



Safety Not Stigma: Reframing the Way We Talk about Guns and Violence

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Gun Deaths and Mental Illnesses

- The link between gun deaths and mental illness is through suicide.



Groups at Elevated Risk of Future Violence

- Convicted of a violent misdemeanor
- Subject to a temporary domestic violence restraining order
- Two or more intoxicated driving charges in a period of five years.
- Two or more misdemeanor crimes involving a controlled substance in a period of five years.



Most Homicides Are Not by People with Mental Illnesses

- If you were to suddenly cure schizophrenia, bipolar, and depression overnight, violent crime in the US would fall by only 4 percent.
- And much of this relates to co-occurring substance use.



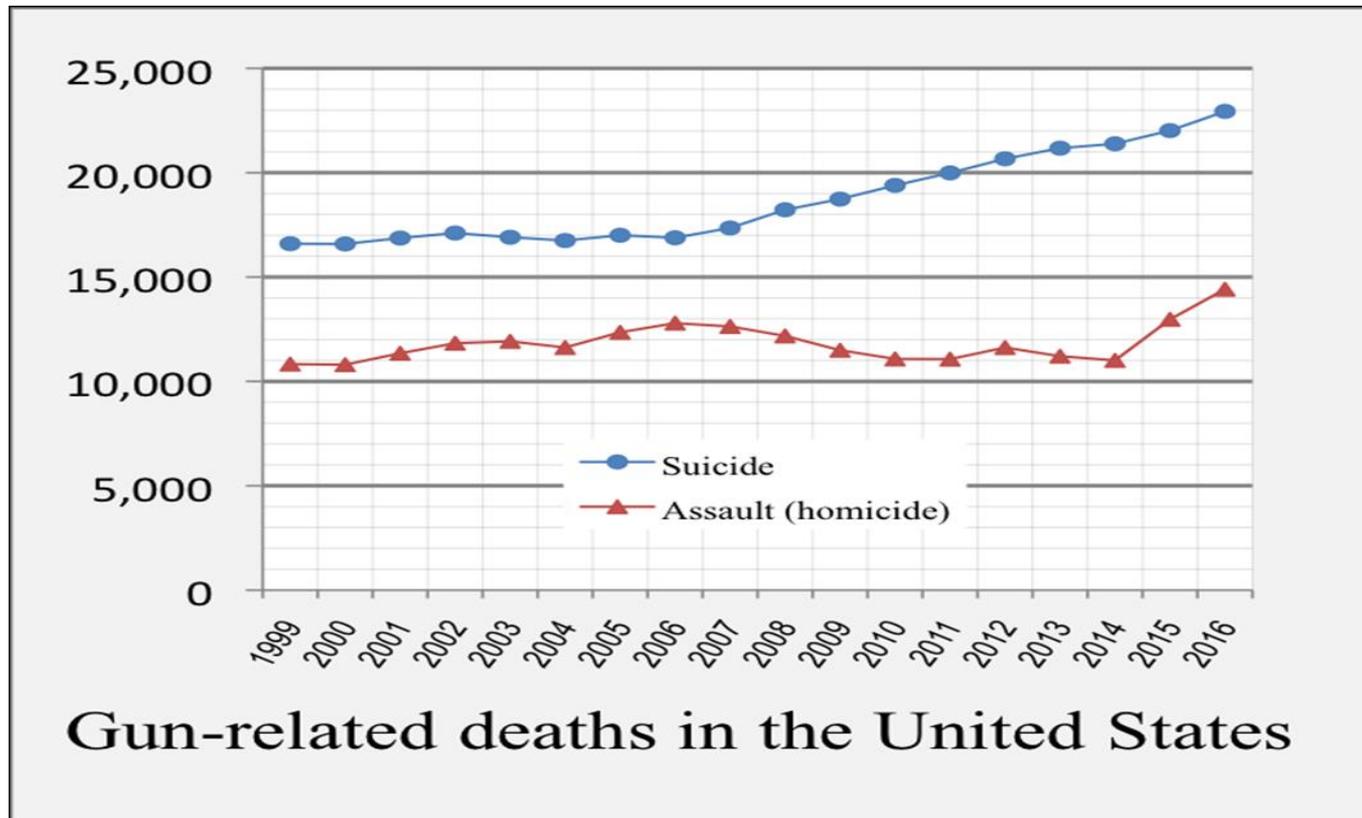
This is True for Mass Shootings as Well

- In one study only 52 out of the 235 killers, or about 22 percent, had a mental illness.
- Another study of shooters who killed four or more people since 1966 found that 14.8 percent had been diagnosed with a psychotic disorder.
- Mass shootings accounted for only one-tenth of one percent of homicide deaths.



