



Reducing Access to Lethal Means

Engaging Gun Owners and the Firearm Community in Suicide Prevention

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Why are we talking about suicide?

- For 15 – 34 year olds, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the US and **10th for all ages.**
- **1.4 Gun Suicides** for each Gun Homicide in region
 - 4.5 in Minnesota - 1.7 in Indiana
 - 3.8 in Wisconsin - 1.4 in Michigan
 - 1.8 in Ohio - .86 in Illinois
- But suicide is **generally** preventable
- Reducing access to lethal means is effective
- You can play a role – whatever your role
- Don't forget to take care of yourself!

Safe Messaging

With Individuals

- **Be direct about suicide in talking to a person you believe may be at risk or to their family**
- Research shows that you won't be "putting the idea in someone's head".

In Media or the Public

Use care in discussing suicide.

Glamorizing the act, normalizing it or providing details about methods can increase risk among vulnerable people.

Reducing Access to Lethal Means

Make highly lethal means less accessible



Attempt suicide with less lethal means

or

Delay suicide attempt

Either way, s/he is more likely to survive

Why does this work?

- Suicide methods vary greatly in terms of their **LETHALITY**
- Most suicidal people are **undecided** about choosing death versus choosing life
- The decision to carry out the actual act of suicide is often made **very quickly**

So, putting time and distance
between a suicidal person and lethal means
MAY save their life

Pesticides – Sri Lanka

- Pesticides are the leading suicide method in many parts of Asia, with an estimated 300,000 deaths annually worldwide.
- In Sri Lanka, suicide rates rose 8-fold from 1950 to 1995.
- Restrictions were placed on sales of the most highly human-toxic pesticides in the mid to late '90s.
- Suicide rates dropped 50% from 1996 to 2005.
- Nonfatal poisonings and other suicides did not.



Gunnell 2007. Int'l J of Epidemiology.

Preventability

- 90% of those who die by suicide had some form of mental illness and/or substance abuse – often undiagnosed but often treatable
- Many people who survive a nearly lethal attempt say something like this : “I instantly realized that everything in my life that I’d thought was unfixable was totally fixable – except for having just jumped” from the Golden Gate Bridge
- 90% of those who survive a nearly lethal attempt do not go on to die by suicide

Why Focus on Firearms?

They are:

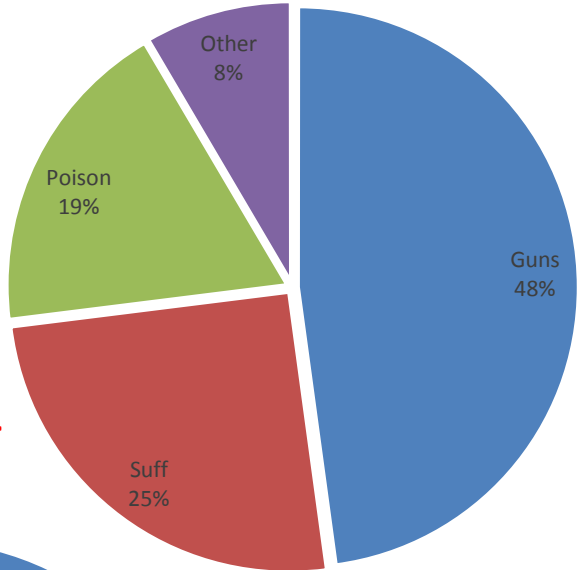
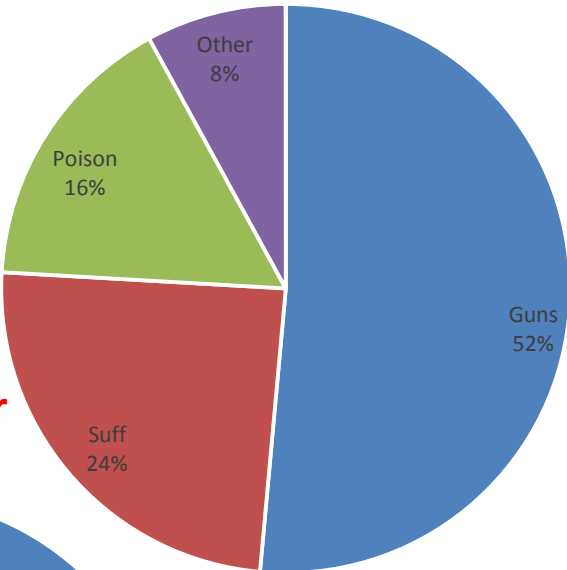
- **The leading method for suicide deaths in the US**
More than all other methods combined.
- **Highly lethal** Nearly anything an attempter might substitute is less likely to kill them.
- **Fast and Irreversible** No chance for rescue or change of heart once the trigger is pulled.
- **Very Accessible** About 1/3 of US homes have at least one gun.

