



## World Suicide Prevention Day, 10 September 2010

### Many Faces, Many Places: Suicide Prevention across the World

Reducing the prevalence of suicide is a challenge the entire Australian community needs to tackle. While suicide rates for both males and females have decreased in the past 10 years, it remains a health, social and economic concern, with latest yearly ABS figures showing that 2,200 people took their own life.

MMHA urges health and social services providers, media and workplaces to be involved in World Suicide Prevention Day by promoting community understanding of the issue and risk-factors, and encouraging help-seeking behaviour.

#### **What is Multicultural Mental Health Australia (MMHA)?**

MMHA is a national program funded by the Australian Government to improve mental health awareness and suicide prevention in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. In collaboration with stakeholders, consumers and carers, MMHA actively promotes these issues through policy advice, public promotion, resource development, community and workforce capacity building, and stigma reduction programs.

#### **What are some of the suicide risk factors in immigrant communities?**

Religion, cultural traditions, social status, personal experiences and genetic factors of the country of birth all play a complex role in suicide risk and protective factors<sup>1</sup>. Risk factors include prolonged periods of stress during migration; social isolation and lack of support; breakdown of traditional and family support structures; limited English language skills; and a decrease in socio-economic status, compared to country of birth<sup>2</sup>.

#### **How do rates of suicide differ between people who are Australian-born and those born overseas?**

Understanding the true scale of the problem is difficult because some cultures may not report deaths as suicides due to stigma, resulting in some suicides reported as unintentional or accidental deaths<sup>3</sup>. However, recent research<sup>4</sup> into rates of suicide amongst first-generation Australian immigrants has indicated:

- Male immigrants born in Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Western Europe and New Zealand have shown higher suicide rates compared to Australian-born males.
- Since the late 1980s, the suicide rates of Eastern European males are higher compared to other country of birth groups.
- Female immigrants born in Eastern Europe, Northern Europe and New Zealand have shown higher suicide rates compared to Australian-born females.
- The highest rates among females were among those born in Western Europe and the UK and Ireland.

Certain age groups are also more vulnerable than others, with research indicating high suicide rates amongst older immigrants<sup>5</sup>. International research also suggests second generation immigrants have a higher risk of suicide death than their parents<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Who should someone contact if in a crisis?**

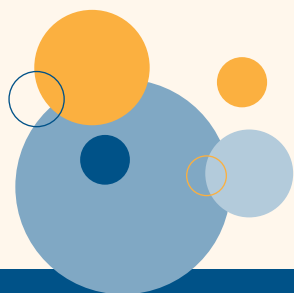
Lifeline - 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800

MensLine Australia - 1300 78 99 78

Media are urged to visit [www.mindframe-media.info](http://www.mindframe-media.info) for national guidelines on responsible reporting of mental illness and suicide in Australia.



<sup>1</sup> De Leo D, Kolves K, Ide N (2010)

<sup>2</sup> Dusvic N, Baume P, Malak A (2001)

<sup>3</sup> Walker S, Chen L, Maddred R (2008)

<sup>4</sup> De Leo D, Kolves K, Ide N (2010)

<sup>5</sup> McDonald R, Steel Z (1997)

<sup>6</sup> Hjerrn A, Allebeck P (2002)

**To find information and services in languages other than English, contact  
Multicultural Mental Health Australia on 02 9840 3333 or  
[www.mmha.org.au](http://www.mmha.org.au).**