



### Mental health falling under the radar say superyacht crew

Superyacht crew are struggling with stress and mental health issues, according to Yachting Pages Media Group, which commissioned a survey of superyacht crew and industry experts last month.

Out of the crew surveyed, 72% had suffered from mental health problems, or knew somebody else in the industry that had. Out of this proportion, only 54% had talked about their issues, with 70% confirming that no support was put in place to help them cope when struggling with stress and general mental health on board.

Kylie O'Brien, former chief stewardess and founder of the Stewardess Bible explained, "I think there is a general attitude within the superyacht industry that you must simply get on with the job. If you can't handle the pressures of being a professional seafarer, then perhaps you need a break (which typically means you're out of a job)."

Michelle Williams, website and digital marketing manager at Yachting Pages Media Group explained, "Having met and spoken with many superyacht crew over the years, it's clear their jobs can be very stressful and sympathy is not typically a forthcoming emotion with the fast pace nature of this business.

"The survey highlights some significant areas of improvement. While many crew admit that the job carries with it a certain amount of stress, many felt it wasn't addressed by the industry, and the general consensus is to get on with it."

Angela Orecchio, chief stewardess and founder of the Savvy Stewardess Blog, agrees that stress and mental health issues are still, "Generally viewed as standard. Crew are expected to keep up with a busy schedule and social life at the expense of their health."

An overwhelming 75% of crew said that the industry is not doing enough to tackle mental health problems and look after the overall wellbeing of crew.

Alison Rentoul, crew performance engineer at The Crew Coach explained, "I'm not at all surprised by the number of crew struggling with mental health issues. I believe that there is still an 'old school' attitude within the industry.

"Yachting is tough on people physically, emotionally and mentally, and not enough people know they can get help with the issues they are facing, so they sweep them under the carpet; sometimes with tragic consequences."

Former chief stewardess and account manager at Yachting Pages, Talullah Rodger, explained, "It's difficult to complain to the captain if you feel stressed, lonely or overworked during charter, when it's exactly what is expected when you enter this career. From the long, hard working hours and intensive living arrangements, to the great wages and fun lifestyle (off charter)."

Former stewardess, TV personality and lifestyle blogger Emily Warburton-Adams, said, “Relationships can differ from vessel to vessel, but overall there’s a definite stigma around mental illness. The work is highly demanding, you get minimal time for yourself and have to be a people’s person, as you’re around your crew members 24/7.” She did however say that when on board she had personally found yachts to be, “Naturally supportive environments.”

In terms of how to move forward and how crew can help to improve and maintain their mental health on board, Angela Orecchio said it’s about deciding to adopt a healthy lifestyle on board. The industry as a whole can improve by encouraging healthy living on board through events, what they write about and what they show on social media.”

In Yachting Pages’ survey, several crew mentioned regular rotation and more down time as ways to help ease the stresses suffered when working long hours and seasons on board.

Alison Rentoul said, “Even just improving internet access for crew to better keep in touch with friends and family would go a long way towards improving mental health!”

Kylie O’Brien also commented, “The crew is the yacht’s most valuable resource, and it can only be viewed as a good thing to openly discuss mental health issues. At the end of the day, superyacht crew are people just like everyone else.”

## **Notes to Editors**

For further press information, please contact Sophie Allen on +44 (0) 1173 160560 or [sophie.allen@yachtingpages.com](mailto:sophie.allen@yachtingpages.com)

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