US Suicide Deaths by Method

2013

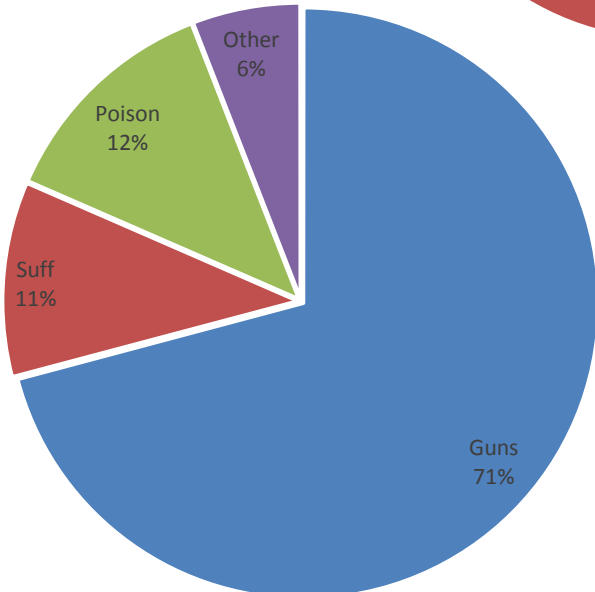
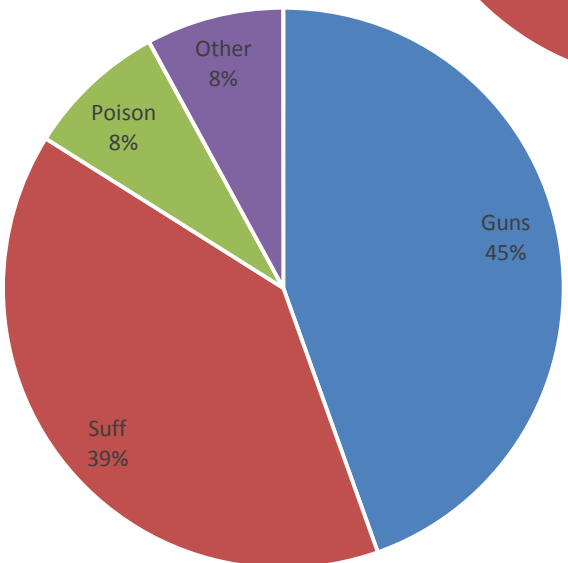
All Ages

