

1

Firearms, Means Safety, and Suicide Prevention

9/6/2022

EMPOWER IDAHO

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1

2

Disclaimer, Limitations, and Research

Disclaimer – Emotional Care	Disclaimer – Content Areas	Limitations of Presentation
<p>This is a presentation concerning suicide. Traumatic incidents of all types may be discussed. Raw, difficult language may be used, and disturbing incidents and situations may be discussed in order to convey the concerns as presented by clients who have experienced profoundly traumatic experiences.</p> <p>Feel free to take breaks as needed, and please connect with the speaker or another colleague if support is needed during or after the presentation.</p>	<p>This workshop is agnostic on matters pertaining to the topic of 2nd Amendment rights.</p> <p>This workshop takes no position regarding any matter of policy. This presentation is focused on clinical information and interventions for mental healthcare providers.</p>	<p>Lethal means is complex. our primary focus today is on firearms.</p> <p>There are many theories of suicide. The ideas we discuss cut across all models.</p> <p>We will focus on a clinical response for the purposes of this specific audience; this does not minimize the importance of other aspects of advocacy and suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p>Firearms and means safety discussions serve as one component of a larger clinical response to suicide.</p>

9/6/2022

2

3

Learning Objectives

- 1) Describe the theoretical and scientific underpinnings of means safety as a method of suicide prevention.
- 2) Practice and demonstrate directive and collaborative approaches to discussions of means safety and gun ownership.
- 3) Apply cultural information of gun owners to clinical interventions regarding safe storage of firearms for clients at risk of suicide.

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3

4

The Problem of Suicide – Setting the Stage

- ▶ Suicide is not about impulsiveness.
- ▶ Suicidal crises are not mysterious.
- ▶ Suicide is about psychological pain and the desire to be free from that pain.
- ▶ Suicide crises are temporary.
- ▶ Suicidal crises can be treated.

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4

5

The Problem of Suicide – Setting the Stage

2020
45,979 suicide deaths
1.4 million attempts

24,292 – 52.8%
Suicide Deaths by Firearm

Drapeau, C. W., & McIntosh, J. L. (2021). U.S.A. suicide: 2020 Official final data. Minneapolis, MN: Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), dated December 24, 2021, downloaded from <https://save.org/about-suicide/suicidestatistics>. 9/6/2022

5

6

Guns and Suicide: Inextricably Linked

Mechanism of Suicide		
Firearm	24,292	52.8%
Suffocation	12,495	27.2%
Drug poisoning	5,528	12.0%
Fall	1,074	2.3%
Cut/Pierce	907	2.0%

Drapeau, C. W., & McIntosh, J. L. (2021). U.S.A. suicide: 2020 Official final data. Minneapolis, MN: Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), dated December 24, 2021, downloaded from <https://save.org/about-suicide/suicidestatistics>. 9/6/2022

6

7

The Problem of Suicide – Setting the Stage

90%
of firearm suicide
attempts result in
death

Unlocked gun in the home
increases the likelihood of
dying by suicide by
300%

Conner A, Azrael D, Miller M. Suicide Case-Fatality Rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: A Nationwide Population-Based Study. Ann Intern Med. 2019 Dec 17;171(12):885-895. doi: 10.7326/M19-1324. Epub 2019 Dec 3. PMID: 31791066. 9/6/2022

Anglemyer A, Horvath T, Rutherford G. (2014). The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. Ann Intern Med. 2014;160:101-110. doi: <https://doi.org/10.7326/M13-1301>. 9/6/2022

7

8

Quick Decision to Action

Time from decision to die and the suicide attempt:

