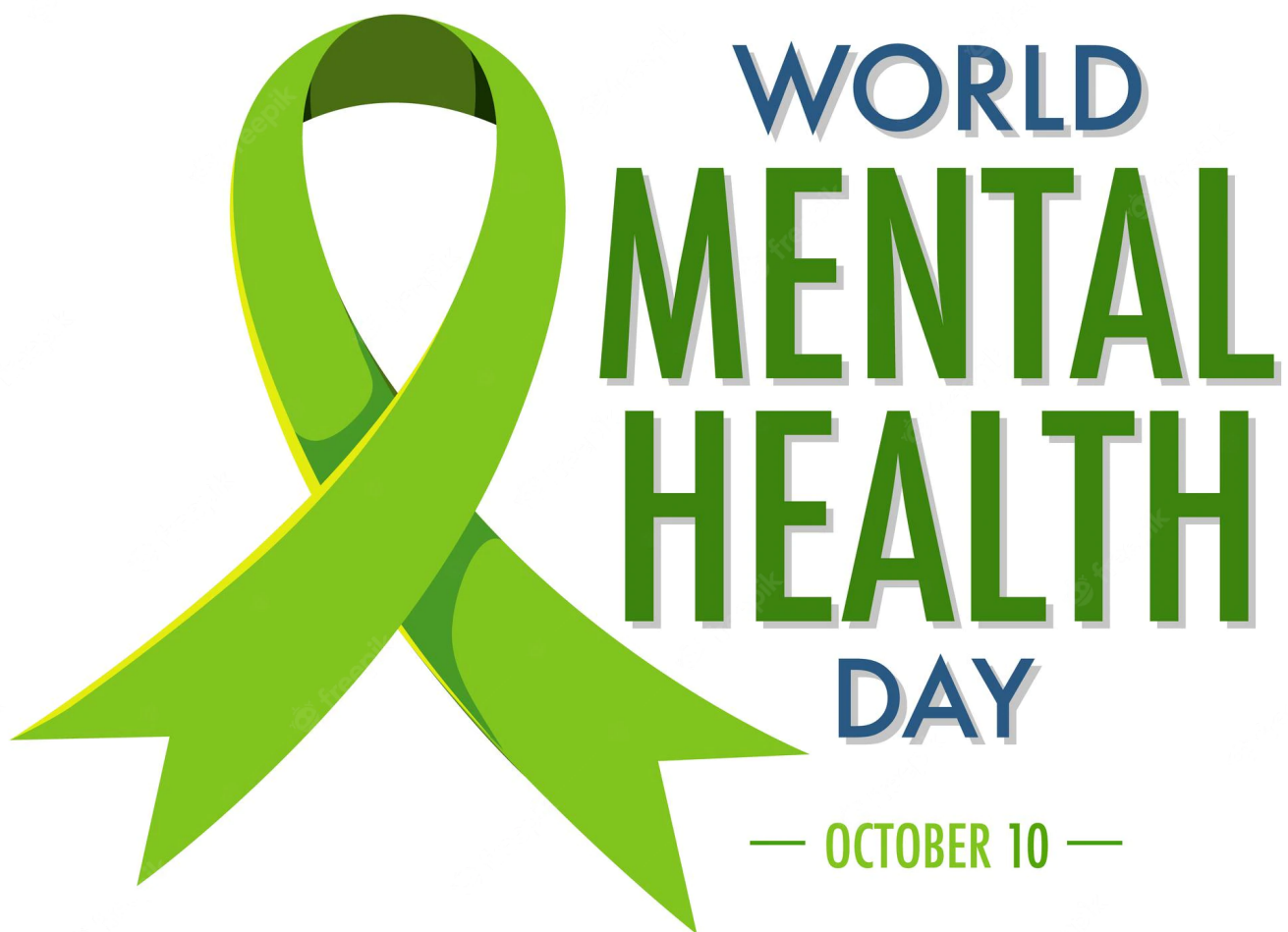


SEAS THE MIND: Making Mental Health a global priority for all

Making Mental Health a global priority for all



SEAS THE MIND is dedicated to creating mentally healthy and resilient yacht crew through Mental Health First Aid training. It's coming up to world mental health day 2022 and founder of SEAS THE MIND, Emma Kate Ross is discussing mental health and its global understanding and importance for yacht crew.