Age 25 - 64

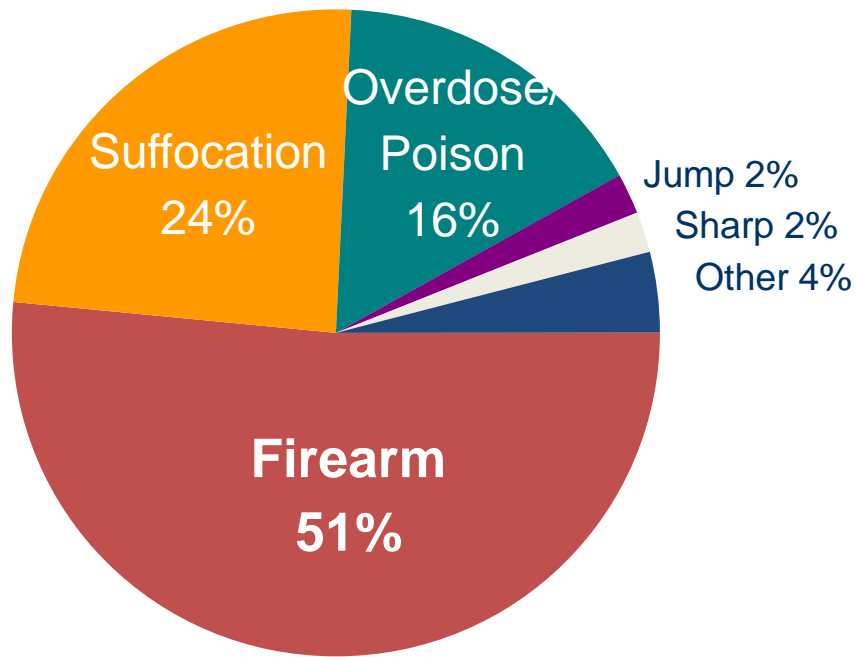


Age 24 and Under

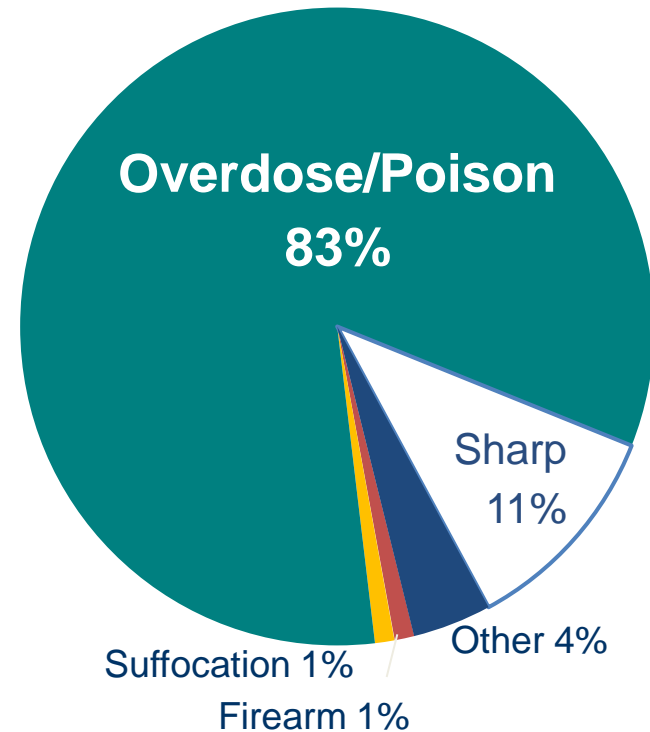
Age 65 +



Methods of Self-Harm, U.S.



Suicide



Nonfatal Self-harm

Sources: Suicide: CDC WONDER (2013)
Inpatient: HCUP-NIS (2005)

Decision Time

Among survivors of near fatal suicides, when asked about time from their decision to complete suicide and the attempt:

- 24% said less than 5 minutes
- 47% more said an hour or less

**Putting time and distance
between a suicidal person
and lethal means MAY save a life**

Ambivalence

Suicidal Behavior Among College Students

Among the 5% who seriously considered attempting, past 12 mos	n=1321
Began attempt, then reconsidered	15%
Carried through an attempt	12%

Drum, Brownson, Denmark, Smith. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 2009

Suicide Plans Among Attempters

Had a Suicide Plan?	People who attempted suicide in past 12 months
No plan	43%
Plan	57%

Borges et al. Risk factors for twelve-month suicide attempts in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). Psychol Med. 2006

Firearm Availability

- About 1/3 of US homes have at least one firearm¹
- **82% of youths who died by firearm suicide used a gun owned by a family member usually a parent²**
- Parents underestimate the likelihood that their children have or could obtain their firearms.

1 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

2 Youth Suicide Fact Sheet, NVISS data

Steps to CALM

Counsel on Access to Lethal Means

- Express your concern directly to client/family using the word SUICIDE
- Inquire about access to firearms and medications (+ other indicated lethal means)
- Inform the client/family that restricting access **reduces** risk
- Discuss how to accomplish this
- Complete a Safety Plan including ongoing supervision, treatment and follow up
- Communicate and document as appropriate

Reducing Access to Firearms

- **Temporarily removing all firearms from the home is the most effective option**
 - Where to store them?
 - Family and friends (if legally able to have guns)
 - Police in jurisdictions where they are willing*
 - Gun shops and ranges, pawn shops, shooting clubs*

*Background checks and/or fees may apply

Options to reduce access if removing from home isn't possible

- Lock **all** firearms in a safe or in a lock box.
- Change combinations and/or key locations
- Store all firearms unloaded
- Lock ammunition separately or remove ammunition from the home
- Remove a key component of firearms – such as the bolt

What about a self-defense gun ?

