

**WHAT
DESIGN
CAN DO**

113 zelfmoord
preventie

RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS

ZERO

**SUICIDE
LAB**

LAB RECAP

ABOUT THE RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS

On 6 December 2019, more than 200 participants from various disciplines came together in the Nemo museum in Amsterdam for a pilot programme entitled 'Radical Collaboration'. The labs are intensive full-day R&D workshops in which creatives and multidisciplinary experts join forces to collectively address issues that are too complex for individuals or a single organisation to tackle on their own. The labs are a hands-on application of research through design, focused on gaining a deep understanding of a wicked problem and co-creating new perspectives on it.

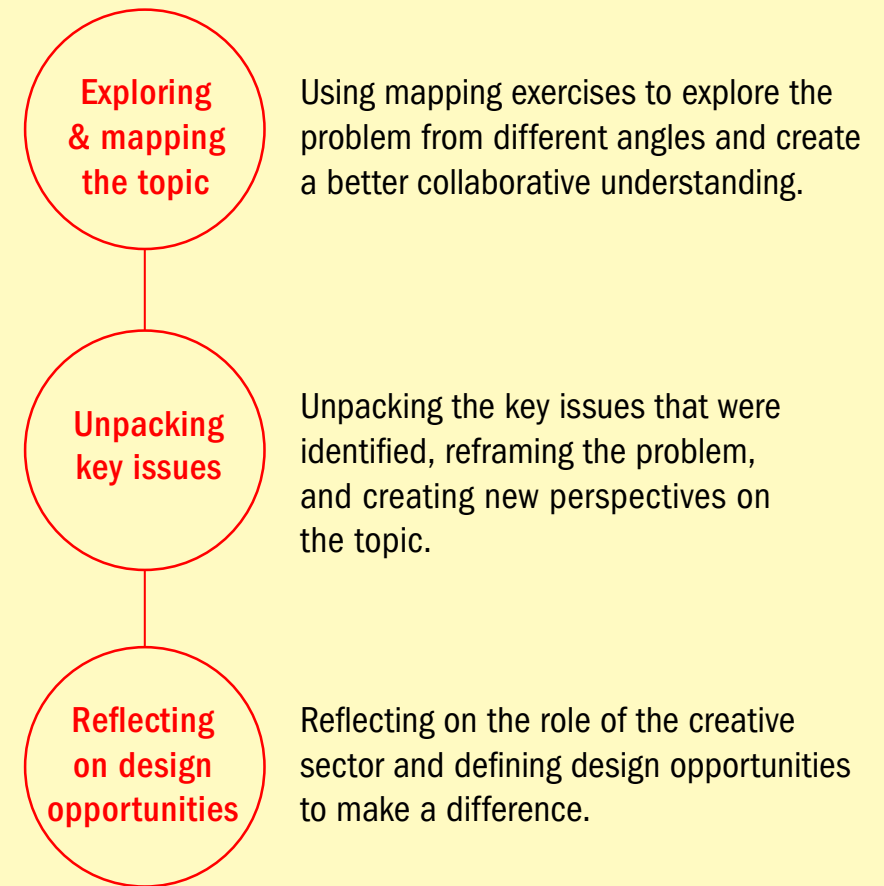
COLLABORATIVE AND OPEN PROCESS

The programme took place in two blocks: a morning and an afternoon session, in which we rolled up our sleeves and delved deep into the key issues raised and prepared in collaboration with various partners.

Though each lab had a tailored programme with a very different focus, the outline of the process was comparable.

The results of the labs not only inspire and connect the participants, but by openly sharing they hopefully also inspire others. This collaborative and creative R&D approach can provide essential connections between key stakeholders related to each topic, and open doors for new partnerships, projects, challenges and further events.

PROCESS DURING THE RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS



WHAT CAN DESIGN DO

What Design Can Do believes that design is more than making pretty things. Design and creativity can play an important role in transforming society. We need design and creativity to come up with fresh ideas, alternative strategies and provocative thoughts to address the urgent issues we are currently facing. What Design Can Do connects creative communities with public and private sectors utilizing design as a tool for social change.

EVENTS

WDCD events are a vital tool for people to meet live, exchange knowledge and ideas, share stories (as they are so important), get inspired, connect different nationalities, cultures and sectors, and start collaborations. The WDCD events are organized in Amsterdam, São Paulo, Mexico City, Nairobi, Delhi, and are important moments in time to research, develop and accelerate ideas.