36%
< 5 mins

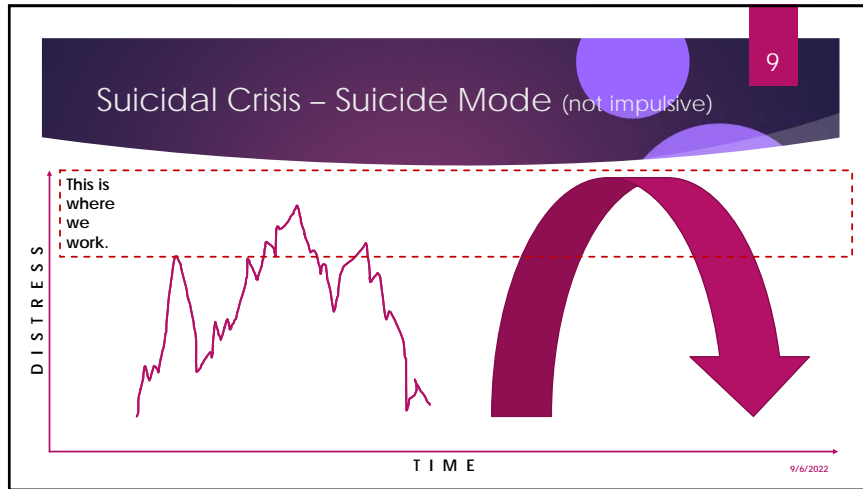
44%
< 10 mins

73%
< 180 mins

...rapidly realized suicide attempts cannot necessarily be characterized as impulsive.

Paashaus L, Forkmann T, Glaesmer H, Juckel G, Rath D, Schönfelder A, Teismann T. From decision to action: Suicidal history and time between decision to die and actual suicide attempt. Clin Psychol Psychother. 2021 Mar 9. doi: 10.1002/cpp.2580. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33687121. 9/6/2022

8



9

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11

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- 12

12

Means Are Chosen with Purpose

Guns, medications, and other methods

Familiarity with methods and safety

Consider values and background.

The method may be influenced by cultural beliefs or capacity for suicide.

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13

Firearms and Personal Identity

Gun Owners Are Dynamic Individuals...

- Veterans, Active-Duty, Family
- Airforce, Army, Reserved, Guard
- Law Enforcement

...That Identify Themselves in Multiple Ways

- Home
- Business
- Self, Family
- The right to carry

- Shooting Range
- Sport, Competitive
- "Gearheads"

- Geography
- Family tradition
- Food

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14

Lethality is not an Abstract Concept

- ▶ Service Member/Veterans
- ▶ National Guard/Reserve
- ▶ Law Enforcement
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Gun Owners – Cultural
- ▶ Hunters
- ▶ Firearm Instructors
- ▶ Retailers
- ▶ Community Members

- These individuals may have relied upon weapons to stay alive
- They have used these weapons for personal protection
- There may be an "expectation" of ownership within groups
- Removal of firearms from the home may not be considered

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15

Gun Owners and Belief Systems

EFF	EFF	EFF
<p>94% of gun owners take pride in being responsible</p> <p>87% of gun owners agree that homes where guns are stored safely are safer than where guns are not stored safely</p>	<p>87% of respondents agree that having a gun keeps me and my family safe</p>	<p>63% of gun owners say they own guns for protection at home from intruders. 93% say a person who may present a danger to themselves or others should not have access to guns. 24% report a concern about someone in the household using their gun to harm themselves.</p>

Brady. (2019). End Family Fire Tracking Survey. National sample of English-speaking adults age 18+ who reside in a household with a gun (n=800).

Parker, K. Horowitz, J., Igielnik, R., Oliphant, J., Brown, A. (2017). America's complex relationship with guns: An in-depth look at the attitudes and experiences of U.S. Adults. Pew Research Center.

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16

17

Gun Owners and Belief Systems

EFF	Pew	Pew
<p>46% of gun owners report they currently have a firearm in/around home that is unlocked (6 month average)</p>	<p>40% of gun owners report that there is a gun both loaded and accessible to them at all times when they are home. 55% say that there is always one gun loaded in the home.</p>	<p>73% of gun owning Americans say they would find a way to kill or harm themselves regardless of whether they had access to a gun.</p>

Brady. (2019). End Family Fire Tracking Survey. National sample of English-speaking adults age 18+ who reside in a household with a gun (n=800).
 Parker, K. Horowitz, J., Igielnik, R., Oliphant, J., Brown, A. (2017). America's complex relationship with guns: An in-depth look at the attitudes and experiences of U.S. Adults. Pew Research Center.

