

# Empowering People working at Sea from Training to Justice

**Some thoughts to better develop a Culture of Care and increased empowerment in the maritime environment**



**Discussion White Paper**

By Toon van de Sande MA

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## Personal Foreword

*As long as humans live side by side, we should take care of each other, both on land and at sea. In the current era this seems to be getting more complicated. Why?*

*Why does it seem so complicated to assist and support ordinary people after a disruptive event or even a crisis? Why is a 'continuum of care' a necessity today more than in past generations? Do people effected by an unjust situation and the illegal actions of others still have a right to assistance or support, recovery, rehabilitation, and justice?*

*Let me give an example from my personal history: like Ukrainian citizens in 2022, my own mother faced tremendous tension and stress during World War II. She also hid from bombs on the front line. She even had to deal with the death of three family members because they were killed by a landmine. In those days there was no formal psychological help for her to recover after these terrible events. Yet, somehow, she and most of her relatives found a way to recover.*

*What, why and how did they manage to navigate this trauma in a healthy way? What were the results? I was raised by a healthy and cheerful mother in the post-war period.*

*But times and circumstances have changed, and so have we. New in our time, we know a lot more about the consequences of war and cruelty. There is an abundance of information about how people are at risk of also going into shock, albeit completely different than on the battlefield itself, but with all the problems that entails.*

*As mentioned, the same happens in wars. Over time not much has changed. Innocent people are victims, both in the Second World War and now in Ukraine. But lately, because of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, more people are being influenced through social and other media such as TV, radio and online with excessive information, "fake news", challenging images, heart breaking stories and sickening videos. I see normal people in need, and I can imagine their despair. But even though I am not on the battlefield, I can feel a similar, but not the same, pain.*

*It is the pain of 'not knowing' or otherwise having great uncertainty.*

*Can we call this 'shock'? We are constantly exposed to terrible experiences, not so much in direct reality, but more through images and stories. We are confronted with a more disturbing reality than in previous generations, partly due to the constant repetition of images and videos in the media. It is a bombardment of our hearts and souls.*

*How can we find solutions? When will normal people be able to adapt and recover? What should be done? There is an apparent army of self-styled experts feeding us all kinds of information, propaganda, solutions, serious questions, debates, theories, signs of hope or equally signs of despair. But who can we trust?*

*My own reaction is that that we might never understand our reality with precision ever again. But, we still need some answers and a practical guide to move forward.*

*What should and can be done now to support and assist those affected? What should we do to take care of ourselves, victims of the endless flow of information and possible solutions? There are so many unresolved and open questions that lead to surprise, despair or bewilderment at the immediacy and intensity of all the information. And the result may be that there are no simple straightforward solutions, time, and tranquillity. **We don't know because we know so much!***

*My mother was normal. The people of Ukraine too, but the situation has changed and is abnormal. In the past, the solutions to get out of a crisis were somewhat simpler, although the crisis was just as bad. With the help of many, my mother empowered herself. Nowadays these processes are all more complicated. Consequently, we were forced to develop a 'continuum of care'. This is care on many levels and based on a variety of professionalisms. Every organization and perhaps every person must be able to deal with stress in a professional way and do the right things at the crucial moments. That appears more difficult now.*

*Based on the simple fact that people can overcome a crisis on their own and with a little extra professional support from outside, we should strive to approach 'care' more professionally. The 'continuum of care' is a good tool for this.*

*But there is another reason, and that is around morality and human rights. After the Second World War, the concept of human rights were formulated and accepted. It was agreed that everyone has a moral obligation to assist and rehabilitate victims. And the victims have a legal right to that care.*

*In the following discussion paper, I hope to bring together both the reasons for the need for an established 'Continuum of Care' combined with human rights protections in a systematic and professional context.*

Toon van de Sande

December 2022

## Introduction

*This paper is primarily intended for all aid workers and their partners in the maritime world. They care about the fate of the people at sea, especially those persons who are abused. The paper is also intended for those who take action around this and those who, after some reflection on their work, realize that much more cooperation with other professional entities could lead to significantly better results for victims.*

*Assisting and supporting people at sea by empowering them should not be the result of humanitarian care and individual responsibility alone, but it must be part of the fundamental human rights and associated protections of all those in need.*

*I wrote this paper with the help of many. After consulting some leading organisations in the maritime welfare world, I decided to spread it at my own initiative to organisations, partners, stakeholders and persons with whom I am familiar.*

*The sole purpose of this paper is that people be inspired, that they have new ideas or insights or improve their knowledge by criticizing what I put forward. I don't expect that you will agree with all I will say - only tension creates light. I'd like to hear what you think, even if your thought and conclusions are different than mine. ([toonvandesande@hetnet.nl](mailto:toonvandesande@hetnet.nl))*

*If any part of this discussion paper might be useful to you, please do feel free to make use of it. I would love to have a copy of whatever you publish so that I can remain in contact with you.*

## Human rights are universal; they apply at sea as they do on land.

This is the core focus under which all the human rights and related justice activities of the UK charitable NGO, Human Rights at Sea ('HRAS'), are brought together under this single founding principle. It supports the organisation's vision to end human rights abuse at sea and aligns with many other similar organisations seeking justice for victims of abuse at sea.<sup>2</sup>

As part of this founding principle, there are some necessary and associated key questions that we should all be asking.

- What should be done when human rights at sea are breached?
- How can these abuses be prevented?

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/who-are-we/> I am member of the Advisory Board of Human Rights at Sea and of course I wholeheartedly support their work.

- What are the root causes and how to solve the issues?
- How to effectively cooperate with interested multiple stakeholder groups and shipping industry entities?
- How can victims be effectively assisted and supported so that justice is done and is seen to be done?
- How can victims and their dependents be rehabilitated and how can they be effectively remediated?"

These are some questions addressed in this paper.

The many answers to these questions cannot be provided by professional groups such as civil society, legal and academic experts alone. It requires an interdisciplinary and collaborative stakeholder approach while preserving the professional character of each professional who participates.

This Paper advocates for much more non-partisan cooperation between the different stakeholders and their respective welfare functions that should be involved in assisting and supporting people at sea in need. One of the greatest challenges is the often-isolated approaches to welfare support.