CHALLENGES

The objective of the challenges is to actively call upon creative makers to use the power of design to come up with innovative solutions to global problems. The aim is to demonstrate the potential impact that design can have on society, and to activate designers and creative entrepreneurs to use their skills to address pressing issues.

We help to develop and accelerate the winning projects to make their ideas reality and create real impact.

RADICAL COLLABORATION LABS

The Radical Collaboration Labs are a first step in exploring and developing new design challenges. Through formulating questions such as 'How might we ..' we aim to pinpoint the issues that are raised by our partners. Moving forward, we can continue the research and narrow down real opportunities for design. The questions, discussions and insights of today will be summarized and shared with everyone who contributed.



RADICAL COLLABORATION





INTRODUCTION

During the Zero Suicide Lab we developed new perspectives on the issue of suicide among middle-aged men. At present a relatively high number of people in this risk group commit suicide, but 113 Suicide Prevention has difficulty reaching these men. Just 4% of the crisis chats that they conduct are with suicidal middle-aged men. During the Zero Suicide Lab we examined what makes this group susceptible to suicide and at what moments in the lives of these men they can be reached.

During the lab we examined how suicidal behaviour appears among middle-aged men according to four main themes / risk factors:

1. Mental Health and Wellbeing
2. Social Relations
3. Gender Roles and Identity
4. Financial/Economical Situation

EXPLORING THROUGH 'MAPPING'

Experts and creatives jointly explored and examined these themes by carrying out a mapping assignment. This clarified the related themes and underlying causes and symptoms of the four themes.

