

A close-up portrait of a middle-aged man with a friendly smile, wearing a blue denim shirt. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

# SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLBOX

**MEN  
IN GENERAL**

# MEN IN GENERAL

In 2023, the suicide mortality rate in Montreal was two and a half times higher for men than for women. Men aged between 45 and 64 are most affected by this reality, with 28 suicides per 100,000 people, compared with 10 for 15-24-year-olds, 14 per 100,000 for men aged between 25 and 44, and 17 suicides per 100,000 for men aged 65 and over.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Direction régionale de la santé publique de Montréal, 2019, Data to inform suicide prevention.



# BEING VIGILANT

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

Suicide is rarely the result of a single cause. It is generally multifactorial, involving a combination of many different variables. Researchers sometimes use the “stress-vulnerability” model. Here are some factors that can increase the risk of suicide, especially when they combine.

- Recent suicide attempt, history and/or similarity with a previous suicide attempt
- Worsening drinking habits, relapse and/or withdrawal
- Gambling addiction, sex addiction, relational codependency, etc.
- Weakened mental health
- A man going through a divorce
- Shameful event (no matter what type of event, it's the person's perspective that counts)
- Disciplinary problems (e.g., criminal record, disciplinary measures at work, suspension from sport, etc.)
- Isolation from family and/or community
- Vulnerability, especially if they adhere to male stereotypes
- Adopt the role of being overly stoic and brave, saying that everything is normal and okay
- A man with a history of violence
- Difficulty sleeping, eating, taking care of oneself (lifestyle)
- Donations of objects (especially objects of personal value)
- Recognizing vulnerable events:
  - Job loss
  - Trauma
  - Credit refusal
  - Hospitalization
  - Family conflicts

### DIRECT VERBAL MESSAGES

- I'm going to kill myself
- I'm going to end my life

### INDIRECT VERBAL MESSAGES

- I'm not celebrating Christmas
- Soon you won't have to worry about me anymore

### DEMEANING REMARKS

- Talking about the desire to end it all
- Low self-esteem

### EMOTIONAL CLUES

- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Great despair
- Homicidal ideas

### BODY INDEXES

- Sad face, low head, serious gaze, etc.

### BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Impatience, obsession
- Risky behavior
- Aggressive language and behaviour
- Aggression, neglect and/or abuse of partners, children, animals

### COGNITIVE CLUES

- Difficulty concentrating, lack of motivation

### BIOLOGICAL INDICATORS

- Changes in sleeping habits

### SIGNIFICANT LOSS

- Money, status, friendship, break-up, death of a loved one, death of a pet, etc.



## ELEMENTS TO EXPLORE

1. Recognizing signs of distress
2. Welcoming distress (active listening, validation, empathy, highlighting strengths)
3. Check for suicidal ideation
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. Creation of a safety net (family, loved ones and professionals as needed)
7. Designing and evaluating a needs-based plan with the individual on an ad hoc basis



**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.)**

## EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING TO FOSTER

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

- Take the call for help seriously
- Do not treat heterogeneous groups in the same way
- Recognize the effort and courage behind asking for help
- Provide validation and empathy
- Briefly explore the situation
- Inform the person about information that will remain confidential
- Pay attention to your own beliefs and emotions that may arise
- Be non-judgmental
- Normalize their feelings
- Recognize the distress behind an aggressive, stoic, calm attitude, etc.



## SUPPORT

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



**STANDARDIZE RESOURCE USE**



**IDENTIFY ONE OR MORE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO COULD GET INVOLVED**



**MENTION THEIR RIGHT AND NEED FOR SUPPORT (E.G., "YOU DESERVE A LITTLE SUPPORT!")**





## 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 in general?

1. Individual factors  
**Remind them that they are not alone**
2. Family factors  
**Create a circle of support with loved ones and the community**
3. Environmental factors  
**Find out about available resources**
4. Try and engage in fun and pleasurable activities
5. Reinforce the protective elements named by the person
6. Reduce or eliminate dangerous elements identified by the individual



Useful resources

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McGill

Douglas  
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INSTITUT UNIVERSITAIRE  
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