For the time being, we will limit the discussion to three groups: welfare workers, (a general term for a multitude of secular and religion based or religious-inspired professions), medical psychologists (psycho-social workers), and legal professionals

One document and emerging soft-law tool has been leading this study. The document is **The Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea**<sup>3</sup> (the Geneva Declaration) developed by HRAS in 2019 and issued in its final form on 1 March 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>4</sup>

### **Fundamental Principles**

According to the declaration, the protection of human rights at sea rests on the following four fundamental principles:

1. Human rights are universal; they apply at sea, as they do on land.
2. All persons at sea, without any distinction, are entitled to their human rights.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.gdhras.com](http://www.gdhras.com)

<sup>4</sup> The aim of the Geneva Declaration is to recall existing legal obligations, to raise global awareness of human rights abuses at sea, to generate a concerted international response to them and to ensure an effective remedy for those who are abused. Overall, the Declaration aims to promote a culture of compliance with human rights at sea.

3. There are no maritime specific reasons for denying human rights at sea.
4. All human rights established under both treaty and customary international law must be respected at sea.

## Continuum of Care

In combination with the Geneva Declaration, is the associated process description of the **Continuum of Care** developed by Dr Marion Gibson. Dr Gibson previously gave a decisive direction to the activities of the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme (MPHRP). Currently, MPHRP is active under the responsibility of the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN).<sup>5</sup>

This Paper aims to clarify the roles of the various professional workers who are considered able to empower people at sea after disruptive events, traumas, or personal needs and therefore may find themselves in an unjust situation caused by unlawful actions of other parties, the abusers.

The root of the issue is not the people working at sea alone, but also their support and management. So part of the solutions must also be found elsewhere. Many people at sea suffer because of the lack of attention to their (and their family's) needs, reluctance, or unwillingness of (many of) those who largely determine the immediate conduct of their lives, such as recruiters, agents, owners, managers and Protection and Indemnity (P&I) clubs.

To solve these welfare problems stemming from unlawful abuse of seafarers, well-regulated and collaborative multi-stakeholder inter-professional collaboration is highly desirable, if not essential. Ideally, this leads to efficient actions with effective results; those variously being prevention, on-scene activities, rehabilitation, justice for those abused, and greater world-wide public awareness of these problems.

In this context, this Paper proposes adjusted codes of conduct for four specific groups of professionals. Three codes are meant for the groups of care providers (welfare workers, psycho-social and legal experts) and one code deals with welfare trainers. The different and distinct codes are meant to cover the minimum requirements that may be imposed on each profession and shared by those who practice the profession. Hence this Paper proposes minimum or basic principles that such a code of conduct should comply with. The various experts are the ones who, based on their professionalism, must further develop, and specify these proposed draft codes.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/> I worked as Assistant Programme Director for this programme from 2009 till 2014.



There is a need for personal support, engagement in advocacy, legal action, enforcement of the law and justice for those who have been treated unjustly. All these actions come together in a coherent system that could be called a 'Culture of Care'<sup>6</sup>.

For now, as said, we will concentrate specifically on aid workers such as welfare workers, psycho-social workers, and legal experts. Important questions may be: Are the various care providers also aware of the quality, usefulness, and necessity of each other's work? When do they need to engage with each other? How can they effectively work together based on their own professionalism while mutually respecting that of other such experts? <sup>7</sup>

All such professionals need to be aware of the root of highlighted welfare issues. In this regard P&I clubs, owners and managers should be *de facto* included. To be successful requires full engagement from these actors.

The Geneva Declaration<sup>8</sup> could be considered a core emerging soft-law reference instrument, a common foundation of ethics and fundamental care, and a unifying document. It could be a starting point for cooperation between the identified experts and it could be complied with and where possible enforced to ensure effective remedies for those who are being abused at sea. Its contents should now be operationalized with the assistance of other stakeholders and professionals as part of the next steps in its development at port, flag, and coastal State level.<sup>9</sup> And one of the key issues is 'unregulated' operations where seafarers are beyond the reach of maritime legislation.

It must be noted that till date the activities of organisations do simply focus only on seafarers, but when successful and accepted the findings could be transferred to other groups, called people at sea by HRAS.

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<sup>6</sup> Culture Of Care Is Key To Future Seafarer Health And Welfare, Says Seafarers Hospital Society: <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/culture-of-care-is-key-to-future-seafarer-health-and-welfare-says-seafarers-hospital-society/>.

<sup>7</sup> There is literature on this, called inter professional practice, or inter professional care or inter professional education. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), by implementing interprofessional collaboration and learning to work together and respecting one another's perspectives, multiple disciplines can work more effectively as a team to help improve desired outcomes.

<sup>8</sup> Steven Haines, [Developing Human Rights at Sea](#), Ocean Yearbook, 2021, 35: 18–51. This article is a good and concise introduction to the Geneva Declaration. © Steven Haines, 2021

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights at Sea has been requested to reflect on this and offer additional points of interest. Psycho-Social experts could be requested to provide specific knowledge about psychological support. ICMA and ISWAN (International Christian Maritime Association and the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network), might be consulted about the role of Welfare Workers (a general term for a multitude of professions like pastor, minister, etc.)"

It is further hoped that much more supportive and inter-professional care providers will be triggered to think and maybe understand the usefulness and necessity of well-defined mutual co-operation amongst stakeholders and experts.

## People at Sea

This titling of 'People at Sea', coined by HRAS, variously consists of groupings of fishermen, seafarers, stowaways, migrants at sea, refugees, indigenous people in coastal and littoral locations, and their families. Each group has its specific characteristics and legal status within the jurisdiction(s) they live, work and transit. However, in the context of the human rights at sea narrative, the term 'People at Sea' is used as a general term in the context of addressing those persons subject to varying forms of abuse and their need for justice and effective remedy. People at Sea work and live at the micro level where they may suffer, and be at risk of victimization due to their status, orientation, gender, religious and other beliefs, for example.

## Basic conditions and starting points

### The image of Seafarers: fighting the stigma.

The target group to be reached is by HRAS referred to as 'people at sea'. However, seafarers and fishermen are not the only persons who may be abused at sea. These should also include migrants, refugees, offshore oil and gas workers, cruise line industry passengers, workers on wind farms, etc. "Abuses" should also be considered to mean 'abuses of power,' hence the need for this management angle to be considered in light of all entities holding or influencing power.

Nevertheless, for the time being we focus only on seafarers. It often appears that two kinds of stigmatisation and prejudices can be observed in terms of the general public's view of seafarers, and that of aid workers. One maybe characterised as of 'hard drinking toughness' and the other one as 'pathetic'.<sup>10</sup>

Most seafarers themselves do not appreciate such a stigmatism as they have a more positive self-image. This does not, however, change the perception and observations that seafarers often work under difficult conditions at sea and are of a certain character – which can be an unhelpful profiling.

