

Reducing Suicide: The Means Matter Campaign

Innovations in Translating Injury Research Into Effective Prevention

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Unintentional Firearm Fatalities

- Sara Solnick (UVM)



Unintentional Firearm Deaths to Children

Importance of good data

Data from the NVDRS



Unintentional Firearm Deaths to Children

Claims of gun advocates:

- “There are only 60 unintentional firearm deaths each year to children (age 0-14)”
- “About two thirds of accidental deaths to children are not shots fired by other little kids but rather adult males with criminal backgrounds”

John Lott

Actual Unintentional Firearm Deaths to Children (age 0-14)

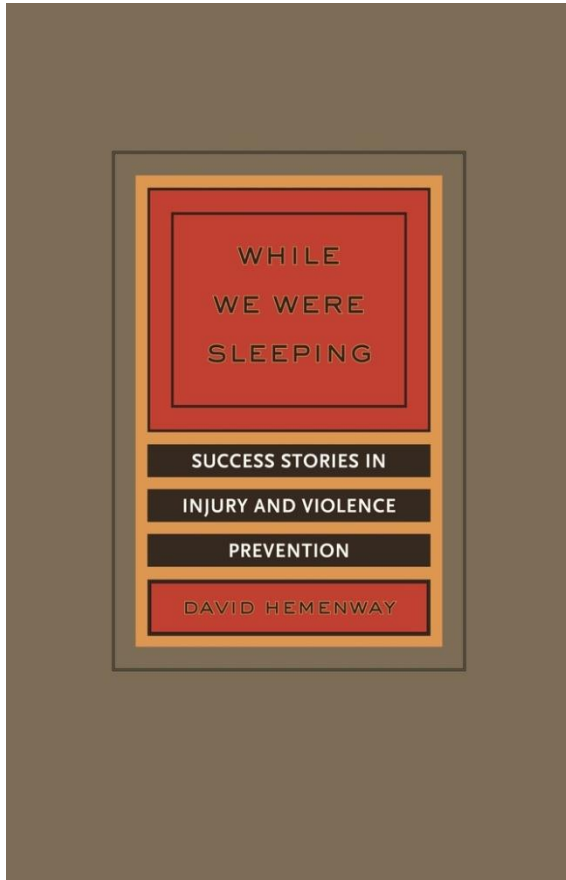
1. Some 110 deaths/year (80% more than Vitals reports)
Vital Statistics good for overall gun deaths, not good classifying
unintentional shootings vs. homicides of children.

2. Children killing children
1/3 self inflicted;
1/3 other children as shooters;
1/6 older teenagers as shooters;
most of the rest are parents as shooters

Unintentional Child Firearm Deaths

	Deaths/million years	% Male	% Other Inflicted	% At Friends House
0-1	0.4	29%	86%	0%
2-4	1.6	88%	29%	0%
5-10	1.1	72%	69%	0%
11-12	2.1	83%	67%	39%
13-14	2.5	95%	69%	45%
				Hemenway & Solnick Injury Epidemiology 2015

Translating Injury Research Into Effective Prevention



“While We Were Sleeping” Success Stories in Injury Prevention

U Cal Press (2009)

David Hemenway, PhD

Harvard Injury Control Research Center

Suicide Prevention



Without changing any laws,
Without changing anyone's mental health

The Means Matter Campaign

- Suicide is the leading cause of injury death in the United States
- Half of all suicides are firearm suicides



Traditionally suicide prevention has focused on who takes their life, when, where, and especially why.



We are beginning to understand that how people attempt suicide plays a crucial role in whether they live or die.

Sri Lanka & Pesticides

- Pesticides are the leading suicide method in Sri Lanka.
- The most highly human-toxic pesticides were banned in the mid to late 1990s.
- Suicide rates dropped 50% from 1996 to 2005.
- Nonfatal pesticide attempts, and suicide by other methods, did not drop.



Britain & Domestic Gas

- Before 1960, domestic gas was the leading method of suicide in England and Wales.
- By 1970, almost all domestic gas in the UK was non-toxic.
- Suicide rates dropped by about a third.
- The drop was driven by a drop in gas suicides; non-gas suicides increased slightly.



