

A close-up portrait of a man with dark hair, a beard, and glasses, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a light-colored shirt over a grey t-shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an indoor setting.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TOOLBOX

**MEN
FROM IMMIGRANT
BACKGROUNDS**

MEN FROM IMMIGRANT BACKGROUNDS

In Montreal, approximately one-third of the male population is made up of immigrant men, who face particular challenges in accessing and using the health and social services available to them. **Montreal suicide data show that only 33% of people born outside Canada who had suicidal thoughts in the last 12 months contacted suicide prevention services, compared with 58% of those born in Canada.**





BEING VIGILANT

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

It is important to clarify that 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.

- **Family and social isolation, feelings of loneliness**
- **Family conflict**
- **Second-generation issues (parental relationships, family pressure, identity issues)**
- **Feeling like a burden (on their family in Quebec, on their family in their country of origin and/or on Quebec society)**
- **Feeling that no one understands them**
- **Acculturative stress (stress related to the challenges of integrating into another cultural context)**
- **Socio-professional deskilling (working in a less socially valued and/or less well-paid job than before migration)**
- **Experience of violence in their country of origin**
- **Discrimination based on skin colour, origin or religion**
- **Lack of knowledge about resources, difficulty locating resources, resources not adapted to cultural realities**
- **Aggressive comments or behaviour (homicidal thoughts, etc.)**

Recognizing vulnerable events:

- Job loss
- Target of discrimination or hate crime
- Rejection of asylum application



ELEMENTS TO EXPLORE

1. Recognizing signs of distress
2. Welcoming distress (active listening, validation, empathy, highlighting strengths)
3. Check for suicidal ideation
4. Encouraging help-seeking (such as a suicide prevention centre, crisis centre, psychologist, emergency service, etc.)
5. Creation of a safety net (family, loved ones and professionals as needed)
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



Exploring if there is any planning (and imminence) of a suicidal act



EMPATHY AND ACTIVE LISTENING TO NURTURE HOPE

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

- Provide an interpreter if necessary
- An understanding of the stressors associated with migration for men (socio-professional deskilling, loss of the role of provider, redefinition of gender norms, need to help the family back home, new cultural requirements in terms of child-rearing and gender relations, loss of the extended family for support, etc.)
- Be aware of the multiple barriers to help-seeking (stigmatization of mental health and suicide issues, time and economic resources, gender norms, mistrust of professional services, fear of being misunderstood or discriminated against, etc.)
- Welcome their experience. Be open to their reality. The practitioner and the organization must adapt to cultural and religious needs, and understand them
- Take a respectful interest in the cultural context and the migratory experience, without reducing the person to one facet of their identity, or insisting if the person does not wish to discuss certain aspects of their experience
- Adapt to their needs while communicating expectations and the limits of intervention (e.g. refusal to talk to a female clinician, etc.)
- If you have to provide information on cultural norms or laws in Quebec, do so without condescension or rudeness. Remember that everyone is a repository of what has been handed down to them, but they are always capable of learning to adapt
- Be open to less rigid interventions
- Use several approaches
- Clearly explain the implications of the meeting (confidentiality, time allotted), as well as the purpose and functions of the resources discussed
- Use the other person's language to describe their reality and distress (if the term "suicide" makes them uncomfortable, consider replacing it)



SUPPORT

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



RESPECT HELP-SEEKING PREFERENCES



ASK PEOPLE TO CLARIFY THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT RESOURCES: WHAT ARE THE OBSTACLES, WHAT COULD BE DONE TO REDUCE THEIR IMPACT?



MAKE THE CALL WITH THEM, EXPLAIN RESOURCES CLEARLY



EXPLAIN HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF RESOURCE USE





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 from an immigrant background?

1. Address immediate concerns (often related to migration and employment)
2. Reinforce reasons for living (particularly those linked to the family's migration project)
3. Have peer helpers
4. Reinforce the protective elements identified by the individual
5. Reduce or eliminate dangerous elements identified by the individual
6. Reinforce the perception and solicitation of social support
7. Encourage participation in community and/or religious activities (if deemed relevant by the individual)
8. Do not invalidate moral, cultural or religious objections to suicide if they act as a protective factor



Useful resources

BOÎTE À PREVENTION TOOLBOX

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CPSM Centre de prévention
du suicide de Montréal



McGill

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