

# Refugee Suicide Prevention Training Toolkit: Adapting QPR Training to Incorporate Refugee Experiences

*Ask A Question. Save A Life.*

## Facilitator's Guide

April 2012

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**REFUGEEHEALTH** TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



[www.refugeehealthta.org](http://www.refugeehealthta.org)

## Introduction

As a certified QPR instructor you are trained to teach the Refugee Suicide Prevention Training that adapts QPR to incorporate refugee experiences. The purpose of this Facilitator's Guide is to provide you with information on presenting QPR to gatekeepers in refugee communities. The Guide includes:

- A suggested training schedule;
- Speaker notes, which include suggested discussion questions and points to cover for the QPR training slides with refugee-specific information;
- Recommendations for large and small group discussions; and
- Instructions for role plays.

### Why a QPR Gatekeeper Training focused on refugees?

In 2010, humanitarian and governmental agencies became aware of suicides and attempted suicides among Bhutanese refugees living in refugee camps in Nepal or resettled in the United States. The suicide rate among Bhutanese refugees may be more than three times higher than that of the U.S. population. Suicides have also been reported among other resettled refugee populations.

One of the major initiatives of the Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center (RHTAC) is to prevent suicide among refugees. To do this, RHTAC has worked with the QPR Institute to develop a refugee-focused QPR Gatekeeper training. As part of this effort, we seek to engage the network of QPR trainers across the U.S., strengthen their capacity to work with refugees, and facilitate QPR trainings for refugee gatekeepers. This training has been supported by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through funding to RHTAC.

### Who are Refugee Gatekeepers?

Refugee gatekeepers may be refugees themselves or individuals who work with refugee communities. They are a diverse group and represent many countries of origin, ethnicities, and language groups. Many work for organizations that serve refugees including social service agencies, ethnic community-based organizations, religious groups, community health clinics, schools, and resettlement agencies. Resettlement agencies provide initial reception and placement services to newly-arriving refugees under cooperative agreements with the Department of State. These initial services include covering basic food, clothing, shelter, orientation, referral, and other services for the first 90 days after arrival for refugees. The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides up to eight months of cash and medical assistance for all eligible, newly arrived refugees, as well as funding for formula and discretionary social services to help refugee populations for up to five years after their arrival.

## QPR Adaptation

The Refugee Suicide Prevention Training is the basic QPR training adapted in three areas to increase its relevance to refugees. These are:

**Adaptation I: Discussing how suicide is viewed in refugee communities;**

**Adaptation II: Recognizing additional challenges and risk factors faced by refugees - including history of violence and trauma experienced by refugees and resettlement challenges; and**

**Adaptation III: Adapting QPR for refugee gatekeepers**

This Facilitator's Guide focuses on these three adaptations and how to carry them out.

## Suggested Training Schedule

Follow the instruction in this Facilitator's Guide for conducting the bolded topics.

Topic	Time
Pre-training Survey and Introductions	20 minutes
<b>Discussion: How is suicide viewed in refugee communities?</b>	<b>15 minutes</b>
General Risk Factors for Suicide	5 minutes
<b>Discussion: Additional Challenges - History of violence and trauma and resettlement challenges experienced by refugees</b>	<b>20 minutes</b>
Behavioral Warning Signs	5 minutes
Verbal Clues	5 minutes
<b>Adapting QPR for Refugee Gatekeepers</b>	<b>85 minutes</b>
Review of Handouts	10 minutes
Post-training Survey	15 minutes

**Total Time: 3 hours**

## Additional Materials/Handouts for Refugee Suicide Prevention Training

- Role Plays (refugee-focused)
- Social Support Worksheet
- Suicide Prevention Referral Worksheet
- Communication Skills for Gatekeepers Handout
- Glossary of Terms Related to Suicide Prevention
- QPR Booklet

## Pre-Training Survey

There is a two page pre-training survey and a two page post-training survey that will need to be stapled together before the training. Hand out the surveys to participants as they come into the training. Instruct them to complete **only** the pre-training survey. Do not collect pre-training surveys because participants will complete the post-training survey at the end of the training.

## Adaptation I: How is suicide viewed in refugee communities? (15 minutes)

This area of adaptation begins with Slide 4, shown below



**Facilitator Notes:** Explain to the group that suicide can be defined and viewed in different ways by different refugee groups and across cultures.

### LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

**Ask:** How is suicide viewed by refugees in your community? Is there a word or phrase for suicide? Is it something people will talk about? What might people say or think if they heard or thought that someone in their community had committed suicide?

## Adaptation II: Additional Challenges- History of violence and trauma experienced by refugees and resettlement experience (20 minutes)

This area of adaptation begins with Slide 12- 17, shown below



**Facilitator Notes:** The violence and trauma a refugee is likely to have witnessed, either directly or indirectly, during the course of their migration may increase a person's capacity for or consideration of suicide. Greater exposure to violence may lower the threshold for considering an act of violence against oneself.

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

**Ask:** Do you think suicide among refugees in your community may be related to their experience of violence and trauma? In what ways?

### Slide 14



**Facilitator Notes:** With this and the next three slides, the focus will be on participants sharing experiences and challenges refugees face that may increase their risk for suicide.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Break into groups of three to four. Have each group discuss the question, *“What are the challenges refugees face as they resettle in the U.S.?”*

Each group should choose a **recorder** to write down major points of discussion and a **spokesperson** who will report one idea/thought back to the large group.

This is a good opportunity for story-telling. Encourage the groups to be specific and, if possible, share some of the challenges they or others they know have faced.

**Large Group Debrief:** Each group's spokesperson will share one idea/thought with the large group. Record responses on a flipchart.

## Slide 15

**Resettlement Challenges**

Community

- Exposure to violence and trauma
- Breakdown of community and loss of traditional supports
- Feelings of isolation
- New culture
- New language
- Unrealistic expectations
- Decline in status
- Being labeled a “refugee”

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## Slide 16

**Resettlement Challenges**

Family

- Money problems
- Separation from family
- Family conflicts:
  - Reversal of family roles
  - Responsibility is placed on young family members to take care of their family
  - Shame from not being able to meet these responsibilities

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**Facilitator Notes:** Compare the list that participants brainstormed with these lists. Point out the similarities/differences between the lists. Share the following points if they do not come up in discussion.

### Suggested points to cover:

- **Unrealistic expectations:** Refugees often arrive in the U.S. believing that their troubles are behind them and that they will have a wonderful life right away. Refugees may be disillusioned when they face financial problems or feel isolated. Refugees may expect that they will be supported financially until they get a job.
- **Linguistic isolation:** Most (but not all) refugees have limited English proficiency. Children are often the first to learn the language and then must interpret/translate for their parents, leading to parent/child role reversal.
- **Family separation:** The reality of refugee processing and admissions often means families are separated, even if all are expecting to be resettled in the U.S.
- **Family dynamics:** Resettlement introduces new stressors in families, including role changes/reversals for parents and children, elders and younger family members, and

women and men. These stressors may be more pronounced for elders. Examples include elders who came to the U.S. for the sake of their children. Because of their inability to speak English, elders are often no longer breadwinners or heads of families; elders feel disrespected and dependent on children who in turn feel overwhelmed and stressed by their new responsibilities.

**Slide 17**

**Refugee Label**

Discussion

Being labeled a “refugee” may make some refugees feel stigmatized or treated differently.

“Low,” “unrespected”, and “inferior”

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**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:**

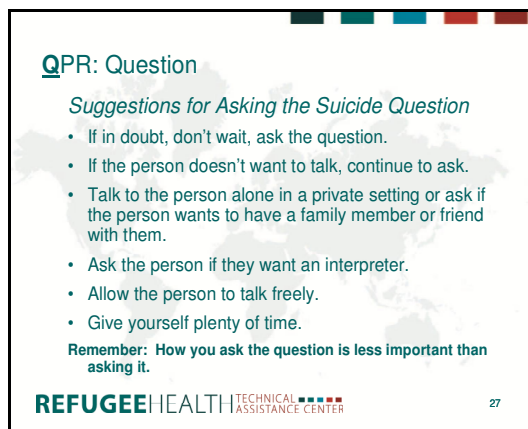
Being labeled a “refugee” by the larger community can be a stressor for many refugee groups. Is this true of the refugee community you work with? Why? Why not?

## Adaptation III: Adapting QPR for Refugee Gatekeepers (85 minutes)

The QPR method is the cornerstone of the Gatekeeper Training. We believe the QPR method can be used successfully with at-risk refugees by including adaptations to increase its relevance to this population. For refugee gatekeepers, becoming comfortable in using each of the QPR steps may be challenging. We encourage you to provide time for discussion of the different ways and approaches for asking the Question, Persuading by offering hope, and Referral by encouraging the person to seek help. We have included role plays so participants can practice each of the QPR steps.

