



**Wellness at Sea**  
FROM SAILORS' SOCIETY



# **SEA MATE TRAINING PROGRAMME PROPOSAL**



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# Sea Mate:

## A new Wellbeing Officer training programme

## 1. Sea Mate: High level overview

Sea Mate is an interactive, industry-leading training programme designed to equip seafarers with practical skills to navigate real-life challenges at sea. At its core, Sea Mate aims to train Wellbeing Officers for every vessel in a fleet, empowering seafarers to create a safe psychological and emotional space on board. These officers serve as key support figures, providing crew members with someone to talk to - someone trained in wellbeing expertise and directly connected to Sailors' Society's crisis response teams for immediate assistance when needed.

More than just a training programme, Sea Mate extends the relationship between expert trainers and Wellbeing Officers beyond the classroom, offering continuous support even after the training is completed. Through expert-led guidance, ongoing mentorship, and a strong peer network, Sea Mate ensures long-term impact, fostering resilience, teamwork, and wellbeing at sea.

## 2. Programme framework

### Two-Day Training Course Outline

This intensive two-day training course equips Wellbeing Officers with the essential skills to support their fellow crew members, enhance psychological safety, and manage emotional crises. The course provides practical tools for self-awareness, emotional regulation, crisis intervention, and resilience-building, ensuring a healthier and more harmonious on board environment.

#### Input:

- Selection of Wellbeing Officers – Chosen based on leadership, empathy, and crisis management potential
- Sailors' Society resources – Training curriculum, expert trainers, and ongoing support

#### Throughput:

- Enhancing self-awareness, emotional regulation, and resilience-building
- Identifying distress signals and providing immediate emotional support
- Applying Psychological First Aid, de-escalation, and crisis communication techniques
- Managing trauma incidents with both short-term and long-term support strategies
- Encouraging cultural sensitivity, inclusiveness, and effective conflict resolution
- Designing, implementing, and evaluating sustainable on board wellbeing initiatives

#### Output:

- Trained Wellbeing Officers – equipped to promote crew wellbeing, offer emotional support, and manage crises
- Crisis response capabilities – officers prepared to act as first responders in on board emotional crises
- Enhanced crew wellbeing – improved mental resilience, teamwork, and communication
- Effective wellbeing implementation – ensuring sustainable wellbeing initiatives through continuous learning, evidence-based practices, and proactive crisis response strategies

## 3. Training outcomes

### 1. Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation

- Participants will recognise their own emotional triggers and develop techniques for self-regulation
- Participants will learn strategies to maintain emotional balance in high-stress maritime environments

### 2. Recognizing Signs of Distress

- Participants will be able to identify early warning signs of psychological and emotional distress in seafarers
- Participants will differentiate between normal stress responses and crises requiring intervention

### 3. Emotional Support Strategies

- Participants will develop skills in providing immediate, compassionate emotional support to distressed crew members
- Participants will learn to create a psychologically safe space for open discussions on mental health

### 4. Psychological First Aid Kit

- Participants will understand the core principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and its application on board
- Participants will create a personalised 'Psychological First Aid Kit' with tools for immediate intervention

### 5. Crisis Communication Skills

- Participants will learn to communicate effectively and calmly in high-stress situations
- Participants will practice active listening and de-escalation techniques to support distressed individuals

### 6. Basic Counselling Conversation

- Participants will develop core counselling skills, including active listening and empathetic engagement
- Participants will gain confidence in conducting supportive conversations to help crew members navigate emotional challenges

### 7. De-escalation Techniques

- Participants will be able to recognise and defuse tense situations before they escalate into conflicts
- Participants will apply non-confrontational strategies to calm individuals experiencing emotional distress

### 8. Handling Crisis and Traumatic Incidents

- Participants will understand the psychological impact of trauma and its effects on individuals and teams
- Participants will learn steps to provide immediate and long-term support to crew members affected by trauma or crises

### 9. Building Resilience

- Participants will explore techniques to strengthen personal and crew resilience to stress and adversity
- Participants will develop strategies for fostering a supportive on board culture that enhances crew wellbeing

### 10. Rolling Out Wellbeing Initiatives on Board

- Participants will design and implement tailored wellbeing programmes for their vessel's specific needs
- Participants will learn to monitor, evaluate, and adapt initiatives based on crew feedback and effectiveness

## 4. Agenda

### Day 1: Self-Awareness, Emotional Regulation and Crisis Response

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#### Welcome and Introduction

- Opening remarks by Sailors' Society representative
- Overview of training objectives and key learning outcomes
- Introduction to trainers and participants

#### Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation

- Understanding emotions and their impact on decision-making and leadership
- Recognising personal emotional triggers and developing coping mechanisms
- Practical exercises for improving emotional regulation

