Suicide & CALD communities:
Addressing the issue

THE MINDSET PROJECT

CALD and migrant communities have diverse views of suicide and suicidal thinking, and vary in the way that their community, family and friends respond to suicide.

Often, a strong stigma surrounds the individual experiencing suicidal behaviours that may also affect their family, carer, friends and community. Spiritual and religious beliefs can sometimes contribute to this stigma.

We know that depression, anxiety and suicide can affect any of us at any time – regardless of our culture or background. We also know that a range of factors can make it harder for people in some communities to seek and access support.

Almost 30% of Australians Were born overseas

Here are some crucial points to keep in mind when dealing with the issue of suicide in CALD communities and migrant individuals:

1. Beliefs affect communication.
Consider how cultural or religious beliefs may impact on open communication about suicide.

2. Family is crucial.
The role of family is crucial to the prevention of suicide within CALD communities. Family and social networks for many CALD people are key to both prevention and recovery of mental health conditions, even if stigmas may exist within the family unit. Despite this, the family unit remains critical in mitigating risk and preventing suicide.

3. Trauma in refugees is an aggravating factor.
Refugees (within CALD communities) carry the burden of painful pasts and histories, with the trauma they've suffered often becoming a risk factor for suicide. Thus, their traumatic experiences need to carefully figure in responding to individuals' unique vulnerabilities.

One-fifth of all suicide deaths Occur in migrant / CALD communities

4. Religion and culture can be protective factors, too.
While much has been said about the stigma surrounding suicide in some migrant / CALD communities, religious and cultural beliefs can help prevent suicide too. Any conversation needs to consider this and harness the positive potential of cultures and religions in deterring individuals from self-harm.