Most Firearm Deaths are Suicides

- Since 2000, 500,000 gun deaths; 59% were suicides, and 37% were homicides.

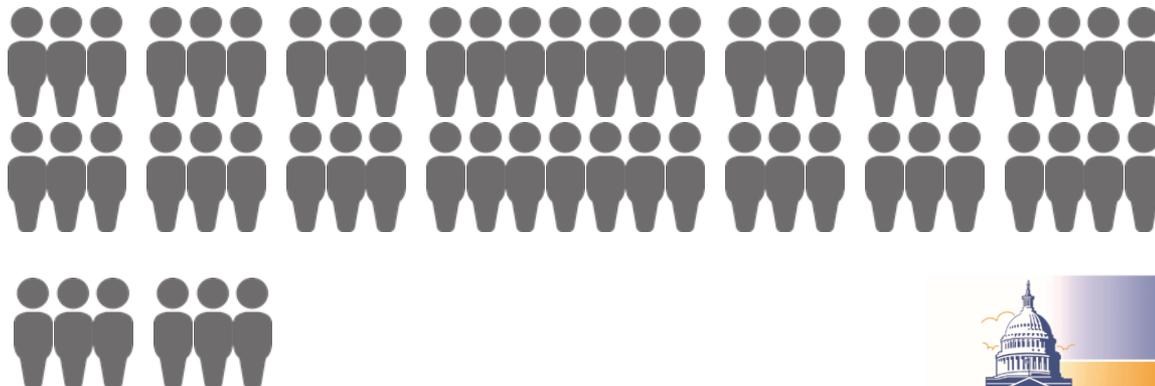


Most Firearm Deaths are Suicides

- 59: Number who died in the Las Vegas shooting:



- 58: Number who die by suicide using firearms each day:



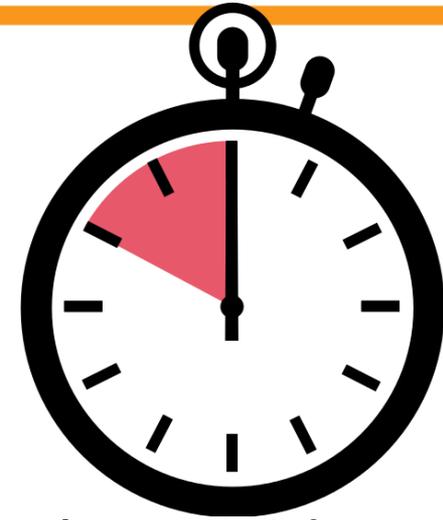
Most People Who Die By Suicide Have a Mental Illness/SUD

- The Violent Death Reporting System finds that 46% of those who die by suicide have an identified mental health disorder.
- Psychological autopsies have reported higher numbers, up to 90%.
- Those with substance abuse disorders are six times more likely to complete suicide than those without.



Means Matter

- Many suicide attempts are impulsive. Studies show a quarter of serious attempters deliberate for five minutes or less following a precipitating event.
- 90% of attempters who survive will not die by suicide at a later date.
- Firearms have the highest lethality of any means: over 85%.