#### Recognising Signs of Distress

- Identifying early warning signs of psychological and emotional distress in seafarers
- Physical, emotional, and behavioural indicators of mental health challenges
- Differentiating between normal stress and crisis situations

#### Psychological First Aid Kit

- Understanding the core principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA)
- Key components of a Psychological First Aid response
- Creating a 'Psychological First Aid Kit' – tools and techniques to provide immediate support

#### Basic Counselling Conversation

- The role of a Wellbeing Officer in providing emotional support
- Active listening and empathetic communication
- Conducting a basic counselling conversation
- Role-play scenarios for practical application

#### De-escalation Techniques

- Strategies to calm down distressed individuals
- Verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques
- Managing aggressive or highly emotional responses effectively

#### Practice Session: Emotional Support and De-Escalation

- Real-life case study discussions
- Role-play exercises to practice counselling and crisis intervention skills
- Group feedback and refinement of techniques

## 4. Agenda

### Day 2: Crisis and Trauma Management, Resilience and Wellbeing Programme Implementation

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#### Understanding Crisis and Trauma

- Defining crisis situations and traumatic incidents
- Recognising the psychological impact of trauma on individuals and teams

#### Immediate Crisis Intervention

- Steps to take following a traumatic event on board
- Techniques for providing immediate support and crisis intervention
- Using Psychological First Aid techniques effectively

#### Long-Term Trauma Support

- Immediate and long-term support strategies for trauma survivors
- Connecting seafarers with mental health professionals and crisis response teams
- The role of Sailors' Society's 24/7 crisis support

#### Crisis Communication Skills

- Communicating effectively under high-stress situations
- Techniques for clear, calm, and compassionate crisis communication
- Dealing with language and cultural barriers in emergency situations

#### Building Resilience for Self and Crew

- Defining resilience and why it matters at sea
- Strategies for strengthening mental resilience
- Techniques for helping crew members adapt to challenges

#### Implementing Wellbeing Initiatives on Board

- Examples of successful wellbeing programmes in the maritime industry
- Brainstorming and designing wellbeing activities for specific vessel environments
- Practical steps for launching and sustaining wellbeing initiatives

#### Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusiveness

- Navigating cultural differences among crew members
- Encouraging inclusiveness and mutual respect on board
- Managing conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings

#### Monitoring, Evaluating, and Improving Wellbeing Programmes

- Tracking the impact of wellbeing initiatives
- Collecting feedback and adjusting programmes accordingly
- Developing a standardised crisis intervention document for ships

#### Ongoing Support and Resources

- Overview of Sailors' Society's post-training support
- Accessing mentorship, materials, and 24/7 emergency helpline
- Quarterly follow-up sessions for continuous learning

#### Review, Certification, and Closing

- Summary of key learnings
- Open Q&A and discussion
- Certification ceremony and next steps

## 5. Trainers

The following trainers will present the SEA MATE training:



### Dr Deepti Mankad

Dr. Deepti Mankad is a leading expert in maritime wellness, leadership development, and mental health coaching. She holds a Doctorate in Multiple Intelligence from the University of Mumbai and has extensive experience in counselling, Psychological First Aid, and corporate training. As the Founder of MINDSPEAK, she focuses on capacity building and mental health awareness, while also serving as the Client and Project Manager for Sailors' Society and a key member of the Sagar Mein Samaan Committee under the Director General of Shipping - India.

With a strong presence in the maritime industry, Dr. Mankad has trained seafarers and corporate professionals worldwide, conducting Wellness at Sea programmes for major companies like Fleet Management, MSC, and Wilhelmsen. Her research and publications, including the book *Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the Maritime Sector*, have made a lasting impact on the field. She has also been an expert interviewee for Shell Shipping and Maritime's Seafarer Wellbeing project.

Recognised for her contributions, she has received multiple awards, including being ranked among the Top 100 Women in Shipping (2025) by *It's All About Shipping UK*, the Samundra Manthan Woman Achiever Award (2024), and the Pride of Bharat Award (2024). Through her work, she continues to advocate for seafarer wellbeing, mental health awareness, and leadership development in the maritime sector.



### Dr. Radhika Vakharia

Dr. Radhika Vakharia is an accomplished training and development specialist with a strong focus on maritime education, leadership, and research. With over 14 years of experience in learning and development, she has played a key role in advancing maritime training through innovative pedagogy, competency profiling, and blended learning strategies. She is a Wellness at Sea trainer and, as a writer and content specialist for Marex Media, she has contributed featured articles, interviews, and hosted the maritime-focused show *Anchored Together*, highlighting key industry insights and discussions.

