

When Should You Seek Professional Help?

A person might be that strongly effected by the event, that it is advisable to seek effected professional help. In particular this is the case when the reactions mentioned earlier persist for more than 4 weeks.

Watch for the following signs:

- Your reactions and emotions are not returning back to normal.
- You persistently experience nightmares or suffer from insomnia.
- You frequently have unwanted memories of the event.
- You avoid certain situations or places that remind you of the event.
- You consume more alcohol, drugs or take a large amount of medication.
- Your quality of work is affected.
- The relationship to your partner is significantly affected or you suffer from sexual problems.
- You have no one to talk to about your feelings, even though you feel the need to talk.

Take these signs seriously. When you experience any, please seek professional help to avoid severe disorders. There are organisations available to assist you, among them outreach clinics, psychotherapists, spiritual counsellors and physicians.



at sea, in port, at home
you can talk to us

24/7 online assistance:

simply enter **dsm.care** into your browser and chat with one of our chaplains.

Contact us in the ports of...

Alexandria (EG): +20 12 2344 2750 alexandria@seemannsmission.org

Amsterdam (NL): +31 206 220 842 shipvisitor@seemannsheim.nl

Antwerp (BE): +32 495 18 56 91 antwerpen@seemannsmission.org

Brake (DE): +49 4401 855 425 pier.one@seemannsmission.org

Bremen (DE): +49 49 421 6969 6235 or 0049 1738 666 108

bremen@seemannsmission.org

Bremerhaven (DE): +49 471 43013 or + 49 171 8308 161

bremerhaven@seemannsmission.org

Brunsbüttel (DE): +49 4852 872 52 brunsbuettel@seemannsmission.org

Cuxhaven (DE): +49 1515 1191 630 cuxhaven@seemannsmission.org

Douala (CM): +237 699 915 448 shipvisiting@foyer-du-marin.org

Duisburg (DE): +49 203 2951 3991 duisburg@seemannsmission.org

Durban (ZA): +27 826 544 009 durban@seemannsmission.org

Emden (DE): +49 4921 92080 emden@seemannsmission.org

Genoa (IT): +39 342 326 1591 genua@seemannsmission.org

Hamburg (DE): +49 40 740 1661 hamburg@seemannsmission.org

Hongkong (CN): +852 9153 5227 hongkong@seemannsmission.org

Kiel (DE): +49 431 331 492 dsm-kiel@seemannsmission.org

Le Havre (FR): +33 623 105 675 lehavre@seemannsmission.org

Lome (TG): +228 2227 5351 lome@seemannsmission.org

Lubeck (DE): +49 451 72991 luebeck@seemannsmission.org

New York (US): +1 203 570 7759 arnd.braun-storck@seemannsmission.org

Nordenham (DE): +49 4401 855425 pier.one@seemannsmission.org

Oldenburg (DE): +49 4401 855425 pier.one@seemannsmission.org

Panama (PA): +507 6452 0905 andrea.meenken@seemannsmission.org

Piraeus (GRE): +30 6944 346 119 piraeus@seemannsmission.org

Rostock (DE): +49 381 6700 431 rostock@seemannsmission.org

Rotterdam (NL): +316 5388 0666 rotterdam@seemannsmission.org

Santos (BR): +55 13 97408 7790 santos@seemannsmission.org

Sassnitz (DE): +49 160 2426 188 sassnitz@seemannsmission.org

Stade-Butzfleth (DE): +49 4146 1233 stade@seemannsmission.org

Wilhelmshaven (DE): +49 4421 993 450

wilhelmshaven@seemannsmission.org

International helpline for seafarers:

SeafarerHelp: +44 20 7323 2737 help@seafarerhelp.org



support of seafarers' dignity

How to cope with stressful events



Advice for seafarers and their families

This leaflet was funded by
Stiftung Deutsche Lutherische Seemannsmission

Possible Reactions

Extremely stressful events such as accidents on board or incidents like heavy weather, collisions or pirate attacks evoke powerful reactions and feelings in those, who were affected by them. This also pertains to eyewitnesses and rescue personnel. These events can cause strong emotions and reactions immediately after the event, such as:

- Helplessness
- Fear
- Depression
- Feelings of guilt
- Severe mood swings
- Disorientation
- Inability to function in normal life

These and similar reactions are normal after an extremely stressful event. Usually, they subside within a few days.

Sometimes additional symptoms may appear, such as:

- Self isolation
- Person is extremely nervous and restless
- Sleeplessness, nightmares
- Feelings of futility, hopelessness
- Memory lapses, concentration problems
- Stressful memories or images continue to intrude
- Loss of appetite, severe fatigue
- Increased use of alcohol, sedatives and other substances

Also these reactions usually subside in the weeks after the event until they eventually disappear.

**Always remember:
It is the situation, which is abnormal
- Not you!**

What Can You Do?

After experiencing a stressful event, it might be helpful to give yourself some space. Take time to overcome and recover from what has happened.

- Pay attention to your needs and take time to meet them. Even writing down things may help.
- Do not suppress your feelings, talk to someone about it.
- Try to return to your routine life as soon as possible.
- Do not expect that time will efface your memories. Your current feelings will be there for quite some time.
- Do some of the things you usually enjoy and which helps you to relax.
- Do not hesitate to seek psychological and spiritual help.

The Port Chaplains and Social Workers of the Deutsche Seemannsmission (DSM) can provide support in 29 ports around the world – confidential and anonymous.

Sometimes it helps to talk to somebody outside the inner family circle who knows how to help in these situations. In case of repatriation, your family doctor or members of the clergy are also available for you in your home country.

How Can Friends And Family Members Help?

Friends and family can play a very important part helping the person deal with the stressful event. Just knowing you are not alone can really help.

If the person who underwent a stressful event wants to talk about it ...

- Listen
- Take time
- Take any feelings seriously.

After certain events, it is necessary to organise and take care of some things. Practical assistance with these tasks can also be very helpful. It is most important, however, to help the person affected by the event to return to his/her normal routine as soon as possible.



This brochure is created based on the original leaflet "How to cope with stressful events" issued by Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (www.bbk.bund.de).