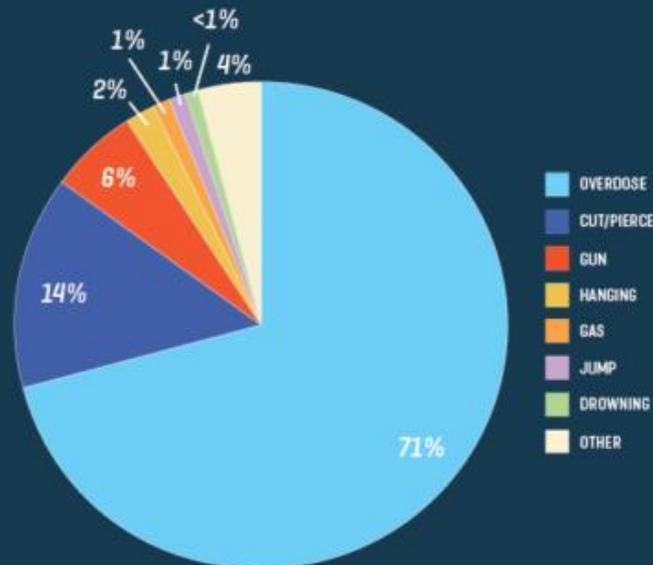


Most Suicide Deaths are from Guns

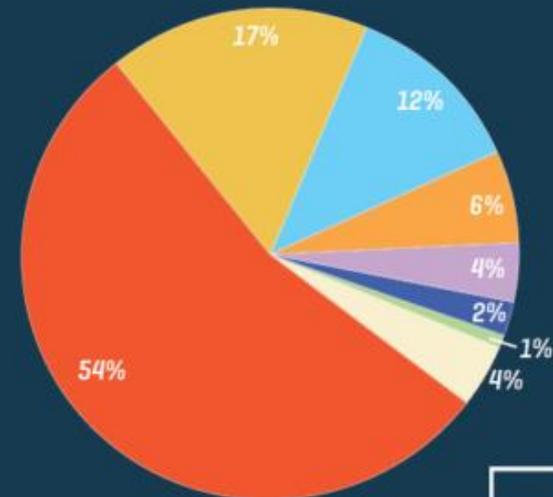
**GUNS AREN'T THE MOST COMMON WAY TO ATTEMPT SUICIDE.
BUT THEY ARE THE MOST FATAL.**

Firearms account for more suicide deaths than every other means combined.

PERCENTAGE OF ALL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS



PERCENTAGE OF ALL FATAL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS



SOURCE: American Journal of Public Health



There is a Positive Relationship Between Access to Guns and Suicide Deaths

- Anything that delays the ability of a suicidal person to have access to a firearm can protect them against suicide.
- This doesn't mean that gun ownership has to be restricted, just access at times of risk.



Gun Ownership Rates Correlate with Suicide Rates

- For every 10 percentage point increase in a state's gun ownership rate, there was an associated increase of 3.3 deaths per 100,000 among firearm-owning men, and a .5 increase among women.
- A 10 percent drop in the percentage of households owning guns was associated with an 8.3 percent decline in overall suicide rates for young people.



Delays in the Purchasing Process Correlate with Suicide Rates

- An examination by the New England Journal of Medicine found that in the first week after purchase, the firearm suicide rate among California handgun purchasers was 57 times higher than the statewide rate.
- States that impose a delay between the moment when someone buys a gun and when they can bring it home had 51 percent fewer gun suicides per capita compared to those without waiting periods.



Delays in the Purchasing Process Correlate with Suicide Rates

- Connecticut passed a law in 1995 that requires people to apply for a permit with local law enforcement and take eight hours of gun safety training before they can buy a firearm. In the 10 years after its passage, the rate of gun-related suicide in Connecticut was 15% lower than what researchers predict it would have been had the law not been passed.



Delays in the Purchasing Process Correlate with Suicide Rates

- Missouri repealed a law in 2007 that required people to apply with the local police for permission to buy a gun. The gun-related suicide rate in Missouri was 16% higher from 2007 to 2011 than researchers predict it would have been, based on the rates in the comparable states of North Carolina and Nebraska.



Permit and Licensing Processes Also Impact Suicide Rates

A 2011 study of the impact of state firearm regulations from 1995 to 2004 found that gun permit and licensing requirements significantly lowered suicide rates among males.



Safe Storage Lowers Suicide Rates

- Laws requiring gun owners to store their firearms with a locking device are associated with 68 percent fewer gun suicides per capita than states without them.