She has designed and conducted training programmes on crisis management, safety culture, emotional and social intelligence, and leadership resilience, equipping maritime professionals with essential skills for high-pressure environments. She has also played a pivotal role in organising and convening major industry conferences, including the Marex Women Empowerment Conferences, the Global Summit, and the Dry Bulk Conference, bringing together leaders and experts to drive progress in the maritime sector.

Dr. Vakharia's research contributions include published works on emotional intelligence, STEM education, and maritime workforce development. Her expertise has been recognised through prestigious awards, including the HIMT Award for Exceptional Achievement in Maritime Research (2023) and the Times of India Education Icon Award (2022 and 2023). Committed to fostering future-ready maritime professionals, she continues to contribute through training, research, and industry collaborations.

## 5. Trainers

The following trainers will present the Sea Mate training:



### Mr. Daniël Taljard

Daniël Taljard is an experienced maritime welfare advocate, leadership coach, and trainer with a strong background in supporting seafarers' wellbeing stretching over more than 30 years. As a Port Chaplain with the Christian Seaman's Organization and part of the wellness team at Sailors' Society, he has been at the forefront of providing emotional and spiritual care to seafarers globally. His role includes delivering the Wellness at Sea training programmes, managing the innovative Sailors' Society Peer-to-Peer Support programme, and creating new programmes like the recently launched Sea Mate programme.

With an MPhil in Leadership and Management Coaching from the University of Stellenbosch Business School, he specialises in coaching, mentoring, and scenario planning to enhance resilience among maritime professionals. His extensive experience in trauma counselling, crisis management, and strategic planning has made him a key figure in maritime welfare. Daniël also works closely with port authorities and donors to strengthen support systems for seafarers, ensuring they receive the necessary care and guidance in high-pressure environments.

His commitment to the maritime industry extends to international collaboration and training, helping shape the future of seafarer wellbeing programmes. Through his work, he continues to advocate for the mental health, safety, and overall wellbeing of those at sea.

## 6. Feedback from the recently presented pilot programme

### Participants' feedback regarding the content and presentation:

- **100%** of participants rated the overall quality of the training as good with **54.55%** indicating that it was excellent
- **100%** of participants rated the presenter as very effective with **63.64%** rating him extremely effective
- **100%** of participants felt the training content to be very relevant to their role as Wellness Officers with **54.55%** indicating it is extremely relevant
- **100%** of participants said that the practical exercises were useful in understanding the concepts. **90.91%** indicated that they were very useful
- **100%** said the training improved their confidence in handling emotional support and crisis situations, with **81.82%** indicating it has significantly improved their confidence
- All participants felt the pace and duration of the training was just right
- **72.73%** said they would strongly recommend it to other seafarers

### Some of the responses when asked what the most valuable part of the training was:

- Building resilience
- Learning techniques you can follow in real life
- Emotional support strategies
- Trained to emotionally handle crisis situations
- Tools to de-escalate a situation
- Awareness of the emotional wellness environment on board a ship
- A framework to counsel somebody
- How to look out for seafarers in distress
- How to create a friendly and supportive environment on board
- Methods to manage your own emotions

### Some responses when asked for their overall experience of the Sea Mate training were as follows:

- Nice to see Sailors' Society conducting this type of training to support seafarers
- Training programme was well structured and informative.
- Provided comprehensive instruction
- I gained valuable skills and confidence in my abilities to perform my duties safely and effectively
- Various techniques were discussed to increase awareness and to identify a developing situation and how to effectively handle the situation
- It provided valuable insights to build resilience
- Undergoing these types of trainings can improve wellness of crews and help to minimise issues of conflicts on board

## 7. Costs

The group size for Sea Mate is 14 participants.

The price per participant is £40 which includes the training, certification, ongoing support after the training via peer support groups and direct access to our crisis response team.

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**14 x £40 per student = £560 per training\***

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\*This will be a fixed cost per training and Sailors' Society cannot be held responsible if participants do not attend the training for any reason.

## 8. Final word

We believe Sea Mate represents a vital step forward in building a safer, healthier, and more supportive environment at sea - one where trained Wellbeing Officers serve as trusted points of contact, equipped to address mental health concerns, defuse crises, and champion a culture of care on board.

This programme goes beyond one-off training, offering ongoing support, mentorship, and access to Sailors' Society's wider network of wellness resources. By partnering with us, your company can demonstrate real leadership in crew wellbeing and set a new standard for psychological safety across your fleet.

We would be delighted to explore how Sea Mate can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your vessels and crews.

**To discuss implementation options or learn more about the impact this programme can have on your operations, please contact our Head of Wellness, Johan Smith, at [jsmith@sailors-society.org](mailto:jsmith@sailors-society.org).**



# Wellness at Sea

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