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<sup>10</sup> Szymanski, K.: Be Mindful of Mental Health But Don't Unfairly Stigmatize Seafarers, <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/be-mindful-of-mental-health-but-don-t-unfairly-stigmatize-seafarers>.

Seafarers are also 'hidden'. It is fair to say that the populations of even seafaring nations are 'blind' to the depth and breadth of maritime supply chain and the people at the sharp-end who crew the ships.

There is also another behaviour - seafarers very often like to please and therefore will tell the stories which match expectations. Very few would say – “no sorry, it is not like that.”

**It must be noted, nonetheless, that most seafarers are on the whole professionals. They are strong and robust, are ambitious and career driven, forward-looking, resourceful, resilient and inter-culturally experienced.**

Further, one should also keep in mind that seafarers in most countries<sup>11</sup> are subjected to stringent health testing before departure on their contracted duty. In addition, most of them are professionally well-trained to undertake their jobs and are entrusted with considerable responsibility.

As said, seafarers are knowledgeable, resilient human beings and like all other human beings can self-reflect. They are the experts of their own working lives and should therefore be decisive in identifying their institutional problems and formulating the direction and the routes out of them. In short, they should take the lead.

Seafarers and welfare providers should therefore work closely together to solve the problems discovered. The latter should consider themselves as expert in their field as opposed to experts of seafarers' lives.

An honest and realistic image of seafarers is a pre-requisite to support them in a realistic way and could diminish subjective external stigmatisation of psychological support sometimes experienced by seafarers, including an unfair uneducated or pathetic image of seafarers.

Extended and more detailed research on the wellbeing of seafarers may show that problems discovered may be partly caused by more external factors like the quality of the management, substandard ship-owners, manning agencies, flag- and port-state inspectors. However, seafarers are the first to notice and suffer from such factors. The role of experts is to inform seafarers (and fishers) about the proven comprehensive extent and possibilities of personal assistance and support. In accordance with the spirit and intent of this paper, the experts should agree on a mutually accepted way of solving specific problems discovered while maintaining their own professionalism within the continuum of care.

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<sup>11</sup> From one of our reviewers: “Many seafarers, especially those from nations with corrupt administrations are not well trained or subject to stringent health checks....Falsification of documents is very common at sea, especially the minor ones dealing with health and minor training.”

## Empowerment

We would therefore like to introduce the term 'empowerment' as the summing-up term underpinning care, support, and assistance. Empowerment is more than just care; it is a holistic<sup>12</sup>, ethical and moral concept, including elements of health as body, mind, social and genetic factors, gender, race, and religion. Empowerment is victim oriented. As stated before, it takes as starting point that the victim should have the lead in this process to overcome problems and finally emerge as a conqueror or survivor. Therefore seafarers themselves should provide real-time data on which support and assistance can be developed in a realistic way. Programs based primarily on hearsay or pure theoretical sources should be viewed with some distrust or caution.<sup>13</sup>

Like the continuum of care, empowerment strives for eventual rehabilitation and justice of those abused or in need. Empowerment is related to rights-claiming – the act of claiming human rights for oneself, as well as to agency.

Empowerment initiates a process of change. This latter could be described in a philosophical way. Usually, it starts with an emotional experience like *"THIS is not IT!"*. This stage, characterised as a disclosure, is crucial. Such an experience evokes energy to continue in a rational way to solve problems. Being guided by emotions or feelings alone will not work out a sustainable solution. After the emotional experience of "This is not IT", the subsequent stages are: Rational research, Conclusion, Action<sup>14</sup>, Evaluation and again... "This is not It". The continuous process of empowerment is not circular, but spiral. Any seafarer is able to communicate about these contrast-experiences, but with whom...

Extra reflection on "IT" makes life a bit more philosophical, something the author would encourage anyone to do from time to time.

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<sup>12</sup> Holistic: Psychological, Economical, Legal, Environmental, Cultural, Gender, Physical, Social, Emotional, Spiritual, Intellectual. It is a philosophical concept, but also a tool to think about health, assistance, and care. More could be learned from Wellness at Sea approach developed by Johan Smith of the International Sailors' Society: <https://www.sailors-society.org/wellness-at-sea-home>

<sup>13</sup>See [www.psy-fyi.com](http://www.psy-fyi.com). I think Psy Fyi is a very promising start-up in the maritime welfare world. Based on continuous monitoring of real-time data delivered by seafarers themselves they provide personal support to seafarers and advise to companies regarding intervention, prevention and risk assessment.

<sup>14</sup> Some suggest that the best action is industrial action. One reviewer stated: "Seafarers are not empowered, but they could be if they worked together and took industrial action. The ship owners are confident that this will not occur as the unions are often dependant on the owners for financial assistance."

## Inclusion of Human Rights

The future standard of care and empowerment could therefore be based around the statement that: ***“If a company cares for the wellbeing of seafarers, it means that they adhere to human rights.”***<sup>15</sup>

Publications, studies, and research around seafarers’ welfare lack fundamental legal reference to basic human rights. There is consequently too little attention paid to providing readily available and financially accessible legal support for seafarers to challenge their situation. Not just unions, but civil society organisations could and should provide this access to justice while cooperating with other assisting bodies like frontline welfare-workers and psycho-social professionals.

In an ideal world, people working at sea should have the lead in the process of empowerment. *[Nothing about us, without us.]* However, seafarers do not always have the advisory lead, nor are they necessarily involved in all welfare developments and discussions that may determine resultant supporting activities. Some stakeholders even suggest that seafarers are deliberately excluded from such discussions (worker voice) as the advice offered by workers is not the advice wanted by industry entities.

Such failures to actively listen to workers’ voices has resulted in a distinct separation between those working at sea from those on land. Therefore, the consequential separation of values, including the lack of explicit and concerted references to the protections of those workers’ human rights, continues.

## The Maritime Labour Convention 2006

*“The rise of digital technologies and automation mean that one of the world’s oldest professions is set to change more in the next 30 years than it has in the last 300.”*<sup>16</sup>

Similar statements can be found in many publications. They all point out that the maritime industry is currently in a transition phase. This will naturally have consequences for the future well-being of crew members, both officers and ratings. The supporting activities in the 'Continuum of Care' should therefore be adapted to that transition process, both in terms of

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<sup>15</sup> Mirella Stroink commented on this: “This is a core problem in the current global economic context - corporations pursue profit by organizing workers. Those workers are individuals with rights to experience wellbeing and express identities. It’s in the space between that tension arises.”

