



SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLBOX

**MEN
AGED 50 AND OVER**

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Men aged 50 and over may experience physical problems that can have a major impact on their lifestyle. The loss of a job, a partner or status in the family or community is a risk factor and can seem to be an insurmountable challenge or many men.



Men in the 50 to 64 age group die by suicide more often than any other group.





BEING VIGILANT

What are the signs of suicidal distress? What are the risk factors to watch out for?

- **Lack of motivation and procrastination**
- **Family and social isolation, feelings of loneliness**
- **Changing relationships with children transitioning to adulthood**
- **Bankruptcy, foreclosure, etc.**
- **Being the target of ageism**
- **Physical bereavement, loss of mobility, body changes, physical appearance**
- **Increased chronic pain**
- **Feeling of powerlessness**
- **Implicit request for help through indirect messages (e.g., "I am avoiding Christmas")**
- **Being overly stoic and brave, repeating that everything is normal and okay**
- **Fear of being a burden on others**
- **Masking their pain to protect others**
- **Increase in declarative statements that have not been said before (e.g., "don't worry, it's beautiful," "I'm in control," "it's going to be okay,")**
- **Exhibiting great despair and difficulty projecting into the future**

Vulnerable events:

- Anticipating retirement
- A new health diagnosis
- Loss of driver's license
- Accidents at work
- Hospitalization



ELEMENTS TO EXPLORE

1. Recognizing signs of distress
2. Welcoming distress (active listening, validation, empathy, highlighting strengths)
3. Suicidal ideation check
4. Exploring if there is any planning (and imminence) of a suicidal act
5. Encouraging help-seeking (such as a suicide prevention centre, crisis centre, psychologist, emergency service, etc.)
6. Equipping loved ones (e.g. educating them about the signs of distress, steps to better support the person at risk of suicide, providing information, etc.)
7. Designing and evaluating a needs-based plan with the individual on an ad hoc basis



Creating a safety net (family, loved ones and professionals as needed)

EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING TO FUEL HOPE

What are the best practices for reaching out to men aged 50 and over, listening to them and inviting them to ask for help?

- Take the time to listen, give value to the past, value experience
- Adopt a slower pace of intervention
- Refrain from proposing solutions, listen to the story the person is telling
- Explore the motivation behind the contact, including the person in their own plan (e.g.: "How would you like to feel at the end of the exchange?")
- Adopt an enthusiastic posture
- Avoid infantilizing
- Identify reasons for living, the things that give them pleasure
- Pay attention to your own beliefs and emotions as they emerge



Deal with their beliefs and emotions



SUPPORT

What are the best practices for inviting them to use the resources?



ACCOMPANY THEM (ACT AS A FACILITATOR FOR HELP-SEEKING OR RESOURCE-SEEKING)



IDENTIFY THE ACTIVITIES THEY REALLY ENJOY AND ENCOURAGE THEM



GUIDE THEM TO THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS AND RESOURCES



GUIDER VERS LEURS PROPRES SOLUTIONS ET RESSOURCES



AVOID LABELS RELATED TO AGEISM (E.G.: BE MINDFUL OF TERMS LIKE GOLDEN AGE, OLD PEOPLE, SENIORS, ETC....)



EXPLAIN WELL, INCLUDING PSYCHOEDUCATION (DON'T ASSUME THEY KNOW EVERYTHING)



PROTECTING THEMSELF

What protective factors can be put in place to reduce risky behaviour? What would an action plan or safety plan look like for a man aged 50 and over?

1. Create a network to overcome any isolation
2. Create a circle of support with loved ones and the community
3. Reflect the resources, strengths and skills that the person already has, note that the person's experience is a strength as they have overcome other situations in the past
4. What specific role can the person play in the community?
5. Encourage independent activities (e.g., grocery shopping, other errands, sports, etc.).
6. Reinforce the protective elements named by the person
7. Reduce or eliminate dangerous elements identified by the individual



Useful resources

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CPSM Centre de prévention
du suicide de Montréal



McGill

Douglas
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE
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