Positive Steps

- MHA is engaging in efforts to work with the gun-owners and sellers to promote gun safety and prevent suicide.
- Key efforts in working with this group include:
 - The Gun Shop Project; helping sellers identify and respond to purchasers who may be suicidal.
 - Safe storage of firearms.



Jean Papalia

Retired, Madison Police Department



What Suicide Prevention could learn from Laundry Pods



But would you talk about firearms?

Common reasons for not participating in the Gun Shop Project

- making a gun inaccessible does not reduce suicide
- there is no way to help a suicidal person
- the topic of suicide may make customers uncomfortable
- the belief that materials were anti-gun.



94% of Americans think suicide is preventable

afsp.org
actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org

NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

What to do with guns when a person may be in crisis.

FACT: Safe Storage of a firearm for a loved one is a critical way to get them safely through a crisis period and is proven to save lives.

What to do when a person is in crisis? When there is an emotional crisis (like a break-up, job loss, legal trouble) or a major change in someone's behavior (like depression or anger, more drinking) that causes concern, storing guns outside the home until the situation improves may save a life.

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Options for Gun Storage

Using the guidelines below, you can help a person in crisis.

- Turn over all firearms to a trusted family member or friend who lives elsewhere. Be sure all firearms are unloaded before transport.
- Contact your local gun shop and ask if they are willing to store the firearms. Tell them that you need temporary storage during a crisis.

The following gun shops will accept firearms for storage in a safe. A small fee is charged for a safety check.

Essential Shooting Supplies

2766 Brandywein Lane, Mount Horeb, WI 53572
Chuck Lovelace: (608) 437-3771

Mountain Man Guns

N3062 Asje Road, Cambridge, WI 53523 Daniel Yeager: (608) 424-3792

- Rent a storage facility and secure the firearm there. Ensure the keys or combinations are not available to the person in crisis.
- If it is not possible to get the guns out of the house, lock up all the unloaded firearms in a hard sided gun case. Remove ammunition from the home or lock in a separate location.
- Use cable gun locks. They are available from healthcare facilities and local law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement can assist in unloading weapons and securing them with cable gun locks.

Safe Communities Sustaining Partners:
LIFESAVER (\$20,000 and above)
• American Family Insurance • City



But would you talk about firearms?

I will talk about firearms!

- Because the alcohol industry not only talks about drunk driving, they started the designated driver program.
- Because 1/3 of American homes have a firearm—this isn't an off-limit topic.
- 90% of the people who attempt suicide and live, don't go on to die by suicide (it's like a seatbelt in a crash) so yes, there is a way to help a suicidal person by letting them survive and get well.
- 1/3 of the gun shop owners contacted for the guns shop project knew someone who had died by an impulsive suicide purchase
- “Most gun groups have a culture around firearm safety, around protecting the family, so extending that to suicide prevention can be a natural fit,” Cathy Barber for Mean Matter



**94% of Americans
think suicide is
preventable**

afsp.org
actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org

NATIONAL ACTION ALLIANCE
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



Positive Steps

- The following laws are associated with lower suicide rates:
 - Universal Background Checks
 - Waiting Periods for Handgun Purchases
 - Licensing or registration requirements.



Positive Steps

- Lethal Violence Protection Order (LVPO)
 - Also known as ‘extreme violence protection order’ and “red flag law”.
 - Creates a process for firearms to be removed from individuals at risk of harming themselves or others; not based on diagnosis.
 - Requires review by court to assure due process.
 - Laws vary as to who may initiate: law enforcement, family members, others.



Positive Steps

- A study found that the LVPO was most often used to take guns away from people at risk of suicide, not homicide.
- About 44 percent of people who had their guns taken away received psychiatric treatment they weren't getting before.
- The LVPO likely prevented one suicide for every 10 to 20 removals.



Positive Steps

- LVPO can be a helpful tool for law enforcement when other options don't work.
- Concerns about law being abused are not valid.
- Law enforcement regularly needs to assess dangerousness and risk; this is not a new role for them.