<sup>16</sup> "A FAIR FUTURE FOR SEAFARERS? Nic. Gardner and Nick Chubb. How will seafaring change in the coming decades and how should the welfare sector adapt to the change? Combined with shorter port stays and less access to and from vessels, protecting the vulnerable and delivering welfare services will require a change in the current delivery models that are struggling to cope with demand now, let alone in the future. [A Fair Future for Seafarers? - Inmarsat](#)

its content and urgency to engage with the proposal. Further, seafarers, as experts from their front-end experience, should participate and determine the direction and content of supporting welfare actions and activities.

New rules and associated legal instruments are usually established because existing rules are no longer adequate nor fit-for-purpose. That is why the entry into force of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006)<sup>17</sup> was a much needed and welcome event. The MLC 2006 is seen by many as 'The Seafarers' Bill of Rights' containing many elements enabling necessary assistance and welfare support to seafarers in need. Countries that ratify the MLC, 2006 must adopt national laws or take other measures to ensure that the principles and rights contained in the Regulations are implemented in the manner set out by the Standards set out in Part A of the Code (or in a substantially equivalent manner)

*“The regulatory instrument MLC 2006 sets out basic seafarers’ rights but does not fully capture their wellbeing to its fullest.”*<sup>18</sup> Therefore it may be hoped that one of the future objectives is to analyse the MLC 2006 on this point, in order to find a more stable legal foundation to construct the welfare work on.

An important point to be considered and eventually decided is which stakeholders or partners should take the responsibility for this. Or should it become a multi-agency initiative?

Just an example: In Regulation 4.4 justification can be found to organise a solid (financial) base for professional support of seafarers in the ports they visit. *[For now I can only be confirmed that within the MLC, chapter 4.4 is by far the weakest, it uses a so-called, promotional framework, using words like encourage, promote. Nonetheless the chapter still can be used it to “encourage” governments and ports to enforce it, but there is nothing strongly compulsory they have to do.]*<sup>19</sup> In cases of Complaints of non-observance Article 26 is leading: “Any of the Members shall have the right to file a complaint with the International Labour Office if it is not

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<sup>17</sup> The MLC, 2006 has been designed to become a global legal instrument that will be the “fourth pillar” of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, complementing the key Conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), such as the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS), the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, 1978, as amended (STCW), and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 73/78 (MARPOL).

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.transnav.eu/Article\\_Seafarers%E2%80%99\\_Wellbeing\\_or\\_Tetemadze,60,1179.html](https://www.transnav.eu/Article_Seafarers%E2%80%99_Wellbeing_or_Tetemadze,60,1179.html)

<sup>19</sup> Luca Tommasi ITF-Seafarers Trust (E-mail 2016.12.15 with Toon van de Sande)

that any other Member is securing the effective observance of any Convention which both have ratified in accordance with the foregoing articles.”<sup>20</sup>

Nonetheless, the MLC 2006 can only work properly if all seafarers know and understand their rights. That’s why “justice’ is an essential part of the continuum of care.

## The Geneva Declaration on Human Rights at Sea<sup>21</sup>

A new recent development is The Geneva Declaration of Human Rights at Sea (HRAS). It is meant as *“a soft-law instrument that highlights the applicable rules and standards to be maintained in defence of fundamental human rights at sea. It reflects existing law and, importantly, does not attempt to generate any new legal obligations for States. It is intended, therefore, as a guide to enhance compliance with the law as it stands deliberately focusing on practical means of applying human rights standards throughout the maritime environment.”*

The Geneva Declaration could be operationalized across the maritime environment, and ideally it needs to be complied with and enforced to ensure an effective remedy for all those persons who are abused. It therefore may have the potential to become a vital tool for welfare advocacy and activities if engaged with and accepted by maritime stakeholders. It might also provide clear indicators as to the actions required at the tactical level at which monitoring, prevention and enforcement activities take place.

Monitoring, prevention, and enforcement. These activities are clear, but we ask “How?” and “By whom – only by legal experts?” In this regard, we also asked key persons of HRAS the following question:

***“Could the Geneva Declaration function as an umbrella or guiding document for a variety of welfare workers that assist people at sea on a human rights level?”***

The answers are positive.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The author learned this from Charles Boyle of Nautilus, when working at a paper for the Nederlandse Zeevarenden Centrale on the MLC 2006 4.4.

<sup>21</sup> <https://gdhras.com/>

<sup>22</sup> Quotes: “The Geneva Declaration will be a soft law document that refers to [existing] hard law. As such, it contains the legal duties for States, although it is not itself a legally binding document. It could well be a core reference document working based around the four fundamental principles. If (when) states endorse it, it will become part of state guidelines. We therefore can consider the Geneva Declaration as a guideline, and HRAS aims to introduce it to the UN Human Rights Council via a state/states”. And a final remark: “Annex D (Operationalising Human Rights at Sea) of the Geneva Declaration goes a step further and provides guidelines for port, flag and coastal states on actions that are either legally mandatory or desirable as best practice.”

May we therefore suggest that the Geneva Declaration could also be a solid starting point for inter-professional collaboration to improve the situation of those who are being abused? The answer appears to be “yes”.

## The Variety of Problems

The themes explored in this paper are collected from conversations with seafarers, scientific publications<sup>23</sup> and HRAS information. They should be elaborated on more to get an overview of the different needs, but also to discern the connection between them.

The list provides an overview of the most current and urgent problems, as they are experienced by people at sea. All actions should be ‘victim-led’. The process must start with asking victims what they want and need in terms of healing and justice.

Very challenging questions are: Can human rights protection be invoked if one is a victim? Are human rights being violated? Are human rights being breached? And: How can an abused person or group achieve protection by legal ways?

Regular mentioned problems or themes are:

- Abandoned ships,<sup>24</sup>
- Harassment and Bullying<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Samantha K. Brooks and Neil Greenberg. “[Mental health and psychological wellbeing of maritime personnel: a systematic review](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00850-4) (Brooks and Greenberg BMC Psychology (2022) 10:139 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-022-00850-4>) P.2: Previous reviews of seafarers’ mental health have examined: factors associated with stress [1, 5, 7, 11, 12]; maritime pilots’ wellbeing and job satisfaction [13] and depression and suicide in seafarers [14]. Collectively these have identified various risk factors associated with poor wellbeing, including loneliness and long-term separation from family and home; fatigue; high workload; long voyages; long working hours; rotating watch systems; short ship-turnaround times; little advance warning of being required for duty; environmental stressors on board such as motion, noise and vibration; economic pressure; disturbed sleep; night shifts; variable weather; limited time for recreation; lack of shore leave; lack of job security; experiencing piracy; criminalisation of seafarers and treatment of maritime incidents as ‘true crimes’; and being constantly confined on board with colleagues, often in multi-national crews with different values, expectations, understandings and languages, which can cause conflicts and poor relationships.

