

The Men's Toolbox



Tool for
loved ones

How to Help a Man Close to You Access Support Services

Here are some ways to help a man close to you get help from available support services.

1 A man you know is going through a difficult time

A man you know or love is going through a particularly difficult time, and you're worried about him. This man (your spouse, brother, father, friend, neighbour, co-worker, etc.) may not understand what is happening to him. Multiple factors may have led to this difficult situation, such as:

- He did not perceive the signs that should have alerted him.
- He doesn't think he has a problem, such as substance abuse, an addiction, a violence problem, etc.
- The situation got worse and he tried to deal with it on his own.
- He doesn't know what resources are available or how they work.
- He feels ashamed because of his problems or about the idea of asking for help.
- Previous requests for assistance were not successful, e.g., his needs were not understood, the process was too long.
- He's reluctant to seek help because of bad experiences in his youth, for example, if he had to get help against his will.

All of these reasons may mean that he simply does not know what to do to get better.

2 Get prepared

Many men are more comfortable talking about their problems in physical or concrete terms rather than in terms of emotions. Some men may be more likely to open up while doing an activity. Here are some keys in order to support a man who is close to you:

- Start by observing his behaviours, especially his changes in habits.
- Ask him to have a talk. You know him, which means you know the best time of day and best space to bring up the topic: would he be more receptive if you went for a walk? Friday night after work? Make sure he's open and listens to what you have to say.
- Determine your own comfort level in talking with him. Would you rather have someone accompany you to talk to him?
- Do you think he would open up more with another person he is close to? If so, get in touch with this person: sometimes going through someone else can be more effective.

3 Talk to him

- First, check his state, i.e., that he isn't intoxicated, stressed out, or overwhelmed.
- While doing an activity together, bring up what has been on your mind.
- Ask his permission to express your concerns, such as: "I'm worried about something. Is it okay if I tell you about it?" "I just want to check whether you..." etc., and ask him to hear you out completely.
- Share your observations while focusing on facts, such as "I see you've lost weight." or "I noticed you stopped going to your Monday class."
- Name your specific concerns, for example, "I'm concerned about your health." Express how you feel about the situation (anxious, frustrated, lonely, etc.).
- Listen to him with openness and empathy; be open to what he says without judging him. The goal is to open up a dialogue and for the situation to improve for both you and him. Start with him; listen to his version of what's going on.
- Avoid giving advice. Be careful with your tone of voice when responding, as he may perceive you as being judgmental.
- Speak his language: if he likes to take action, ask him what he could do to get better. If he likes video games, compare his situation to a challenge he has to overcome to advance to the next level.
- After you talk with him, contact professionals to get referrals for his specific situation (addiction, gambling, depression, etc.)

4 If he is open to it, help him put his needs into words and seek help

If the man has trouble talking about his emotions, you could:

- Help him with a self-evaluation by suggesting that he put words to what he is experiencing: "Are you feeling angry? Overwhelmed? Alone?"
- Ask him what his needs are and what he thinks would be useful by asking simple and concrete questions: "Are you sleeping? Are you eating? When was the last time you did an activity you enjoyed?"
- Direct him to information or self-assessment sites so that he can put what is happening to him into words (for example, allume.org).

5 If he agrees to see someone, take the necessary steps with him

This man may not be aware of available services. He may not know how to go about accessing them or how to submit a request. He may also be uncomfortable with phone or computer systems. You could:

- Remind him that he is entitled to public support services and that these services are confidential.
- Suggest a simple approach of one step at a time.
- Help him consult the websites of professionals or assistance organizations to check out these services and their availability.
- Help him get ready for appointments with doctors, social workers or community resources: go over his experiences in recent days, note down changes, symptoms, etc.
- Help him gather any necessary or relevant documents.
- Assist him with making an appointment or even make the appointment for him, if he wants.
- Go with him to his appointments, exams, etc.