- First, discuss probabilities of suicide attempt by person at risk versus risk of home invasion
- If self-defense is essential, keep the self-defense gun either in a quick access lock box or on your person
- If the gun owner is the person at risk, seek creative solutions to reducing access if suicidal. e.g. put pictures of loved ones on the lock box

Reducing Access to Medications

- Remove out of date, unused and excess medications and over the counter remedies (see handout for safe disposal)
- At risk person should not have control of quantities of medication
- Avoid policies that require prescriptions for long periods of time. Short term prescriptions can also provide a check-in for patients

Reducing Access to Other Methods

Suffocation

Difficult to remove all possible means

Focus on maintaining emotional and visual contact and on other parts of the Safety Plan

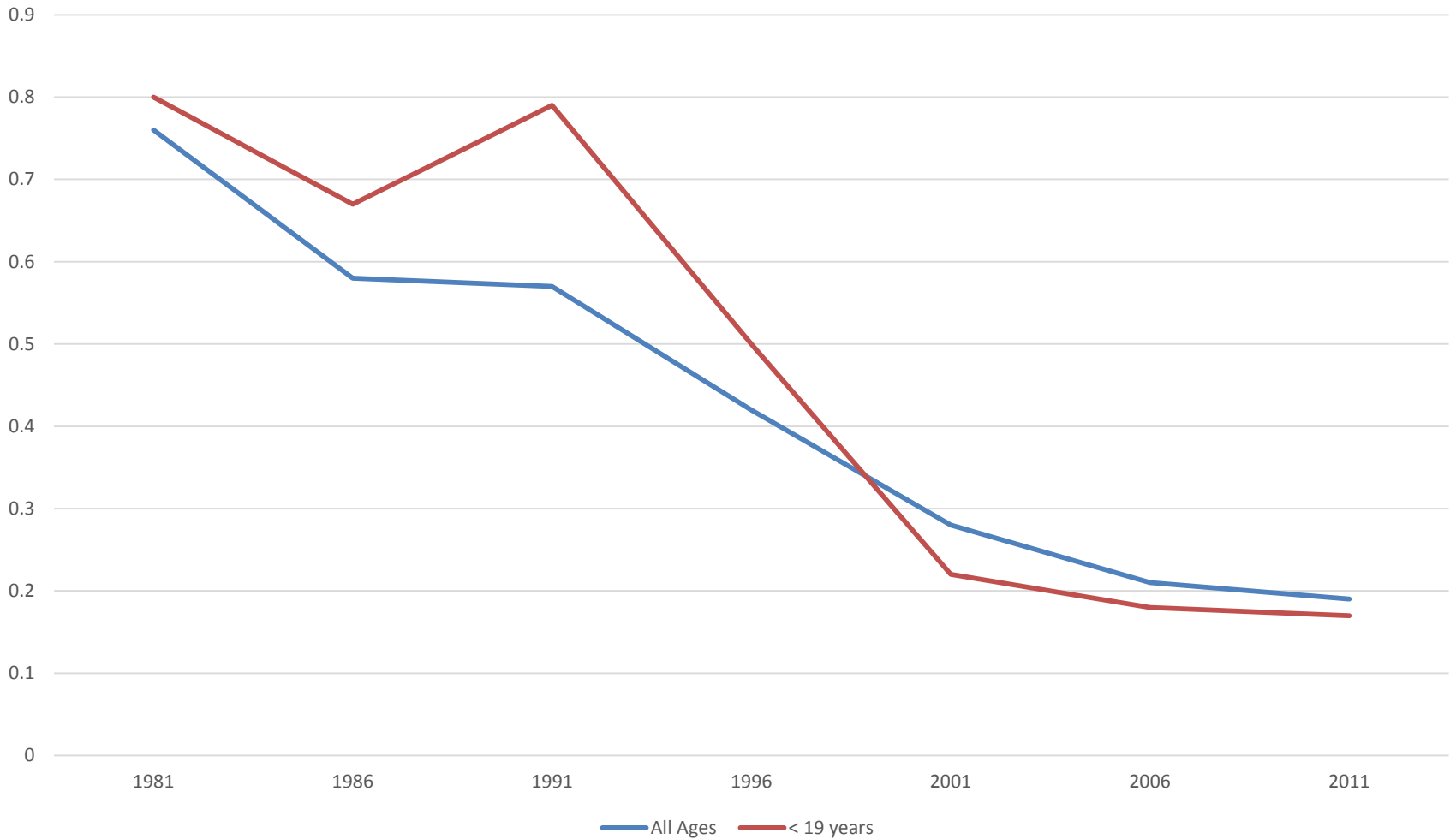
Other Methods

Reduce access wherever possible

Maintain contact

Focus on the rest of the Safety Plan

Accidental Gun Deaths, US



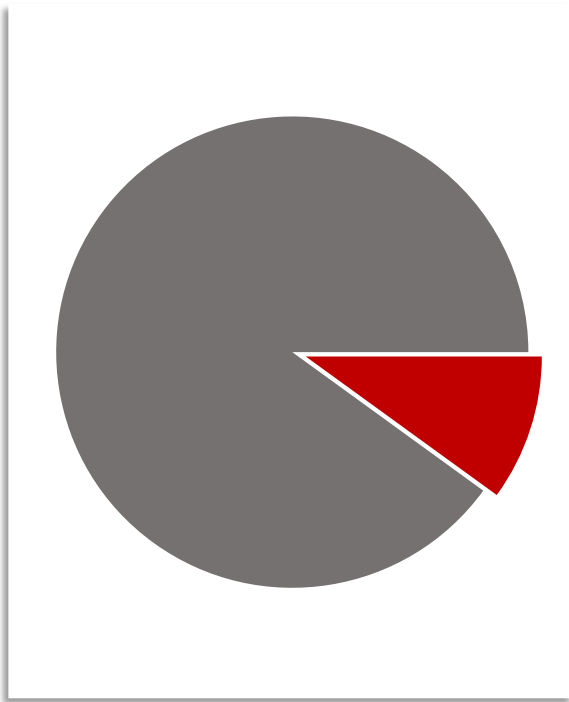
The Gun Shop Project



www.nhfsc.org or elaine.m.frank@dartmouth.edu

Start of the Project

- **Three** suicide deaths in **six days** within hours of gun purchase from a single NH gun shop



About 8% of NH Firearm Suicides
Used a newly acquired gun

Mission

Engage gun community in suicide prevention

- Educate shops and ranges about steps to avoid selling/renting a firearm to a suicidal customer
- Educate their customers about making firearms less accessible if a friend or family member is suicidal