<sup>24</sup> Human Rights at Sea Publication “[Abandonment of Seafarers: Background, Legal Status, Remedies and Practical Advice, April 2021](https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/?s=abandonment)”, <https://www.humanrightsatsea.org/?s=abandonment>. ILO database of abandoned vessels and crew: [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/seafarers/seafarersBrowse.list?p\\_lang=en](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/seafarers/seafarersBrowse.list?p_lang=en)

<sup>25</sup> Physical and Mental abuse: Where one person or persons engage in unwanted conduct in relation to another person which has the purpose or effect of violating that person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.



- Stigma<sup>26</sup>
- Criminalisation<sup>27</sup>
- Fatigue<sup>28</sup>,
- LGBTI+<sup>29</sup>
- Gender<sup>30</sup>
- Collusion and Corruption<sup>31</sup>
- Maritime Piracy and Armed Robbery
- Refugees
- Migrant Crossings
- Exploitation of Fishers
- Child Labour
- Repatriation of fishers and seafarers.
- Missing Seafarers
- Sexual assaults
- War and international tensions

## Partners and Stakeholders

Ship owners, managers, crew managers, charterers, insurers, port, flag and coastal state authorities can and should play a prominent and decisive role in achieving the goals addressed in this paper. To stimulate their awareness, activate their moral compass and offer guidelines to improve the situation of all victims. In an ideal world, stakeholders become partners.

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<sup>26</sup> The disapproval of a person based on physical or behavioural characteristics that distinguish them from others. (Wikipedia)

<sup>27</sup> The process by which behaviours and individuals are transformed into crime and criminals (Wikipedia)

<sup>28</sup> Fatigue is a symptom, a sign that something is going on which is damaging the physical and mental wellbeing of the sufferer. At sea, this is likely to be overwork and lack of sleep and is often worsened by loneliness, isolation and perhaps even depression. Fatigue is a major problem owing to low crewing levels allowed by the flag states.

<sup>29</sup> Basic rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.

<sup>30</sup> Gender is not a code word for 'women' or 'discrimination'. A common misconception is that Gender is only relevant for women. This is incorrect. Gender is about women's and men's socially described roles and how that affects their power, opportunities, and resources.

<sup>31</sup> Secret or illegal cooperation or conspiracy in order to deceive others. Dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery.

## Company Disruptive Events Preparedness Assessment

Connected to the above, we are in the process of designing a tool, called a “Company Disruptive Events Preparedness Assessment”.<sup>32</sup> This is meant to be used by shipping companies. The draft tool has been reviewed by several partners, but more constructive advice is welcome. This risk assessment is also based on the continuum of care.

*The tool provides clear questions with focus on current company disruptive events awareness and preparedness . The purpose of the assessment is to help companies establish an internal process for continuous improvement of crisis awareness and preparedness, ultimately leading to a solid and humanitarian company safety and security culture. The main questions are: “How to improve humanitarian quality throughout the company? How to make crisis preparedness pay off by preventing disruptive events as a first step in developing a safety and security policy*

The main question is: How is a company prepared to deal with a crisis? “A **crisis** is a sudden, unexpected and undesired event that has the potential to damage the organization’s People, Environment, Assets, Reputation, Revenue and Legal and Liability and does not allow for any delay in its multi-disciplinary management”. Any crisis has a great impact: “When it comes to a crisis, it’s not the cause itself that is the problem, but it’s the effect or impact on the organization. That’s why any organization should be prepared.” As crises are defined by time pressure and chaos. It is better to address those issues when there is no crisis, to be ready just in case. There is no opportunity to prepare once the crisis is already there. *“It’s like trying to perform lacking maintenance on a plane that is already crashing”* <sup>33</sup>

## Continuum of Care in detail<sup>34</sup>

Before explaining the various steps comprising the Continuum of Care one key principle must be made clear. **In general, most people can get out of a traumatic crisis on their own or with a little help.**

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<sup>32</sup> The author is willing to discuss this tool with interested partners, but he is a bit reluctant because of ‘cherry-picking’ to include it in this paper.

<sup>33</sup> Bas Poelmann and Arjan de Pauw Geerlings, [Expect the unexpected](#). ISBN 9789463986946

<sup>34</sup> First it was used as a medical concept. (In healthcare, the continuum of care is now being used to describe how healthcare providers follow a patient from preventive care, through medical incidents, rehabilitation, and maintenance: <https://blog.eoscu.com/blog/what-is-the-continuum-of-care>

This principle is based on common sense, the so-called ‘grandmothers-wisdom’, and scientific research.<sup>35</sup>

Although the concept of CoC came from a medical background, it has proven itself useful in other contexts, because it has been accepted in the past by many to be a solid tool to assist and support seafarers who are in need.<sup>36</sup>

Till date the concept of ‘continuum of care’ has been used mostly in the medical world. Quote: *“Continuum of care is a concept involving an integrated system of care that guides and tracks patient over time through a comprehensive array of health services spanning all levels of intensity of care.”*<sup>37</sup>

We now follow the concept as it had been developed and used in the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme. We think it can provide guidance in developing the main idea of this paper.<sup>38</sup> The natural ability of persons to overcome disruptive events consists of the following stages: **Pre-Crisis, Crisis, Shock, Realisation, Acknowledgement and**

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<sup>35</sup> Samantha K. Brooks\*, G. James Rubin, and Neil Greenberg, Traumatic stress within disaster-exposed occupations: overview of the literature and suggestions for the management of traumatic stress in the workplace P.2: Most often, exposure to trauma does not lead to serious long-term psychological consequences and many who experience distress following a traumatic incident will recover within a few weeks, without intervention. However, it is inevitable that a minority of people exposed to trauma will develop mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, alcohol problems or PTSD. Cfr. Dunn R, Brooks SK, Greenberg N. Psychological impact of traumatic events: guidance for trauma exposed organisations. *Occup Health Work* 2015;12:17–21.2 S.K. Brooks et al., 2018 Downloaded from <https://academic.oup.com/bmb/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/bmb/ldy040/5244175> by King's College London user on 18 December 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Toon van de Sande has written a note titled *“Discovering the Continuum of Care, a personal history”*. In that note he describes the use of the concept Continuum of Care (CoC) in the maritime world, starting with the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme in 2009. His conclusion is that, although the concept of CoC came from a medical background, it has proven to be a good instrument because it has been accepted by many and appeared to be successful in the past.

