

Young people from immigrant backgrounds



TROUSSE
horizons

Definition

- Teenagers and young adults who have immigrated to Canada or who have at least one immigrant parent or grandparent
- May be referred to as first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants.
- May or may not identify as immigrants.

Why adapt your approach?

Teenagers and young adults from immigrant backgrounds navigate multiple cultures, having immigrated or had parents who immigrated to Quebec. Youth-related issues may manifest differently in this group.

A person's culture, their integration challenges, their access to health and social services, as well as their relationship to the host society all influence help-seeking strategies and adaptation. It is worth noting that young people from immigrant backgrounds are less likely to seek professional services than those in the general population.

Migration

Separation from loved ones, **prolonged gaps** in schooling, or post-traumatic **stress** related to forced migration

Integration challenges:

- Adapting to a new education system
- Learning new ways to communicate emotions
- Building a new social network
- Learning a new language

Children whose parents have limited English or French proficiency may take **on parental roles** (e.g., helping with administrative tasks, grocery shopping)

Additional pressure to succeed and realize their parents' dreams

Parents may have difficulty finding work that corresponds to their skills, which may cause unstable living conditions and reduced parental presence due to irregular working hours



Culture and minority status

Discrimination in employment, housing, and educational institutions due to skin colour, name, language, accent, culinary traditions, etc.

Pressure to maintain family harmony or fear of not being understood by their family may prevent seeking help

Family dynamics strongly influence suicidal behaviour

Recommended practices

The practices recommended when working with all young people also apply to those from ethnocultural minority and/or racialized communities or those who have experienced forced migration. The following additional considerations should be taken into account.

Understand the intersectionality of different aspects of a person's identity (e.g., age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, migration status, social class, disability).

Recognize that the person's family's expectations may differ from the host society's expectations, which may cause tension for the individual.

Pay particular attention to family conflicts as a factor of vulnerability. See the *Intergenerational Conflict* section in the *Explore and Highlight Strengths* page (only available in French) in the Horizons Toolkit.

Support the parent-child relationship:

- Involve parents and other adult relatives in the intervention
- Strengthen communication skills of the young person, parents, and other adult relatives
- Clarify each party's expectations and needs in the relationship

Pay particular attention to the mental health, psychosocial needs, and development of young people who have experienced forced migration and potentially traumatic events.

Highlight strengths related to their migration experience or navigating multiple cultures that may promote the development of useful skills throughout life.

Strengthen interpersonal skills and emotional expression among young people with creative approaches (e.g., theatre, drawing, video, dance, etc.).

Strengthen self-confidence, multiple social and cultural identities, and problem-solving skills. These strengths help overcome the challenges of the post-migration context.

Recognize that integration and access to services adapted to young newcomers promotes their long-term well-being.

Create safe and culturally adapted learning spaces to:

- Reduce risks associated with migration
- Strengthen social support and the ability to adapt and solve problems
- Foster sense of belonging to school environments and the host society

Encourage participation in community, spiritual, and religious activities. The presence of adults with whom young people can identify helps them develop a connection to their cultural community.

Encourage participation in activities outside their cultural community, such as school, sports, or French courses, to help them develop a broader range of social connections.

Assess whether the young person has experienced racism or discrimination, as these experiences can negatively affect their self-confidence and sense of belonging.

To learn more:

[Toolkit for Strengthening the Intercultural Capacity of Services for Young People and their Families \(IU SHERPA\)](#)
[only available in French]

[Teenagers and Young Adults](#) (MSSS) [only available in French]