### The Q of QPR - Asking the Suicide Question (30 minutes)

#### Slide 27



**QPR: Question**

*Suggestions for Asking the Suicide Question*

- If in doubt, don't wait, ask the question.
- If the person doesn't want to talk, continue to ask.
- Talk to the person alone in a private setting or ask if the person wants to have a family member or friend with them.
- Ask the person if they want an interpreter.
- Allow the person to talk freely.
- Give yourself plenty of time.

**Remember:** How you ask the question is less important than asking it.

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**Facilitator Notes:** Read the list of tips for asking the suicide question, note potential problems, and provide additional guidelines:

- Refugee clients may want to talk privately with you because they are talking about suicide. However, in many refugee cultures, this is not encouraged and family members expect to be part of the meeting, especially with women. If possible, you should ask the client whether s/he would like to speak in private or with a family member present.
- You also need to ask whether or not the person would like to have an interpreter because some clients may feel uncomfortable talking about their problems and feelings with an interpreter present.
- Make sure you have plenty of time for the conversation because of language barriers and different perceptions of time in other cultures.



**Slide 30**

**QPR: Asking the Question about Suicide with Refugees**

Discussion

- Before you ask the “suicide question,” how would you begin the conversation about suicide?
- What phrases would you use?

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**LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:**

Talking about suicide and asking someone if s/he is thinking about killing himself/herself is very difficult for everyone, but it may be especially hard for those working with refugees.

Have a large group discussion on the two questions posed on the slide:

- How would you lead up to asking a person if s/he is thinking about suicide?
- What words or phrases could you use?

**ROLE PLAY**

**Introduction to the Role Play:** To become comfortable helping someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are considering suicide.

**Role Play: Asking the Question**

**Instructions**

**Time: 10 minutes for each role play practice**

- Break up into pairs. If possible, pair individuals together who speak the same language.
- One person will be the at-risk individual and the other will be the gatekeeper.
- There are four role play scenarios. Hand out one role play scenario to each pair.
- Have the pairs review the role play “script”.
- Begin the role play. Tell participants to stop after asking the question.
- Hand out another role play scenario and have each pair switch roles and practice with this role play.

**Note:** Two of the role plays are gender specific (married middle-aged man and married middle-aged woman). If any pairs are mixed gender, have the male practice the married man role and the female practice the married woman role.

**Debrief:** Have each pair report back on their discussion. Ask each pair to report specifically how the “suicide Question” was asked/phrased.

## The P of QPR – Persuade (30 minutes)

### Slide 33



**Introduction to the Role Play:** The goal of this role play is to give you the opportunity to practice persuading the at risk person to seek help. Continue the role play with the same pairs. Instruct the gatekeeper to use the suggestions generated by the large group discussion of ways to persuade an at-risk person to seek help.

### **Role Play: Persuade**

#### **Instructions**

**Time: 10 minutes for each role play practice**

- Keep the same pairs with the same role play scenarios to continue the conversations started in the previous role plays, but this time with a focus on practicing the Persuade step.
- One person will be the at-risk individual and the other will be the gatekeeper.
- Gatekeeper: Use the suggestions on the slide to persuade the at-risk individual to seek help.
- Switch roles and practice another role play.

**Note:** Two of the role plays are gender specific (married middle-aged man and married middle-aged woman). If any pairs are mixed gender, have the male practice the married man role and the female practice the married woman role.

**Debrief:** Have each pair report back on their discussion and include the key points the gatekeeper chose to use to persuade the at-risk person to seek help.

## The R of QPR – Refer (25 minutes)

### Slide 35

**QPR: Refer**

Discussion

- What resources are available in your community to help refugees who are thinking about suicide?
- What national resources are available?

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**Facilitator Notes:** Explain that if you are going to be able to refer someone for help, you need to have identified beforehand a list of referrals in your community.

### Exercises: Identifying Sources of Help and Support:

1. Gatekeepers can help refugees at risk for suicide by identifying social supports as well as local referral resources. Have participants fill in the **Identifying Support Resources Worksheet** to identify resources that are available in the refugee's immediate circle of family and friends as well as help from their ethnic community and the community at large. Encourage participants to think outside the formal system of support. Through this activity, they are identifying a team of people to help support the refugee.
2. Have the participants start to fill out the **Suicide Prevention Referral Worksheet** with specific information about local referral resources.