<sup>37</sup> Evashwick C., *Creating the continuum of care*, *Health Matrix*, 01 Jan 1989, 7(1):30-39: This article presents a definition of continuum of care, including objectives, basic components, and operating principles. The purpose is to provide a concept that will encourage leadership by offering a vision for the future and providing a framework to guide day-to-day decision-making.

<sup>38</sup> More insight can be found in: : Samantha K. Brooks, Rebecca Dunn, Richard Amlôt, Neil Greenberg & G. James Rubin (2018): Training and post-disaster interventions for the psychological impacts on disaster-exposed employees: a systematic review, *Journal of Mental Health*, DOI: 10.1080/09638237.2018.1437610

**Adaptation**<sup>39</sup>. Everyone goes through all these phases to get out of a crisis, not always in the same order. No stage can be skipped. Each step or recovery period has its own outcome to ultimately achieve **Resistance, Resilience and Recovery**.

We would urge that we must also add to this sequence, **Rehabilitation and Justice**.

An attractive key term, related to the above, in the scientific literature is Post Traumatic Growth.<sup>40</sup>

These successive processes show the potential foundation and sequence of professional help that could be derived from the human capability and capacity to overcome a trauma, or recover from a significant disruptive event, or crisis.

Consequently, support such as training, first emergency response, aftercare, rehabilitation, and justice build on this natural human process.

The stages identified above in this assisting process are Pre-Crisis, Immediate Post Crisis, Short Term Post Crisis, Long Term Post Crisis. Crucially, each stage requires a specific subject matter expert who works within the boundaries of their professional expertise – but who need to interact with other professionals to achieve a successful outcome for the victim.

<sup>39</sup> M. Gibson, [Order from Chaos – Responding to Traumatic Events](#), Venture Press, 1998, Chapter 3, p.31-46 and:



Source: M. Gibson, *Order from Chaos – Responding to Traumatic Events*, Policy Press, 2006

<sup>40</sup> P. Samantha Brooks, R. Amlôt, G. J. Rubin, N. Greenberg, [Psychological resilience and post-traumatic growth in disaster-exposed organisations: overview of the literature](#). P.1: Key Messages: his paper provides an overview of the literature on factors associated with resilience in disaster-exposed employees, and the potential positive impact of experiencing a disaster (post-traumatic growth). This paper provides an overview of the literature on factors associated with resilience in disaster-exposed employees, and the potential positive impact of experiencing a disaster (post-traumatic growth). Experiencing a disaster may result in posttraumatic growth at both a personal and professional level.

There is another premise in the use of the ‘Continuum of Care’ which must be considered. **Professional execution in successive sub-areas requires professionals who can cooperate and compliment, but do not interfere with the specific skills of other care providers or professionals.**

Every expertise has its place in the continuum of care. For now, in this Paper, we differentiate between trainers, first emergency responders, welfare workers, psycho-social workers, and legal experts.

### **Successive phases:**

**Training.** ‘How to prepare for disruptive events’ is a requisite to overcome the first unexpected *shock* by building **resistance** and **resilience**.<sup>41</sup>

- *Realisation, acknowledgement, and adaptation* relate to **recovery**.
- We also suggest adding to this process the additional steps of **rehabilitation and justice**. The latter steps should not be overlooked but considered as the final objective of assisting those in such need. Nonetheless, the process is not complete when individuals find they can cope with the trauma they have experienced. There is also a social obligation to structurally improve the situation and environment that was the cause of the trauma. Legal experts identify this enforcement through **achieving justice**, while psychologists view it as getting **‘back to normal’** by healing. Both are necessary.

In this way, the connection is made in a logical and organic way between the human capacity to get out of a crisis, empowerment and the additional available professional support that can take this recovery to a higher level.

The ‘Continuum of Care’ could therefore be a leading process to help distinguish the variety of inter-related and inter-disciplinary forms of successional care needed for victims of trauma. As suggested, such necessary support and assistance would come from welfare trainers, first emergency responders, psychological and legal professionals alike. It could also have the potential to develop new or improve existing assessments and tools, like a Company Disruptive Events Risk Assessment<sup>42</sup>, which is still under construction by the author of this paper.

## **Training**

The first step in the continuum of care is professional pre-crisis training. This should be the primary concern and objective in preparing people at sea for potentially disruptive events. The

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<sup>41</sup> A Code of Conduct and quality assessment are needed for all welfare trainers to develop a minimum professional standard. We propose some at the end of this paper. Accreditation should also be developed later.

<sup>42</sup> See note 39.

main objectives are to provide participants with the latest information about the risks and hazards they could expect. This way they can prepare themselves for a possible crisis. If they are properly trained, they will not lose valuable time in responding appropriately in an emergency.<sup>43</sup>

## First Emergency Response and Referral

Welfare workers are ideally suited, if properly trained, to carry out the **first emergency response**. The main objective of this activity is to restore the basics of human life for the victims; the person concerned should calm down and gain clarity about eventual further professional assistance. When their immediate needs are cared for, the chance that victims become survivors gets greater and greater.

There is no need for psychological support at this stage, because immediately after the disruptive event everyone suffers from the same stress. Very reassuring is the message: *“It’s not you that is behaving abnormal... the situation is abnormal! That’s why you react as you do right now!”*. According to Neil Greenberg<sup>44</sup>, this kind of support requires trained staff. When they meet abused people, they should pay extra attention to those who keep suffering in the longer term. They may need more professional help later.

**Referral**<sup>45</sup> by a welfare worker is a limited, but vital link in offering effective support to people in need of help. By referral the way must be cleared for psychological and/or legal aid. Referral is not therapy or legal assistance, union advice or family support. If a welfare worker should

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<sup>43</sup> [“Seafarers Pre-Departure Piracy Awareness Training Guide, 2013, developed by the MPHRP \(https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/our-work/piracy\)](https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/our-work/piracy)

<sup>44</sup> One of our reviewers recommended The Royal Navy’s TRiM programme: “It is a good enabling tool that has a good track record of effectiveness.”

