



Evolution of Guest and Crew Care Programs in the Cruise Line Industry

By Carolyn V. Coarsey, Ph.D.

On an early morning in March 2016, I received a phone call from a man whose name I recognized as a survivor of an excursion accident. Tragically, his wife and most people in his 12-person party had been killed. He and one other friend were the only survivors. He asked me if I knew what day it was.

I told him that I did not, and he reminded me that it was the 10th anniversary of the accident. I then told him that I certainly remembered the day and the events that surrounded the tragedy and offered my condolences for his wife's death.

He quickly told me that the real reason behind the call was to express his gratitude for all that had been done for him and his family in the aftermath of his loss. He told me that during his grief, every day he thanked God for the Family Assistance Foundation and the cruise line's actions after the tragedy.

As painful as the loss of his wife of 40 years had been, his memory also included immense positive feelings toward those who supported him and his family with kindness and compassion because with the support offered to him, we had given him and his family hope.

DEVELOPMENT OF CARE PROGRAMS

The gentleman who called me that day is one of the people we at Aviem and the Foundation consider the true experts and best teachers—those who have lived the experience. The stories they so courageously share form the basis of the training many cruise lines now use to show

employees, both on and off their ships, proven best practices for responding to survivors. In this context, the term “survivor” includes guests, their families, and fellow crew members in crisis.

In early 2007, the Family Assistance Foundation worked with CLIA to locate and interview numerous such survivors. Their narratives helped shape the first cruise line Care Team programs, which today continue to support guests and employees in crisis with great success.

Prior to this, many employees had instinctively performed well during crises while others, fearing they might cause further harm, did not. The interviews, many videotaped, became the basis by which current programs could ensure that all survivors in crisis receive a consistent and humane response, and they continue today as an essential part of continuously improving these evolving programs.

The story of the man who called to express his gratitude illustrates the power that a swift, compassionate response can have on a survivor's long-term recovery. From the business perspective, it is also important to note that the man sailed on the same cruise line with his family a little over a year after the tragedy, and several times after that. While friends suggested he file a lawsuit, he and his family instead wrote letters expressing thanks to the company for acting with heart and purpose after the accident.

HEAD AND HEART RESPONSE

Effective training that includes survivor

testimony about what helps and what potentially harms, along with crew member input, is only part of an effective Care Program. A well-orchestrated logistical plan, with adequate resources such as an emergency call center, on-site support, and a reliable data collection and management system, are also critical to a successful response.

It has been a decade since the cruise line industry began this proactive approach to supporting survivors of crises both on and off ships. In that time, we have seen significant industry growth, which is a clear indication that cruising is a preferred way for people to spend leisure time. With that growth comes more exposure to crises where extensive planning, preparation, logistical support, and Care Team responders will be needed.

As this field has evolved, this case study is but one of many that clearly indicate the importance of compassionately responding to guests, crews, and all families involved. It is a win-win for all involved. Help exists for survivors, and we can help companies who wish to do the right thing.

Carolyn V. Coarsey, Ph.D., was the first person to conduct groundbreaking research showing the importance of employees' compassionate response in survivors' long-term healing. Her Human Services Response™ (HSR™) model has been proven through decades of use and ongoing research, and is the basis for the training, methods, and practices used by Aviem International and the Family Assistance Foundation. ●

with their specific duties and with all ship arrangements, installations, equipment, procedures and ship characteristics that are relevant to their routine and emergency duties.

The details of such training are developed in line with the strict mandates and international law of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that addresses maritime affairs. These laws include the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the STCW Code, which apply to cruise ships.

These requirements also lay out an established system of training, drills, inspections, audits and certifications that crewmembers must receive in addition to training in emergency procedures, safety, security and first aid.

Crewmembers, no matter their job, must be trained in safety procedures, such as emergency procedures, signals, and alarms, evacuation procedures, and fire prevention. In addition, many cruise ship crewmembers are trained in crowd management, direct evacuation services to passengers, crisis management and human behavior, advanced firefighting, medical first aid and medical care, and operation of shipboard survival and rescue craft.

As a result, and as required by STCW, the combination of seafarers aboard at any time are trained to effectively coordinate their activities in emergency situations and in performing functions vital to safety, security and the prevention or mitigation of pollution.

The IMO continuously raises the bar on crew training by developing new, and revising existing, training standards. For example, the IMO recently adopted amendments to the STCW Convention and Code related to passenger ship-specific training. These amendments further enhance the crewmember training in the event of an emergency onboard passenger ships, including effective communication with passengers.

The IMO has also recently adopted specific operational training for officers onboard ships operating in polar regions and sailing aboard gas-fueled ships. No matter where a cruise ship operates, or



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Cindy D'Aoust, President & CEO, CLIA

what fuel it uses, the ship's officers are required to have been properly trained to sail a safe voyage.

The STCW Convention and Code are enforced by both flag and port States. However, principal enforcement accountability rests with the flag State where the ship is registered. Flag States must make certain that ships registered in their territory comply with all international and national standards and inspection and audit regimes.

Port States around the world also have the right to inspect ships to make sure they follow international safety and training requirements, regardless of where the ships travel. For instance, every ship that visits a U.S. port is subject to inspection by the

U.S. Coast Guard to ensure compliance with applicable international training and safety requirements for crew. Additionally, some port States such as the U.S apply further national requirements to cruise ships calling on their ports.

CLIA Cruise Line Members continue to be forward leaning and raise the bar regarding crew training, either at state of the art third party training facilities, such as CLIA's new Diamond Executive Partner Simwave and CLIA's Gold Executive Partner Resolve Maritime Academy, or establishing their own facility, such as Carnival Corporation & ple's Centre for Simulator Maritime Training (CSMART). These facilities educate seafarers in a number of different formats, such as classroom instruction and real life simulations, to prepare them for a variety of scenarios at sea.

Cruise ship crewmembers do more than provide an enjoyable cruise vacation. A highly-trained crew is integral to maintaining the safety of all on board, and CLIA Cruise Line Members are proud of their highly-trained global workforce. While training requirements fall under international and national regulations, CLIA Cruise Line Members continually review their policies and practices, and lead the maritime community in advancements in crewmember training. ●