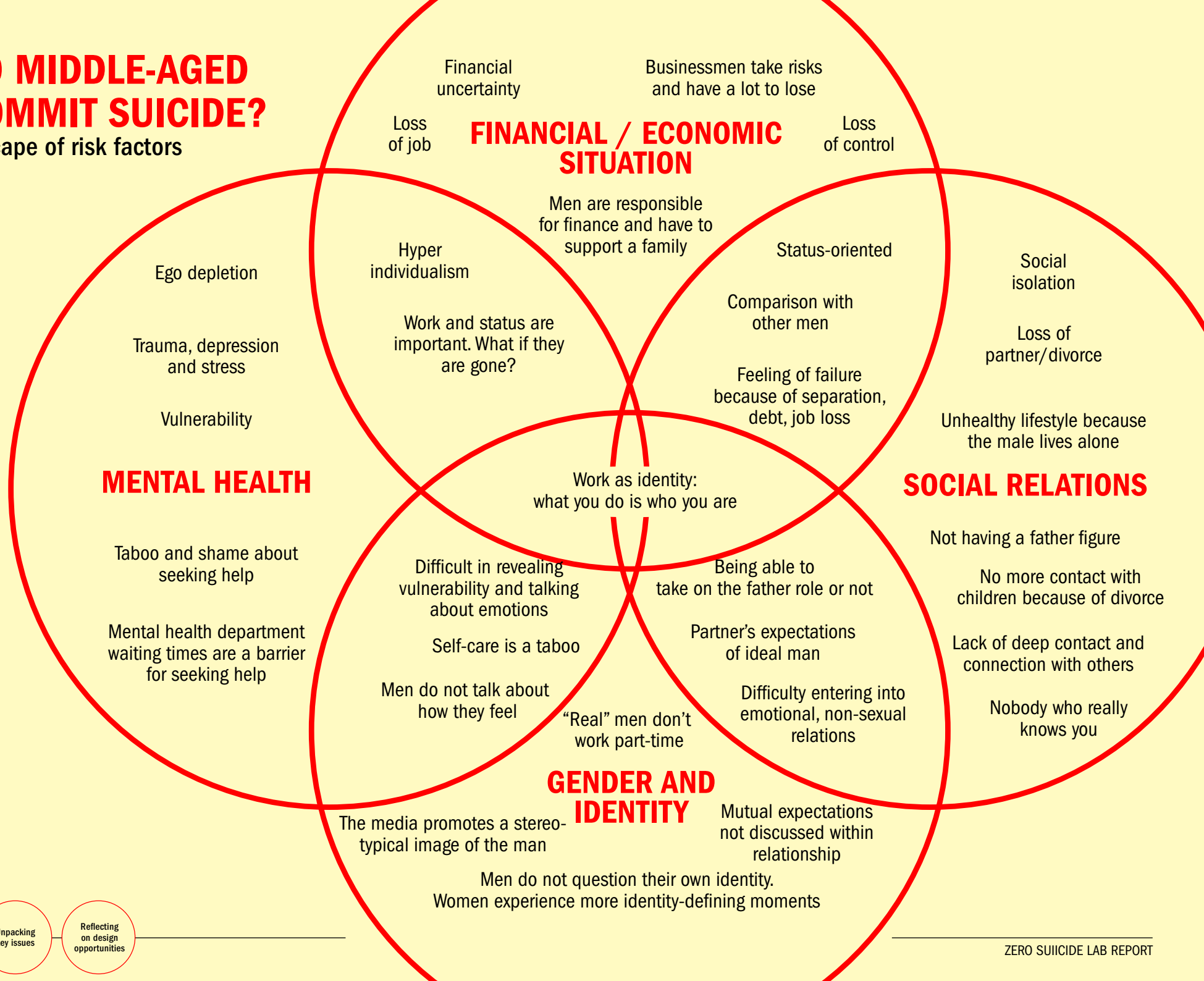
VISUAL LANDSCAPE OF RISK FACTORS

Suicidal behaviour often results from a combination of factors and events, which lead people to lose their will to live. These risk factors are often interconnected and do not necessarily lead to suicide on their own. A combination of various factors is usually responsible. To gain insight into which factors potentially contribute to suicide among middle-aged men, lab participants charted the risk factors related to each theme. These risk factors are gathered into a visual landscape on the following page.

The Zero Suicide Lab documentation and report are shared on the basis of Creative Commons (CC BY-SA).

WHY DO MIDDLE-AGED MEN COMMIT SUICIDE?

Visual landscape of risk factors



KEY ISSUES & REFRAMING

The landscape of issues shows a diversity of causes that prompt middle-aged men to commit suicide. During the lab the participants selected a few key issues which they then elaborated further.

These key issues are the important risk factors why middle-aged men commit suicide:

1. Social and emotional isolation of middle-aged men
2. Lack of self-reflection
3. Inability to talk about emotions and problems
4. Feeling of failure owing to loss of job or partner
5. Uncertain financial situation
6. Care is inadequate and too limited

Using cause diagrams, we jointly discovered the underlying causes and symptoms behind these key issues. We then did exercises to reframe these key issues and created new perspectives to view at the issues. Reframing helped participants to formulate design questions. The following pages present the key issues as well as the reframing and design questions.



KEY ISSUE

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ISOLATION MIDDLE-AGED MEN

The inability to engage in meaningful contact with others, resulting in a lack of connection with others and, in some cases, even a lack of contact with oneself. Social and emotional isolation of middle-aged men can lead to suicidal behaviour.

REFRAMING WHAT IF THE EMOTIONAL ISOLATION OF MIDDLE-AGED MEN WERE SEEN AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SOCIETY AND NOT OF THE INDIVIDUAL?

If people realized that they were just one handshake away from suicide, they would also realize they could do something and make a difference to the life of another person. Especially if we could encourage lonely men to become visible, and to get in touch with other people, or even with other lonely people. One-on-one contact could make a difference by letting hands-on suicide experts act as buddies for other men, or with help from the community. If the whole community were to join in, that would create opportunities to pull middle-aged men out of their social and emotional isolation.

DESIGN QUESTIONS RELATED TO SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ISOLATION.

- » How might we encourage fathers to teach boys (and girls) emotional resilience and change the masculine mindset?
- » How might we encourage people to ask their friends if they really are familiar with #stay alive?
- » How might we make connections with men in order to pull them out of their isolation?
- » How might we encourage men to help others so that they help themselves by finding a purpose?
- » How can we make every child skilled in recognizing emotions and a topic of conversation among all children.
- » How might we learn to use our whole life to learn about mental health?
- » How might we turn listening into a sport so that we can engage in better conversations about mental health?
- » How can we encourage men to sing instead of talk so that they derive pleasure from expressing their feelings?
- » How might we make it enjoyable to express your feelings?
- » How might we create an easily accessible physical place where people can be in contact with one another. For example, people with broken items at the hardware store
- » How can we design a game where you get points for avoiding suicide of other players?
- » How can we follow people online to find out if they want to commit suicide so that we can reach out and intervene.
- » How might we turn displaying emotions into a sport so that men (40-70) are encouraged to do it more often?

KEY ISSUE

LACK OF SELF-REFLECTION

Middle-aged men often fail to recognize their problems or take them seriously. It can also be the case that if they do take their problems seriously, those around them don't. As a result, they don't seek or receive help in time.

REFRAMING WHAT IF WE WERE TO SEE SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR AS A CHANCE TO REDESIGN LIFE?