TRiM is a trauma-focused peer support system designed to help people who have experienced a traumatic, or potentially traumatic, event. TRiM Practitioners are non-medical personnel who have undergone specific training allowing them to understand the effects that traumatic events can have upon people. They are not counsellors or therapists, but understand confidentially and are able to listen and offer practical advice and assistance. TRiM originated in the UK Armed Forces and the model is based on ‘**watchful waiting**’, that means keeping a watchful eye on individuals who have been exposed to a traumatic event, whether that person has been directly involved or involved from afar. (<https://www.marchonstress.com/page/p/trim>) Watchful waiting is originally an approach to a medical problem in which time is allowed to pass before medical intervention or therapy is used (Wikipedia)

<sup>45</sup> A Referral Training Course for telephone helpline operators has been developed in the past by the author and Hennie Lagrange for the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme. Many elements of this course may be tailored to our subject.

overstep the mark of referral it could lead to serious liabilities, that should be understood in advance.

Aims (and outcomes) of the referral process are: *Reassurance, Empowerment, Accountability and Networking*. Enabling people at sea to deal with their own problems by finding assistance restores dignity.

## Aftercare

Psycho-Social experts professionally support and provide mental health solutions to individuals and companies alike. To be effective, and prevent further possible harm, advice and support must be provided by professional and qualified practitioners. By support we mean a proactive, tailored, and holistic approach, with an emphasis on information and education about what could be expected after the crisis is solved. For example: after returning home, piracy survivors and their families have experienced serious difficulties in getting their lives back in order.

Abuses occur where individuals fail to identify, notify, and rectify failures in the protection of an individual's fundamental human rights, or otherwise turn a blind eye to issues and incidents because of a lack of awareness, training, or moral courage.

In our view legal experts should also be included at this stage to assist those abused by giving them sound legal advice. At a later stage, if further legal action is chosen, those experts can assist in the successive proceedings.

## Rehabilitation and Justice

This is long-term work. It requires constant contact with those affected, especially when they are back at home. This can only come to a good result if all care providers can work well together, while at the same time not losing sight of the legitimate interests of the 'victims'. This phase calls for oversight and constant contact with the survivors and their assisting agents.

We suggest finding a local liaison person through the seafarers' welfare networks (ISWAN/ICMA), to draft an agreement on paper and to maintain regular contact with the victim about progress.

HRAS and other agencies might be requested to take the initiative to bring cases to court based on the Geneva Declaration and assist in drafting agreements with local experts.

The question is: Who should monitor and be responsible for the whole process? Something to be discussed.

## Codes of Conduct<sup>46</sup>

### Best Practice within the limits of each profession

One of the objectives of this paper is to initiate a process to clarify the best practices<sup>47</sup> of the various professionals with a stake in this work, and place them in a framework under the focus of a Continuum of Care. The different professional groups that may endorse this approach may be asked to contribute to this process, because they have their subjective experience and expertise, as well as inter-party contacts that will overlap within stakeholder circles. In this way, all activities may be better coordinated in a transparent manner.

Best practice should meet a few suggested requirements, but not limited to: transparency, professionalism<sup>48</sup>, openness to critical feedback, small steps, and sufficient time.

A useful part of the best practices could be establishment of various Codes of Conduct and associated public policies reflecting with the scope of work of the various identified experts. Each professional group should then draw upon their own Codes of Practice and work inter professionally.

### Humanitarian and Faith-Based Best Practices

Best practices do not need to be invented. Many welfare providers are working on the shoulders of giants with decades experience in serving seafarers.

The first Christian Faith based organisations are more than 100 years old. Over time, they supported many seafarers with hotels and homes, with cheap leisure facilities, with telephone services, with transport, with spiritual and social support, with internet access, with covid related assistance, with referral to general practioners, psycho-social specialists, legal experts, union workers and spiritual and liturgical services.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> More information can be found on: <https://www.instituteofpersonaltrainers.com/code-of-ethical-conduct.html> One notable quote: "As a personal trainer, you are expected to work to a certain standard. You need to be able to do your job properly, behave properly, and always do the right thing. This is essential to protect yourself, clients, and members of the public and others from harm. Clients and their relatives, your employer and your colleagues all expect this, and you should expect this of yourself."

<sup>47</sup> "A best practice is a method or technique that has been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because it produces results that are superior to those achieved by other means or because it has become a standard way of doing things." (Wikipedia).

<sup>48</sup> Professionalism implies that you can explain WHAT, HOW, WHY you are acting as you are acting and what the POSSIBLE RESULTS of your work may be. Additionally: WHAT DRIVES YOUR OWN INVOLVEMENT? Every expert should be able to explain his/her professionalism.

<sup>49</sup> Roald. Kverndal , *Seamens' Missions: Their origin and Early Growth*, 1986. This book will long stand as the foundational study of church missions and ministry to men and women of the sea. International in scope, it



More secular organisations are doing similar work.

Worldwide they cooperate. The infrastructure of both faith based and secular organisations is to be seen in Organisations like ICMA (International Christian Maritime Association [www.icma.as](http://www.icma.as)) and ISWAN (International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network <https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/>).

Based on the experience, research and cooperation many best practices in seafarers' welfare are available. Workers from all over the world meet each other at conferences to share their views and practices and discuss new developments and training.

A core argument in this paper is that co-creation with stakeholders seems critical for effectiveness of supporting and assisting abused people at sea to avoid duplication efforts elsewhere. People at Sea can also use the codes to help them understand what kind of service they think that could be useful or not.

There is much debate about effective codes of conduct.

- You can limit yourself to a **Code of Ethics** regarding professional conduct that every practitioner of a profession must adhere to. This part deals with the values and boundaries of the profession. In this regard welfare workers, lawyers and psychologists have professional bodies they must satisfy. This could lead to a situation where one can say: "Your profession already demands *x, y and z* from you. This is not negotiable, because breaching it may lead to severe consequences for your role."
- Then, as a logical second step. Specifically, if you work with seafarers you must be asked to additionally adhere to *a, b and c.*, a more detailed part of your professional code. We call this the **Code of Conduct**, applied to this unique situation. One example to illustrate the need for this code: *"Because seafarers are often faced with these issues in foreign countries, unaware of who the professional bodies are, they often fall victim to 'experts' who take advantage of them with little remedies at their disposal."*

The main question will be: What remedies are in place for seafarers, should the code of conduct be breached by any of these three groups?

In our view, you can start from a basic formula or general starting point in which the common characteristics are generally formulated. To streamline and coordinate all activities, it may be useful to start from a joint agreement that all experts promise to keep.