- Promote National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to link with local crisis centers and other emergency services (1-800-273-TALK)



New Hampshire Firearm Retailers:

Your vigilance could save a life!

Close to one in ten firearm suicides in New Hampshire occur with guns purchased within that same week, usually within *hours*. While not all suicides are preventable, you could reduce the odds that a gun bought at your store today is used in a suicide tomorrow.

Signs that a potential buyer could be suicidal

Note: None of these signs clearly indicate someone is suicidal, but if any are present (especially if more than one is present), use extra caution in deciding whether to proceed with the sale.

- No knowledge about guns AND no interest in learning; asks no questions
- Doesn't care which gun s/he purchases or seem responsive to your questions about the purchase
- Gives unconvincing response when asked what s/he intends to use the gun for
- No interest in firearm maintenance or safety
- Mentions recent crisis, such as a divorce, job loss, or other setback
- Makes comments that could suggest suicidality (e.g. "I don't need a lot of ammunition, I won't have the gun for long.")
- Looks anxious, avoids eye contact
- Appears distraught (shaking, fighting back tears)

Options for responding to a potentially suicidal buyer

- Notify store owner or manager (if applicable) if at all uncomfortable with a prospective sale



CONCERNED ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND?

ARE THEY SUICIDAL?

- Depressed, angry, impulsive?
- Going through a relationship break-up, legal trouble, or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Acting reckless?
- Feeling trapped?