If we were to view suicidal behaviour as a perfect moment to transform the lives of people who are unhappy or cannot see a way forward, then we could hold up a mirror to men with a lack of self-reflection. If we see suicidal behaviour as a chance to bring about a turning point in someone's life, then men can learn to reframe their own situation.

DESIGN QUESTIONS RELATED TO LACK OF SELF-REFLECTION.

- » How might we create a safe space where men can fix and create, or just hang around and share emotions, while enjoying themselves? Involve like-minded (practical men) in fitting surroundings (hardware store / repair cafe)
- » How might we offer a DIY suicide prevention self-care kit so that men (40-70) can take care of themselves
- » How can we design a suicide shop and present it as a chance to redesign the lives of all citizens in local communities?

KEY ISSUE

'REAL' MEN DON'T TALK

Society has the idea that men don't talk about their emotions and feelings and that they must be strong. The prevailing idea that 'real' men don't talk about how they feel leads to communication problems. Many middle-aged men have the feeling they have to be strong and don't dare admit that they are not well. They have the feeling they are a nuisance if they do that. Moreover, they have not learned to talk and express their emotions because they are taboo.

REFRAMING IF WE WERE TO VIEW EXPRESSING EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS AS MASCULINE, WE WOULD CREATE SPACE WHERE PEOPLE COULD TALK

If we no longer were to view men who seek help as weak, but rather as plucky and brave, gender roles could change. If children learned to express their feelings from an early age, we would create a generation of men brave enough to talk if things aren't going well. Vulnerable role models could play a role here. As someone remarked during the Zero Suicide Lab: *"We need a vulnerable Arnold Schwarzenegger!"*

DESIGN QUESTIONS RELATED TO 'REAL' MEN DON'T TALK

- » How might we design rituals for men that question their identity?
- » How might we use the macho guy identity to increase resilience?
- » How might we encourage men to realize they are role models so they can help others (and hence themselves)?
- » How might we develop a new vocabulary that is 'role fluid' in order to change the expectations of men (40-70)?

KEY ISSUE

FEELING OF FAILURE THROUGH LOSS OF JOB OR PARTNER

By losing their job or partner, men have the feeling they do not fit the image that society has of a man. As a result, they feel they have failed and are not real men. Especially for men who are sensitive about their status, this experience can be disastrous. If the man has a family, he can get the feeling he cannot perform the role of father figure because he can no longer pay the bills, or cannot see his children because of a divorce.

REFRAMING WHAT IF THE STATUS OF A MAN WERE NOT DETERMINED BY BEING SUCCESSFUL AND RICH BUT BY BEING CONTENT AND RESILIENT?

Resilience is important in coping with and recovering from a loss. If a man relies too much on his status for his sense of self-worth, it is more difficult to recover again after a loss. If the aim of life is not to be successful and important (status) but to be content and happy, then we can let men feel they are needed and useful even though they may have lost their job or partner.

DESIGN QUESTIONS RELATED TO FEELING OF FAILURE BECAUSE OF LOSS OF JOB OR PARTNER

- » How might we use children as experts to teach men (40-70) how to be fluid in their roles?

KEY ISSUE

CARE IS INADEQUATE AND SEEMS TOO LIMITED

Existing care does not align with the needs of suicidal men. For men, seeking help is in any case a barrier, and the long waiting lists at local mental health departments ensure that men do not get the help they need. The approach from the care side is currently very sensitive, while 'the man' is not (yet).

REFRAMING WHAT IF WE WERE TO DEPLOY THE CARE THAT FOCUSES ON MEN IN THE WAY THAT THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF A HARDWARE STORE /BOL.COM SITE DOES?

In this way, a practical approach to mental problems among men could be used to devote attention to the practical side. Hands-on experts could play a role here. In addition, both men and women could be invited more often for check-ups. From the age of 30 on, women are regularly called for a cervical smear or breast cancer check-up. Why aren't men also called up for check-ups after they pass 30?

DESIGN QUESTIONS RELATED TO CARE IS INADEQUATE AND SEEMS TOO LIMITED

- » How might 113 Suicide Prevention use the logistics/aesthetics/functionality or bol.com/repair cafe/hardware store to encourage men to seek help?
- » How can we ensure that all men and women are financially independent from the age of 20 so that there is space to develop if the situation seems hopeless.
- » How might we reach these 40+ men in a more targeted way so that care institutions and official bodies can reach out to them in a more pragmatic and less oversensitive way with folders and other methods.
- » How can we use the funds of Rijkswaterstaat and work with urban designers and ProRail to make buildings, bridges and rail tracks in areas where suicides are common? Randstad and agricultural areas.
- » Provide a basic income for everybody over the age of 30 so that they no longer feel trapped by their job position and are assured of an income from the government.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN

If you look at the key issues, and at the visual landscape of risk factors, it is noticeable that these occur during different phases in a man's life. Design interventions to combat suicide among middle-aged men do not always have to focus on middle-aged men but on men in other age categories (40-70).

