

# Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



## Home Healthy - Home Safe

March 2021

### Reducing Access to Lethal Means Saves Lives

Firearms are the most lethal and most common method of suicide in the U.S. More people who die by suicide use a gun than all other methods combined. Suicide attempts with a firearm are almost always fatal, while those with other methods are less likely to kill. Nine out of ten people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide later.

Every U.S. study that has examined the relationship has found that access to firearms is a risk factor for suicides. Firearm owners are not more suicidal than non-firearm owners; rather, their suicide attempts are more likely to be fatal. Many suicide attempts are made with little planning during a short-term crisis period. If highly lethal means are made less available to impulsive attempters and they substitute less lethal means, or temporarily postpone their attempt, the odds are increased that they will survive. Studies in a variety of countries have indicated that when access to a highly lethal and leading suicide method is reduced, the overall suicide rate drops driven by a drop in the restricted method.

- [Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis.](#)
- [Intent isn't all that determines whether an attempter lives or dies; means also matter.](#)
- [90% of attempters who survive do NOT go on to die by suicide later.](#)
- [Access to firearms is a risk factor for suicide.](#)
- [Firearms used in youth suicide usually belong to a parent](#)
- [Reducing access to lethal means saves lives.](#)

Not all clinicians and crisis centers are trained to Counsel on Access to Lethal Means. Please take it upon yourself to remove or minimize access to lethal means. If you are helping someone who is suicidal, if they have guns ask them if they would like you to keep their guns safe until they feel better.

**HEALTH OR SAFETY REMINDER: "Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most."  
— Buddha**

#### Discussion Points / Question:

1. Does access to firearms matter when it comes to living or dying during a suicide attempt?
2. What are some ways to ask for permission to reduce access to firearms during a crisis?
3. Are there any scenarios in which you would forceably take away someone's access to firearms?