### Slide 36

**QPR: How to Refer**

- Get a commitment from the person to accept help.
- Connect the person to sources of help.
  - If possible, take the person to someone who can help, or
  - Have the person identify a trusted friend or family member to go with them as they seek help.

Why is this important when working with a refugee?

- Stay in touch to let the person know you care about them. Caring may save a life.

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**Suggested point to cover:** Don't just hand the person a list of referrals. Instead, work with the at-risk person to identify a trusted friend or family member who may accompany her/him through the referral process.

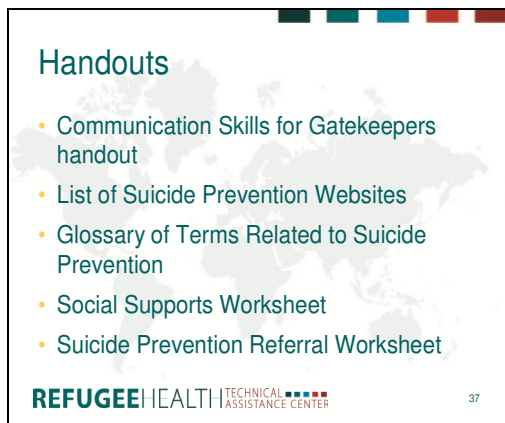
## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

**Ask:** How might you connect the person with a trusted friend or family member for immediate support?

**Ask:** How would you follow-up with the person to ensure that they made contact with the recommended referral?

## Handouts/Additional Resources (10 minutes)

### Slide 37



Review the list of handouts on the slide and discuss how gatekeepers can use them after the training.

## Post- training Survey (15 minutes)

Have participants complete the post-training survey and return both pre and post-training surveys to you. Give completed surveys to the organization hosting the training to mail back to RHTAC.

# Role Plays

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## Elder Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Elder

You are 70 years old.

You have come to the U.S. as a refugee with your son, his wife, and their three children. You felt too old to leave the refugee camp where your spouse died 2 years ago. But your family would not leave you behind.

You have been in the U.S. for about one year. You can't speak English and you feel alone, depressed, useless, and no longer respected as the elder of your family. Your worst fears have come true.

You are now talking to someone you know and trust (a gatekeeper). You are very emotional as you start to talk about your problems and feelings and you eventually say, "**I don't think life is worth living anymore.**"

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## Elder Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Gatekeeper

You are meeting with an elder whom you know.

The elder's spouse died 2 years ago in a refugee camp. The elder did not want to leave the camp but his/her family would not leave the elder behind.

The elder came to the U.S. as a refugee with his /her son, the son's wife, and their three children about a year ago. The elder is still unable to speak English.

You have met with the elder before. You are concerned because you know the elder is having a really difficult time adjusting to his/her new life.

As you begin talking with the elder, encourage the elder to talk about his/her problems. Listen for a verbal "warning sign" or clue that may indicate suicide risk. When you hear it, find a way to ask the suicide question.

# REFUGEE HEALTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

## High School Student Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: High School Student

You are 17 years old and a high school student.

You came to the U.S. as a refugee with your parents, your grandparent, and 2 younger sisters about a year ago. You are learning English but not as quickly as you would like. Your parents and grandparent speak little or no English. They depend on you to interpret for them when they go to doctor's appointments, shopping, and other activities outside the home.

You are struggling in school. Your teachers told you today that you are failing three classes.

You have no time for homework or for yourself. You are feeling overwhelmed and angry with your family for being so dependent on you. However, you are also ashamed of not meeting your family's expectations.

You are now talking with someone you know and trust (a gatekeeper). You are very emotional as you start to talk about your problems and feelings and you eventually say, "**I'm not sure how much longer I can go on.**"

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## High School Student Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Gatekeeper

You are meeting with a 17-year old high school student. You have met with the student before. The student is a refugee and came with his/her parents, grandparent, and 2 younger sisters to the U.S. about a year ago. The student is learning to speak English but not as quickly as s/he would like. The student's parents and grandparent speak little or no English and they depend on the student to interpret for them. The student has no time for himself/herself or homework and is struggling in school.