MHA Screening

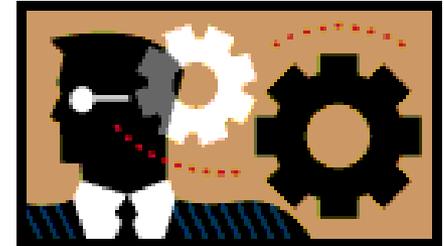
Debbie Plotnick, VP for
Mental Health and
Systems Advocacy

MHIA
Mental Health America
B4Stage4

Screening Promotes Recovery

People who screen regularly are:

- More attuned to their symptoms;
- More knowledgeable about their conditions;
- Better able to communicate with their provider;
- Able to recognize improvement early in treatment;
- More aware of the warning signs of relapse;
- Better able to self-manage their illness.



MHA Online Screening Tools, 2016

Depression (PHQ-9)

Anxiety (GAD-7)

Bipolar (MDQ)

PTSD (PC-PTSD)

Youth Screen (PSC-YR)

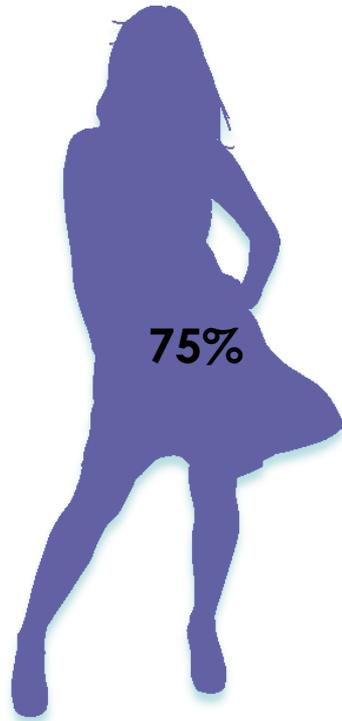
Parent Screen (PSC)

Alcohol and Substance Use Screen (CAGE-AID)

Psychosis Screen (Ultra-High Risk) (PQ-B)

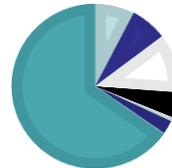
Work Health Survey





RACE/ETHNICITY N=751488

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic or Latino
- More than one of the above
- Native American or American Indian
- Other



25%



Bending the screening curve to lower suicide rates



Without Pointing Fingers

- MHA is opening a national dialogue in collaboration with people who own guns, and people who sell guns
- Hoping to get more men (especially middle aged white men, and family members) to screen
- Getting the message out that it's OK to reach out for help for yourself or someone you care about
- And it's OK to ask someone you trust to hold your guns (if you or someone in your family) is not feeling OK and there's guns in your house



Questions?



Contact Us



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Redirecting the Mental Health and Gun Violence Conversation From Mass Shootings to Suicide

Jeffrey W. Swanson , Ph.D.

Published Online: 9 Nov 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201800365>

Psychiatry Online

Guns, Public Health and Mental Illness: An Evidence-Based Approach for State Policy, Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy, Dec. 2, 2013.

Ten Essential Facts about Guns and Suicide

The Trace, Sept. 6, 2016

<https://www.thetrace.org/2016/09/10-facts-guns-suicide-prevention-month/>

Gun Violence not a mental health issue, experts say, pointing to ‘anger,’ suicides.

Emanuella Grinberg, CNN

January 25, 2016

<https://www.cnn.com/2016/01/25/health/gun-violence-mental-health-issue/index.html>

Stop Blaming Mental Illness for Mass Shootings, Dylan Matthews, March 14, 2018, Vox

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/11/9/16618472/mental-illness-gun-homicide-mass-shootings>

Chart: Gun Related Deaths in the United States

Wikipedia: By RCraig09 - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

From data compiled on the National Safety Council (NSC) website:

<https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/home-and-community/safety-topics/firearms/data-details/>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=72121545>

US Mass Shootings, 1982–2018: Data From Mother Jones’ Investigation. San Francisco, Mother Jones, 2018. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data>.

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Dragisic, T., Dickov, A., Dickov, V., & Mijatovic, V. (2015, June). Drug Addiction as Risk for Suicide Attempts. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from

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Referenced in Mental Health America: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/suicide#12>

Means Matter website: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>