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covers in detail the efforts, particularly during the past two centuries, to serve the spiritual and moral needs of seafarers. The author, himself a former seafarer and seafarers' chaplain, spent more than fifteen years of painstaking research to compile this fascinating and authoritative book.

That common agreement can lead to modified codes of conduct, because each professional group has its own specific expertise. We propose a template here, which can be further completed by the various professionals. If all experts follow the general principles, then there could be more clarity and distinction leading to an efficient cooperation.

## General Principles

The following general principles should be included in formulating Codes of Conduct:

- **Respect** for the dignity of persons is one of the most fundamental and universal ethical principles across geographical and cultural boundaries, and across professional disciplines.
- **Competence** refers to the ability to provide those specific services to a requisite professional standard.
- **Responsibility** is an essential element of autonomy. All experts must accept appropriate responsibility for what is within their power, control, or management. Awareness of responsibility ensures that the trust of others is not abused, the power of influence is properly managed and that duty towards others is always paramount.
- **Integrity:** Acting with integrity includes being honest, truthful, accurate and consistent in one's actions, words, decisions, methods, and outcomes. It requires setting self-interest to one side and being objective and open to challenge in one's behaviour in a professional context.

All work must be done without hidden agendas. Examples of hidden agendas could be trying to convert someone to another religion or joining a trade union.

Yet it is understandable and justifiable that this work takes place from a certain inspiration. This need not be left unsaid, but can be discussed, shared, or clarified only if it is explicitly requested. Then the assisting and supporting conversation goes to another, sometimes a religious, philosophical or cultural level.

## Draft Code for Welfare Workers

In the past the author of this paper was a welfare worker (pastor) himself. That is why he is attempting here based on his experience to formulate a code of conduct in which the above principles are incorporated.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> On this subject the author cooperated intensely with Hennie la Grange, former Secretary General of ICMA and colleague Assistant Director in the Maritime Piracy Humanitarian Response Programme (MPHRP)

Welfare work, whether or not on a religious basis, could be described as holistic, clarifying and supporting interaction between the welfare worker and the one in need <sup>51</sup> It is most relevant in the First Emergency Response phase.

- **“Holistic”** stands for dealing with any human being in such a way that body, mind, spirit, and social environment are not seen apart from each other.
- **‘Clarifying’** is meant that the life of the seafarer is the starting point of the emphatic communication.
- **‘Supporting’** means assistance for the seafarer starting from everyday reality.

In the first contact with a seafarer four stages are paramount: “Hello!”; “Welcome!”; “I am...working for...” How can I be of any service to you?” As said the seafarer has the lead in this conversation. It may come to a clarifying conversation. It might make the seafarer curious about the inspiration of the welfare worker, because he is doing his job for free.... Then the communication reaches a level that without any hidden agenda issues can be communicated like faith, religion, ideals or....

In the opinion of the author it should never be an objective to ‘convert’ seafarers into a religious system of specific faith.

<i><b>General Principles</b></i>	<i><b>Welfare workers</b></i>
<b>Respect</b>	allow seafarers to dictate the content of the holistic, clarifying and supporting interaction;
	ensure confidentiality and protect the person's privacy;
	are self-aware and respectful;
	avoid victimising seafarers, in case of disruptive events, treating them as survivors, not victims.
	constantly reflect their professionalism <sup>52</sup> ;

<sup>51</sup> [“Best practice for engaging with the maritime industry for seafarers’ welfare” Refocus on our work: Benefit for all?](#) By Toon van de Sande. ICMA World Conference, October 25th, 2019 , Taiwan, Kaohsiung. In: Studi Emegrazione, International Journal of Migration Studies, 218, 240-249

<sup>52</sup> P. 243-244: “Professionalism implies that you can explain what you are doing; how you are doing it, why you are doing it and most important: what the possible results of your work can be. And equally important, you should understand and be able to explain what drives your involvement.”

<b>Competence</b>	value transparency;
	use only authorised and trustworthy information;
	are careful not to overstep the mark of their professionalism;
	do not defect in the work of other professionals;
	are willing to refer seafarers to other professionals.
<b>Responsibility</b>	honour their commitments
	make sure that they can always 'answer' for their actions or omissions.
<b>Integrity</b>	do not give false hope

This code was meant as a draft. Similar codes of conduct for psycho-social and legal professional workers should be developed.

A final thought-provoking remark from one of our reviewers:

*It would be really empowering for people at sea to articulate a code of conduct for themselves. An important line of work! Eventually we could work this out together with them. Could we gather some partners/stakeholders, some seafarers, to help brainstorm this code? The process of creating the code itself could be empowering.*

## Provisional conclusions

- The combination of the Continuum of Care with the Geneva Declaration offers the maritime world a tool to organise assistance and support of seafarers by a variety of professionals who don't overstep the mark of their profession and work inter professionally.
- Assisting people at sea should be based on humanitarian values and international law and not be a matter of charity alone. In concrete terms, this means that they are legally entitled to assistance and support by welfare workers, psychologists, and legal experts. Otherwise full rehabilitation and justice will never be achieved.
- The Continuum of Care, based on the premise that ordinary people are usually able to come out of a crisis healthy themselves, offers an overview and tool to clarify and combine the roles of the various supporting experts. They are considered able to empower people at sea after disruptive events, traumas, or personal needs and

therefore find themselves in an unjust situation caused by unlawful actions of other parties.

- Prejudices and biases about people at sea must always be avoided.
- Empowerment is the collective term for all supporting actions.
- The main objectives of all victim-led empowerment are rehabilitation and justice.
- Codes of Conduct for the different groups that aid and support can be helpful in delineating and coordinating activities.
- Extra assessment-tools could be developed to assist other stakeholders, like ship-owners and –managers to focus on current company disruptive events awareness and preparedness.
- Other stakeholders in this process such as for example P&I clubs, welfare/ship-owners-organisations, and unions should be informed about this approach to involve them in this process.

## Provisional recommendations<sup>53</sup>

- Tailor-made training as part of the continuum of care should be provided
- Key figures from the various parts of the continuum of care should exchange and coordinate their experiences. A working group could be set up for this.
- Contact should be sought with the major players in the maritime world, to hear and value their reactions to be able to explore possible ways of cooperation.
- Separate experts should formulate Codes of Conducts.
- To gain experience with this method, it is best to set up a pilot project. In 2022 were already some interested parties for that idea.

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<sup>53</sup> Who or which organisation(s) will work on this? A welfare collective of national and international organisations?