Men enjoy opportunities to become more resilient both during their youth and after they retire. Whether it's about learning to express feelings and emotions to combat emotional isolation, or building up and maintaining social relationships to prevent social isolation. Even during their youth, interventions can help men become more resilient later in life and prevent suicide.

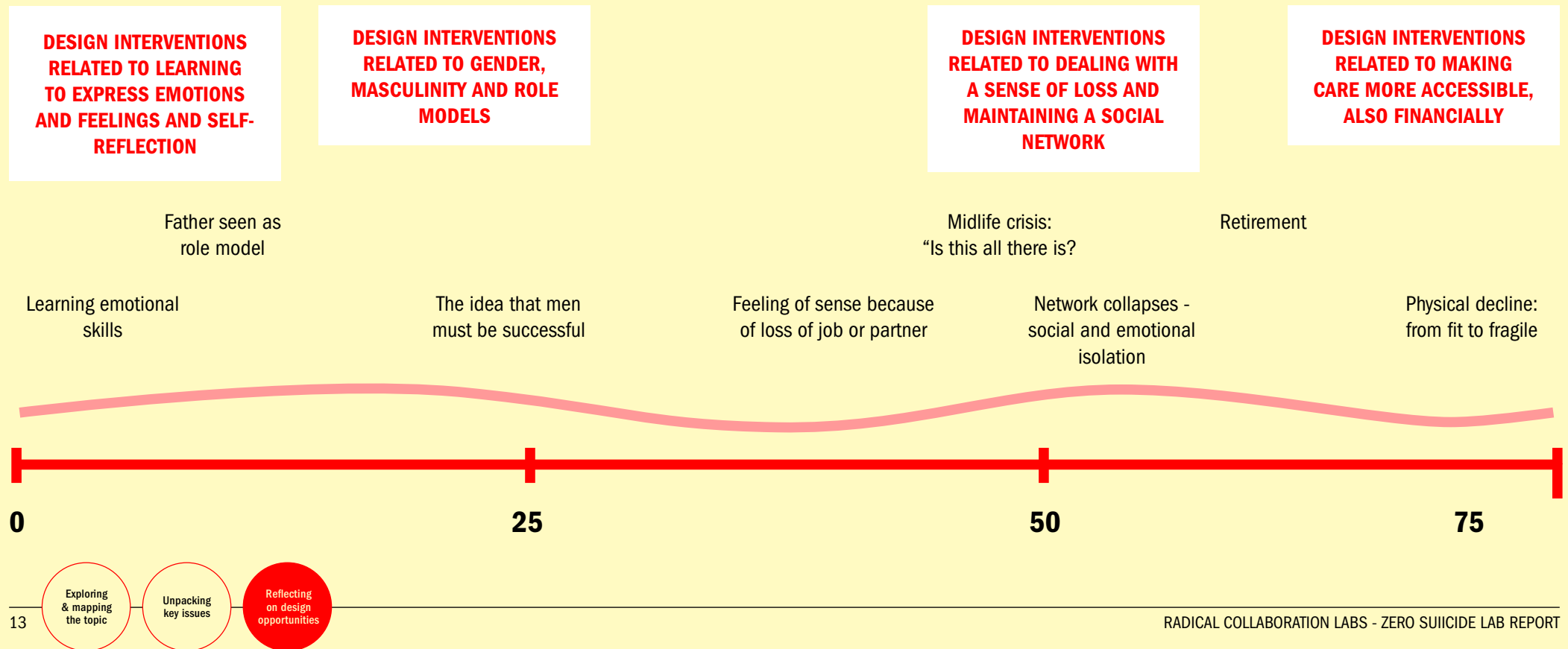
BIOGRAPHICAL LINE WITH DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

Various moments in which design interventions can be made and that can make a difference in the lives of men are indicated on a biographical line on the next page. This line shows that interventions can be made even before men become suicidal.



BIOGRAPHICAL LINE WITH DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

At various moments in a man's life there are opportunities for design interventions that could possibly reduce the development of suicidal behaviour in later life. This line indicates moments when a man runs the risk of developing suicidal behaviour and moments in a man's life where design could make a difference.



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