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17

18

Connecting the Clinical and Cultural

Clinical/Suicidology

- ▶ Guns in the home -> dramatic increase in risk of suicide
- ▶ Gun ownership does not increase suicidal ideation, but the use of a gun is 90% effective for the purpose of suicide
- ▶ The removal of a person's primary chosen method of suicide dramatically reduces risk

Cultural/Gun Owners

- ▶ People want to protect their families from harm
- ▶ People do not see suicide as a primary risk factor of gun ownership
- ▶ People perceive discussions of guns in a protective/defensive manner

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18

19

Connecting the Clinical and Cultural

Clinical/Suicidology

- ▶ The field commonly discusses means restriction, but...
- ▶ Safe Storage of firearms is a method of means safety, and...

Cultural/Gun Owners

- ▶ ...when gun owners hear "means restriction" they hear "gun control," whereas they respond positively to MEANS SAFETY
- ▶ ...Safe Storage is considered a value

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19

20

Time and Distance

Take any step that increases time and distance between person at risk and an accessible, usable firearm.		
Temporarily remove gun from home.	Temporarily store ammunition out of the home.	Store guns unloaded and locked, with ammunition stored separately.
Lock the gun.	Store gun in a safe.	Disassemble the gun.

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20

Temporary off-site storage of firearms 21


- ▶ Friend or relative
 - ▶ Provided they aren't prohibited from possessing firearms
 - ▶ Can hold ammunition
- ▶ Storage facility
 - ▶ Ammunition must be stored separately
- ▶ Police departments
 - ▶ Some police departments will store temporarily at no charge
- ▶ Gun stores or gun clubs
 - ▶ Some may offer free or inexpensive storage options for people they know

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21

Locking Options 22

Cable Lock



Trigger Lock




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22

Locking Options 23

Lifejacket



Lock Box




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23

Locking Options 24

Gun Safe / Cabinet



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24

25

Lethal Means Safety – Medications

Take any step that increases time and distance between person at risk and medications.

Remove or dispose of all unnecessary medications from home.	If opioids are prescribed, keep as little at home as possible.	Store opioids and medications locked, with another person available to help dispense medications.
Have at least two doses of Narcan/Naloxone readily available at home.	Ask pharmacist to prepare medications in blister-packs.	Minimize quantity and refill options, increase in-person medication consultations.

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25

26

RESOURCES

- ▶ The American Association of Suicidology
▶ www.suicidology.org
- ▶ End Family Fire
▶ www.endfamilyfire.org
▶ <https://www.youtube.com/c/EndFamilyFire>
- ▶ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
▶ www.afsp.org
- ▶ Harvard/Means Matter
▶ www.meansmatter.org
- ▶ Nat'l Suicide Prevention Lifeline
▶ www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
▶ 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- ▶ Crisis Text Line
▶ Text # 741741
- ▶ The Trevor Project
▶ www.thetrevorproject.org
▶ 1-800-866-7386
▶ Text # 678678

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26

27

RESOURCES

- ▶ U.S. Veterans Administration
▶ <https://www.va.gov/reach/lethal-means/>
- ▶ Prevent Firearm Suicide
▶ <https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsqv.org/>
- ▶ The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence
▶ <https://efsqv.org/>
- ▶ The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence
▶ <https://www.csgv.org/>
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Resource Center
▶ www.sprc.org
- ▶ New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center
▶ <https://gunviolenceresearchcenter.rutgers.edu/>
- ▶ Suicide Prevention Resource Center
▶ Free CALM training
▶ www.sprc.org

9/6/2022

27

Course: Firearms, Means Safety, and Suicide Prevention: A Clinical Workshop

Trainer: Ted C. Bonar, PsyD

Description:

Firearms account for more than half of all deaths by suicide. Clinical, counseling, and medical interventions for suicidal crisis must include discussions of access to firearms and safe storage. This workshop addresses the acute problem of suicide, the concepts and science of lethal means safety, and the integration and practice of talking about access to firearms during crisis, and the cultural challenges of conversations about firearms for those at risk of suicide. Participants will practice difficult discussions to improve clinical readiness regarding discussions of gun safety and safe storage in the context of a public health approach to suicide prevention.

Conversations about firearms are difficult and rarely practiced. This workshop takes no stance on policy, advocacy, limitations, or rights regarding firearms. This training is focused on the clinical challenges inherent in discussing firearms during suicidal crisis, and approaches the conversation through the intersection of safety, cultural language, and values of those who are at risk of suicide and who have access to a weapon.

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