

How to deal with your crew during the Ukraine Crisis

Objective:

To give guidance to the master working on board in specific war situations, like the actual Ukrainian situation

Tips to reach out to the crew in this situation.

This situation is characterized by stress on all levels in the company.

The most important message in supporting your crew:

Every emotion and reaction is normal, because the situation is not normal

- Please, allow that anyone has the right to have his/her personal story
- It is of utmost importance that everyone can share her/his story
- Exchanging and clarifying those stories may be taking place in different stages, depending on the trust level between partners
- Every feeling experienced is correct: there is no right nor wrong
- In any conversation on this topic, we do not try to find the single truth, there should be room for more versions of the truth
- It is important not to judge, discuss, or come forward with political considerations from your point of view, do show understanding toward the crew members and give support to deal with their own stories and dilemmas
- Anyone in these circumstances should try or giving the chance to find peace of mind and share their story. Anyone affected should be given chance to find balance between sharing and finding rest
- If you want to reach out, there are better question to be raised than: 'How are you doing?' You can ask 'Did you sleep well?' or 'Do you have contact with your family?'
- Give crewmembers the possibility to have personal talks with you as master
- Leave room for the crew to come forward on their own terms, invite them, do not push them
- Crew members could feel shame, blame, guilt, and doubt. Be prepared for these emotions and leave room for these
- As stated above: The most important thing to keep in mind when dealing with colleagues, worrying or affected, is that every emotion and reaction is normal, because the situation is not normal!
- Try to avoid any debate or discussion on solutions but give attention and seek clarification.
- Do not promise anything which you or the company cannot follow up or continue for a longer period. Mention and remind yourself not to provide solutions.
- Allow time to contact home but point out safe working conditions to prevail.
- Inform crewing department in their role as prevention employees and persons of trust.
- Trust needs to grow. Allow this to happen by justifying different response to any stress situation.
- Toolbox and other work-related meetings should keep its business nature.

Important to keep in mind, it might be that over time the situation and understanding between Ukrainian colleagues and Russian colleagues can change. It is understandable and should not be overlooked. This is a special point of attention for the captain and could urge you to intervene because of the safety of crew and ship. In those circumstances do inform the crewing department in order to mutually seek ways to deal with that situation.

Background information:

A crisis is a sudden, unexpected, and undesired event that has the potential to damage the organization’s People, Environment, Asset, Reputation, Revenue, Legal & Liability and does not allow for any delay in its multi-disciplinary management.

(fm: Bas Poelmann en Arjan de Pauw Gerlings; Expect the unexpected)

Continuum of care

People are usually able on basis of their own strength and history to overcome a crisis. The company only seeks to assist in this natural process and will have after-care measures in place to work on adaptation.



If you are insecure or do not know how to deal with the crewmembers’ emotions and stories, or if you experience that they are no longer engaged or becoming more silent than usual, please, reach out to the crewing department.

Inform the person on what you are noticing, and offer the aftercare-support by the company. Keep to your task as captain and do not pretend to be a psychologist.

We, the company, can support and help you!

Contact us at: [contact data of the shipping company]

Toon van de Sande,
March 8, 2022