SUICIDES IN NH
far outnumber homicides

**FIREARMS ARE THE
LEADING METHOD**

**ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN
ARE MORE DEADLY**
than attempts with other methods



HOLD ON TO THEIR GUNS

- Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life.
- For other ways to help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**



GUN SAFETY RULES

11 10 COMMANDMENTS
OF GUN SAFETY

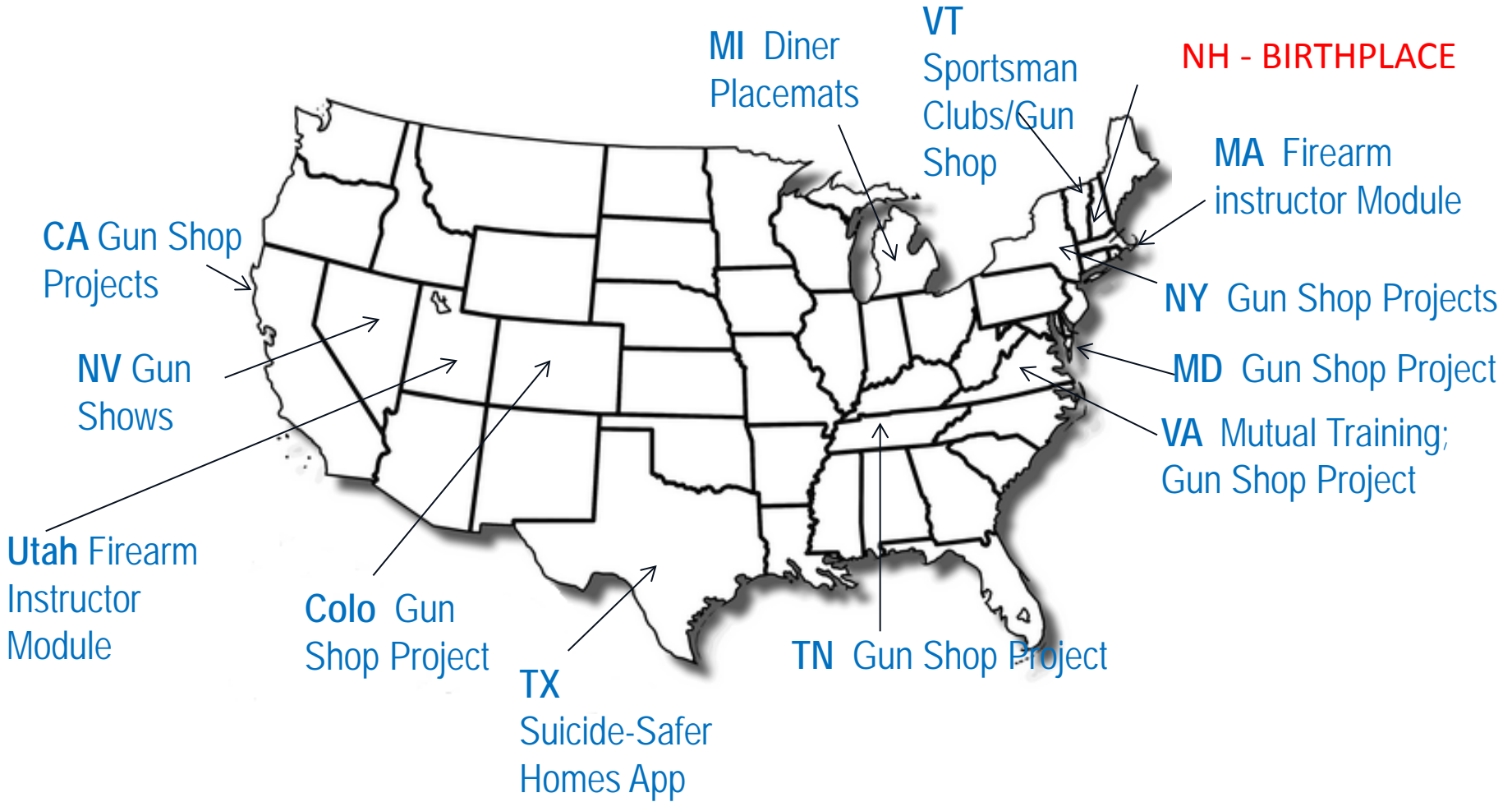
Look inside
to see
what's new!

11. Consider temporary off-site storage if a family member may be suicidal. When an emotional crisis (like a break-up, job loss, legal trouble) or a major change in someone's behavior (like depression, violence, heavy drinking) causes concern, storing guns outside the home for a while may save a life. Friends as well as some shooting clubs, police departments, or gun shops may be able to store them for you until the situation improves.

Evaluation

- 60 gun shops visited
- 48% were using at least one of the items
- Little negative feedback from customers
- Good feedback from shop owners and public

Spreading the Message





Suicide Prevention at Las Vegas Gun Show

MARYLAND LICENSED FIREARMS DEALERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

Announcement !