6 If he doesn't seem to agree

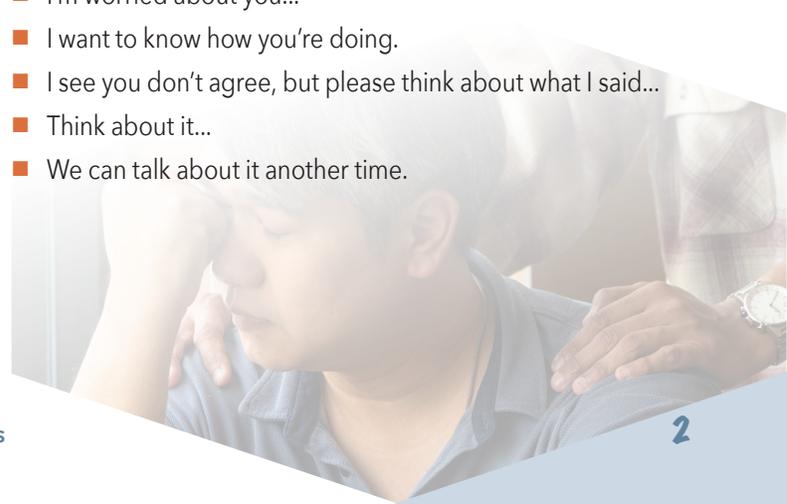
He may not agree with your concerns or may not like that you brought them up. He may find your impressions wrong and may refuse your proposals. If this happens:

- Find and give him materials that are relevant to his situation or direct him to self-assessment or health information sites.
- Let him know that he's not alone, that what he's experiencing is normal, but that he needs a type of help that you cannot offer as a partner, friend or relative.
- Remind him of the problems that he has already overcome and help him build on his strengths.

If he refuses to hear you out, get him to realize how important his well-being is to you.

Reaffirm your support with simple phrases

- I'm worried about you...
- I want to know how you're doing.
- I see you don't agree, but please think about what I said...
- Think about it...
- We can talk about it another time.



7 If you think he is at risk of committing suicide or hurting someone

The last thing we want to imagine is that someone close to us may hurt themselves or someone they love.

- You don't need to be 100% certain to ask for help. If the risk seems imminent, call 911.
- If you think you have time, call 1-866-APPELLE so that an outside person can help you make a decision.

The majority of men who consider suicide do not want to die. They are not intoxicated by alcohol but rather by suffering. Just as you wouldn't let a drunk person get into their car, you also have to do something when a man close to you is impaired by distress, as he wouldn't do the same thing if he had full control of his faculties.

8 Take care of yourself too!

You may be impacted by seeing your friend, spouse or family member going through a hard time. However, to support this person, you can't neglect your own health and safety.

Don't face this challenge alone: get help for you as much as for your loved one and don't hesitate to see a professional if you need to. Have realistic expectations, go at your own pace, and respect your needs.

Consult all the toolbox tools

www.polesbeh.ca/en/documentation/mens-toolbox

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Useful sites

- allume.org (in French)
To assist distressed men aged 35 to 49 find help. The site also provides a self-assessment tool.
- [Suicide Prevention Centres directory](http://SuicidePreventionCentresdirectory.ca) (in French)
1-866-APPELLE – Toll free 1-866-277-3553
To prevent suicide (for you or a loved one). Some centers offer services in English.
- headsupguys.org
To support men in their fight against depression and provide advice, tools and information.
- interligne.co
For people affected by sexual and gender diversity issues: listening and intervention services, etc.
- 811 line ([Info-Santé](http://Info-Santé.ca) and [Info-Social](http://Info-Social.ca))
To contact a nurse or a social worker free of charge either for you or a loved one.
- myrelief.ca (formerly Revivre)
To support people living with anxiety, depression or bipolar disorder and their loved ones.
- ordrepsy.qc.ca (in French)
To find a psychologist in your area.
- [211 service](http://211service.ca)
To find information about community, public and parapublic services in your area, throughout Quebec.
- suicide.ca
To chat confidentially with professionals or get advice.
- telaide.org – Toll free 1-855-365-4463
Confidential line for mental health, violence, addiction, abuse and bullying, loneliness.

NOTE This information does not replace the help offered by a professional, a specialized service, or a community resource.

To cite this tool

L'Heureux, P., Arévian, A., Bacon, J., Brodeur, N., De Serres, J., Gagné, D., Gariépy, Y., Hammond-Rivard, M., Lavoie, B., Martel, B., Martin, R., Tremblay, G. & Houle, J. (2021). *The Men's Toolbox. How to Help a Man Close to You Access Support Services*. Vitalité - Laboratoire de recherche sur la santé (UQAM). <https://www.polesbeh.ca/en/documentation/mens-toolbox>



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Graphic design and editing: Pascale Ouimet, Cert. Ed.

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