As you begin talking with the student, encourage the student to talk about his/her problems. Listen for a verbal "warning sign" or clue that may indicate suicide risk. When you hear it, find a way to ask the suicide question.

# REFUGEE HEALTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

## Middle-aged Married Woman Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Middle-aged Married Woman

You are a middle-aged married woman. You came to the U.S. as a refugee with your husband, his father, and your three children about a year ago. You had to leave your sisters, brothers, and their families behind in the refugee camp.

You are still unable to speak English. You must depend upon your teenage son to interpret for you.

Your husband is very depressed and angry because he can't get a job to support the family. He often drinks too much and beats you when he does.

You are feeling anxious, depressed, and worthless. You are worried about your children because they are struggling in school. You just found out that your son is failing three classes.

You are now talking to someone you know and trust (a gatekeeper). You are very emotional as you start to talk about your problems and feelings and you eventually say, "**I would just like to go to sleep and not wake up.**"

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## Middle-aged Married Woman Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Gatekeeper

You are meeting with a middle-aged married woman. You have met with her before. She came as a refugee to the U.S. with her husband, his father, and her three children.

She has been in the U.S. for about a year and is still unable to speak English. She depends on her teenage son to interpret for her.

She has told you that her husband is very depressed and angry because he can't get a job to support the family. He often drinks too much and beats her when he does.

As you begin talking with her, encourage her to talk about her problems. Listen for a verbal "warning sign" or clue that may indicate suicide risk. When you hear it, find a way to ask the suicide question.



# REFUGEE HEALTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

## Middle-aged Married Man Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Middle-aged Married Man

You are a middle-aged married man. You came to the U.S. as a refugee with your wife, your father, and your three children. You have been in the U.S. for about a year.

You are unable to speak English and must depend upon your teenage son to interpret for you.

You came to the U.S. to provide a better life for your family but you can't find a job. You feel that your wife and children do not respect you. You are depressed, angry, and drinking too much. You beat your wife when you are drunk and feel badly about it when you are sober.

Your landlord has just told you that if you can't pay the three months' rent that you owe, he will force you and your family to move out of the apartment.

You are now talking to someone you know and trust (a gatekeeper). You are very emotional as you start to talk about your problems and feelings and you eventually say, "**I think my family would be better off without me.**"

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## Middle-aged Married Man Role Play

To be better prepared to help someone who may be suicidal, it is very important to practice the Question-Persuade-Refer (QPR) Gatekeeper method. The goal of this role play is to have you practice listening to a person and asking in a compassionate manner if they are thinking about suicide.

### Role: Gatekeeper

You are meeting with a middle-aged married man. You have met with him before. He came as a refugee to the U.S. with his wife, his father, and his three children.

He has been in the U.S. for about a year and is still unable to speak English. He depends on his teenage son to interpret for him.

He came to the U.S. to provide a better life for his family but he can't find a job. He feels that his wife and children don't respect him. He often beats his wife when he's drunk and feels badly about it when he's sober.

As you begin talking with him, encourage him to talk about his problems. Listen for a verbal "warning sign" or clue that may indicate suicide risk. When you hear it, find a way to ask the suicide question.

## Refugee Suicide Prevention Training Toolkit

The Refugee Suicide Prevention Training Toolkit is available on-line at <http://www.refugeehealthta.org/suicideprevention/>. The Toolkit is designed to provide resources for QPR instructors who are interested in training refugee gatekeepers. We suggest that instructors review the resources in Part I of the Toolkit (Orientation to Refugees) before conducting the adapted QPR training. The Toolkit includes the following resources:

### I. Orientation to Refugees for QPR Trainers

**Self-study webinar:** *Introduction to Refugee Experiences* webinar recording, slide set, and transcript

Refugee Experiences: Stories from Bhutan, Burma, Eritrea, Iraq, and Somalia

Glossary of Refugee Terms

Websites and Resources on Refugees

### II. Materials for Refugee Suicide Prevention Training

**Powerpoint presentation:** Adapted QPR Suicide Prevention Training for Refugee Gatekeepers with facilitator notes

#### Facilitator's Guide

#### Handouts

- Refugee-focused Role Plays
- Social Support Worksheet
- Suicide Prevention Referral Worksheet
- Communication Skills for Gatekeepers
- Refugee Suicide Prevention Annotated Websites
- Glossary of Terms Related to Suicide Prevention
- Pre and Post Training Surveys