Emma: Us yachties epitomise any global citizen description I've ever seen.... Extra page passports bursting with international stamps and visas. Special bank accounts with multiple currencies. Take a look at any crew members weather or time app on their phone and I bet there are more than your average amounts of cities saved and checked in on as we navigate ourselves across oceans, seas and time zones.

The effect globalisation has had on society is beyond my limited knowledge, but I know what it has done for Superyacht crew...we no longer have to wait for our boat to go to Barcelona before we spend all our summer season tips on Zara. We can get an Espresso martini anywhere in the world now, not just at Skully's...the old style of banking that took a hefty chunk out of our salaries every month (I'm looking at you Lloyd's) has been eradicated with the new fangled online banking apps (thank you, thank you each and everyone of you).

But what about Mental Health and its global understanding and importance? This year the WHO made the World Mental Health day theme " Make mental health & well-being for all a global priority." I think this is especially important for the global citizens I know and love, yacht crew.

Far away from families, regularly missing births, weddings and funerals, our global ticket to travel often leaves us feeling more isolated than not and away from our tribe for important rituals and celebrations. I know from personal experience the pain of responding "Not able to attend" to many of life's important events has made me sad, angry, resentful, guilty and finally accepting as I saw the trade of for not being there to throw confetti or raise a glass; was my above average salary, my sun soaked Instagram posts and my dinner party swag of modesty dropping " I'm a Superyacht chef" in a humblebrag I dined out on for 15 years.

So with this in mind how do we look after our mental health onboard when we are both blessed and challenged in equal amounts when it comes to this thing we call life? The most important sentence ever uttered to me when I was starting out, young and excitable in Antibes was "Are you ok with not being in control of your life? If so, yachting is for you, if not, you better walk away now." I thought the young lady at our drink laden table on Boulevard D'Aguillon was jaded and I internally scoffed. Wow. How wrong I was and how right she was...we do have to give up so much... Our schedules and alarms are set by our duties and responsibilities to the boat. Our daily food is chosen for us by the chef. Our cabins and roomies are assigned to us by (hopefully) a benevolent HOD. Our uniform is uniformly distributed reducing us to numbers rather than names (16b at your service) to cope with the high turnarounds of crew.

But what yachting takes away it also gives in spades. Paid international travel. Better salaries than most of your friends. Holidays in exotic locations with gorgeous beaches that make the whole of Pinterest collectively groan. We know what we gain externally, but what can we gain internally? From experience I know we can gain a family in place of one that has been faulty, weird or turbulent. We can buy houses unaffordable to most, but mortgage free for us within years. (Take that Lloyds!) It can be a way out, a way in, a place to hide out, a place to find solace in. Sometimes all on the same day...

What I would like from this World Mental Health day is for us to all take stock of what we have, who we are, and where we are going. Not just physically traveling, but also our mental journey. When we know our jobs demand so much of us, what can we do to recharge and replenish ourselves daily?

Finding good work which involves us feeling engaged and motivated by what we're doing – and battling any inertia and weariness with courage and imagination. Fortunately,

motivation is not a gift from the gods; it is a quality we can nurture in ourselves and encourage in others.

Similarly, our work will always benefit from new ideas, new crew members coming in and their fresh ways of thinking. So reframing any frustrations you may have currently with winter crew turnovers.

Recognising beauty in the everyday, through daily walks, hikes, swims if it's outdoors and its exercise...do more of this.

Focus more on how travel for work can assist us with our ongoing psychological education. It can play a critical role in helping us to grow into better versions of our normal selves. When utilised it can correct the imbalances and immaturities of our upbringing. I know from my own experience paid travel reveals its full potential to function as a form of therapy in our lives when we harness its power in our lives and use traveling for work rather than feeling used by it.

For more tips, training and ways to look after your own and others mental health onboard please reach out to me at emma@seasthemind.co.uk or www.seasthemind.co.uk