This is the official website of the **Maryland Licensed Firearms Dealers Association, Inc.**

It will be updated as necessary to keep it's members informed as to breaking events affecting the Second Amendment rights of Maryland gun owners.

Posted on August 8, 2014October 7, 2014 by mlfda

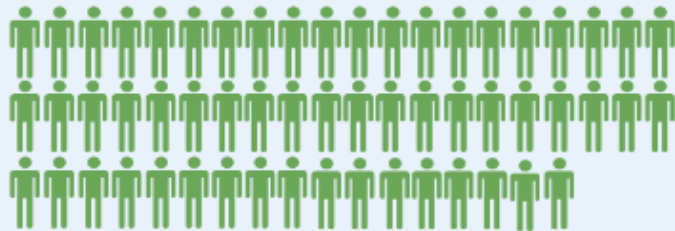
FIREARM DEATHS IN COLORADO

Over the past several years, unintentional firearm deaths in Colorado have averaged less than 10 per year, thanks largely to increased awareness of gun safety. Unfortunately, Colorado still has a tragically high number of suicide deaths by firearms - more than 3,367 between 2005 and 2012.

 For every 1 unintentional firearm death,



there were 15 firearm homicides



and 57 firearm suicides.

For every unintentional firearm death from 2005-2012, there were approximately 15 firearm homicides and 57 firearm suicides.

The first step to reduce these numbers is to follow the 11 commandments of gun safety. The latest addition addresses suicide prevention. Firearms are the leading method of suicide in Colorado, contributing to about half of all suicides.

If a family member is going through a difficult period (like depression, a relationship break-up, or drug problem), make sure they can't get to your guns. To learn ways to get help for them, call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK [8255]**.



Adapted from:



GUN SAFETY RULES

11
10 COMMANDMENTS
OF GUN SAFETY

*Look inside
to see
what's new!*



CONCERNED ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND?

ARE THEY SUICIDAL?

- Depressed, angry, irritable?
- Going through a relationship breakup, legal trouble, or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Acting restless?
- Feeling trapped?

FIREARMS ARE THE LEADING METHOD ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN ARE MORE DEADLY
(than attempts with other methods)

HOLD ON TO THEIR GUNS

- Putting fire and disease between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life.
- For other ways to help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

HURON COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

**Scheurer Family Medical Center
Redi-Care Clinic**
168 N. Caseville Road, Pigeon

Use Earth Medical Arts Building Entrance
989-453-3223

Monday - Thursday: 3:00 pm-8:00 pm
Friday: 1:00 pm-8:00 pm
Saturday - Sunday: 9:00 am-3:00 pm



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WELCOME HUNTERS - 2013

The Black Crow Company, LLC invites you to join us for our ... **CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE** November 15 and 16
(See our ad in this placement for more details!)




IMPORTANT DEER HUNTING DATES

- **Archery Season** is open Oct. 1 - Nov. 14 and Dec. 1 - Jan. 1
- **Firearm Season** is Nov. 15 - Nov. 30
- **Muzzleloading Season** is Dec. 6 - Dec. 22 for Zone 3
- **Late Antlerless Firearm Season** is Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 on public and private land in DMU 332: Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac Counties

The entire "Thumb" area (Sanilac, Huron, and Tuscola counties) now has a late antlerless deer season.
Deer populations greatly exceed desired population levels in Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties.



HURON COUNTY PHEASANT HUNTING DATES
Regular Season: Oct. 20 - Nov. 14
Late Season: Dec. 1 - Jan. 1

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packaged **bp Bad Axe Party Store**  **The Black Crow Comp.**

Placemats Used in Diners in Bad Axe, MI, during hunting season.

Conclusions

- Suicide prevention is a good fit for gun owners who can be a powerful ally
- Most of us are neither strongly pro-gun or strongly anti-gun but almost everyone is

ANTI-SUICIDE

- Getting across the idea that suicide is preventable is essential!
- How can you get the message out?

Putting time and distance
between a suicidal person and a
gun may save their life!

Resources

-Free CALM online course is available at: www.sprc.org

Click on **Training Institute** and choose **online courses**

Finally select **CALM**

- Information about the Gun Shop Project is at:

www.nhfsc.org

- Means Matter info is at www.meansmatter.org

Questions? Elaine.m.frank@Dartmouth.edu