taken an emotional toll on all of us, and in many ways, we are all grieving and in need of healing. For those at sea, this can be even more challenging as they are away from home, away from their loved ones and with limited resources to deal with their grief.

**What are the most common emotional reactions to grief?**

* Numbness, shock, disbelief and denial
* Sadness and emotional pain
* Yearning, searching and preoccupation with the deceased or circumstances of loss
* Despair, anger, guilt and fear
* Physical reactions include loss of sleep, loss of appetite, physical exhaustion, and crying

**What are the stages of grief?**

* Stage 1: Denial -‘this is not happening to me’
* Stage 2: Anger – ‘why is this happening to me? Who is to blame?’
* Stage 3: Bargaining – ‘I will do anything to change this’
* Stage 4: Depression – ‘What is the point of living after the loss?’
* Stage 5: Acceptance – ‘It is going to be okay’. Healing begins
* Stage 6: Finding meaning - integrating the loss and moving through life by finding your own meaning to the loss

**How can I support other in grief?**

* Ask them about their feelings
* Be a good listener
* Do not minimise their grief
* Do not offer false comfort by telling them it was for the best
* Be understanding
* Share your feelings
* Acknowledge their pain
* Offer practical help – help them with practical tasks

“No matter how major or subtle the loss we experience may be, grief touches all of us in unique ways. Grief is a natural reaction to loss that allows us to move forward in our healing journey. However, there is no specific time frame to healing or particular ways of grieving; if you find yourself suffering or feel that the pain is too much to carry, seek professional assistance to help you move forward in your healing journey.”

**For the full advice\* on grief and bereavement, please visit:** [**https://www.ukpandi.com/news-and-resources/crew-health/article/?dm\_i=33T,7BARP,EDWTDK,TO1HR,1**](https://www.ukpandi.com/news-and-resources/crew-health/article/?dm_i=33T,7BARP,EDWTDK,TO1HR,1)

***\**** *This advice was compiled in collaboration with I.M.E.Q.*

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