Israeli Defense Force (IDF) & Firearms

- Almost all 18-21 year-olds Israelis serve.
- In the early 2000s, IDF focused on preventing suicides—90% by firearm; many during weekend leave.
- In 2006, IDF required soldiers to leave weapons on base during weekend leaves.
- The suicide rate decreased by 40%.
- Weekend suicides dropped significantly.
- Weekday suicides did not.

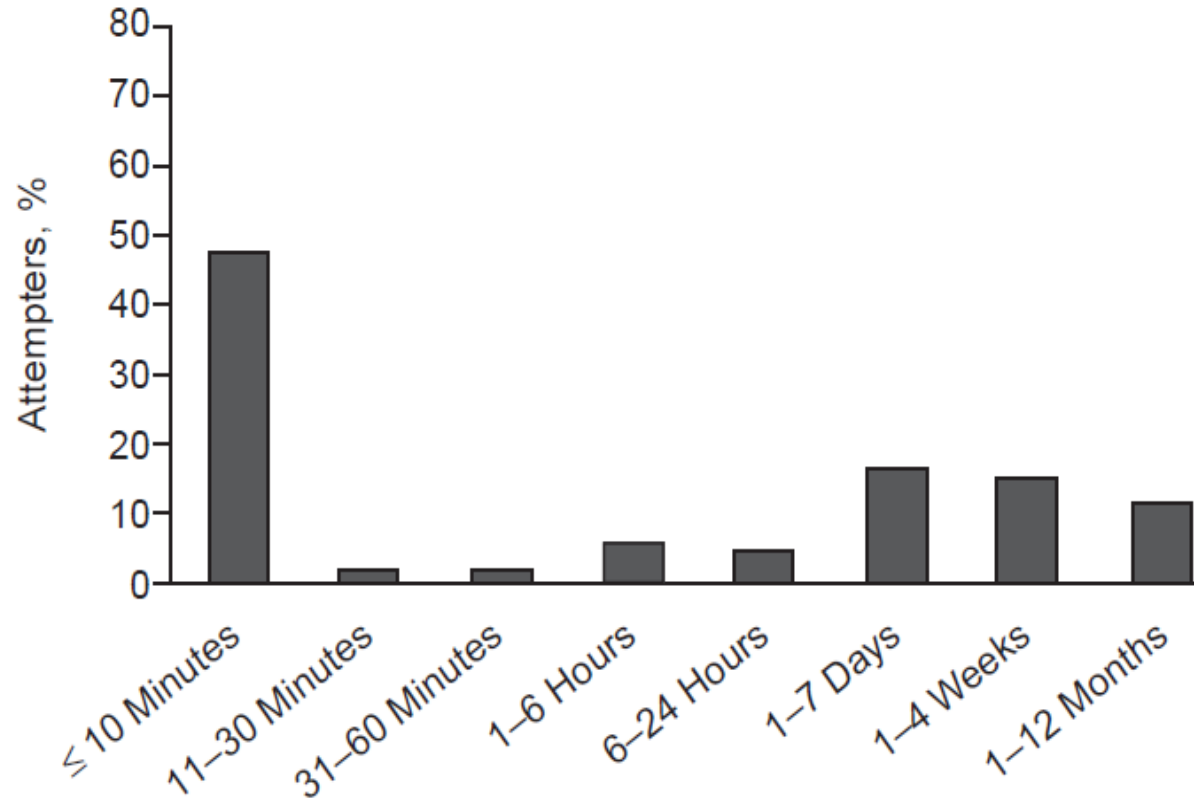


How could means possibly matter??

-
1. The acute phase of a suicidal crisis is *often* (not always) brief.

Duration of Suicidal Crises

Time Between 1st^s Thought of Suicide and Attempt



Deisenhammer et al. 2009. Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 70(1):19-24.

WHO?

WHAT?

WHEN?

WHERE?

WHY?

HOW?

When do people take their lives?

Among people who nearly died in a suicide attempt, 24% said less than 5 minutes elapsed between deciding on suicide and making the attempt.

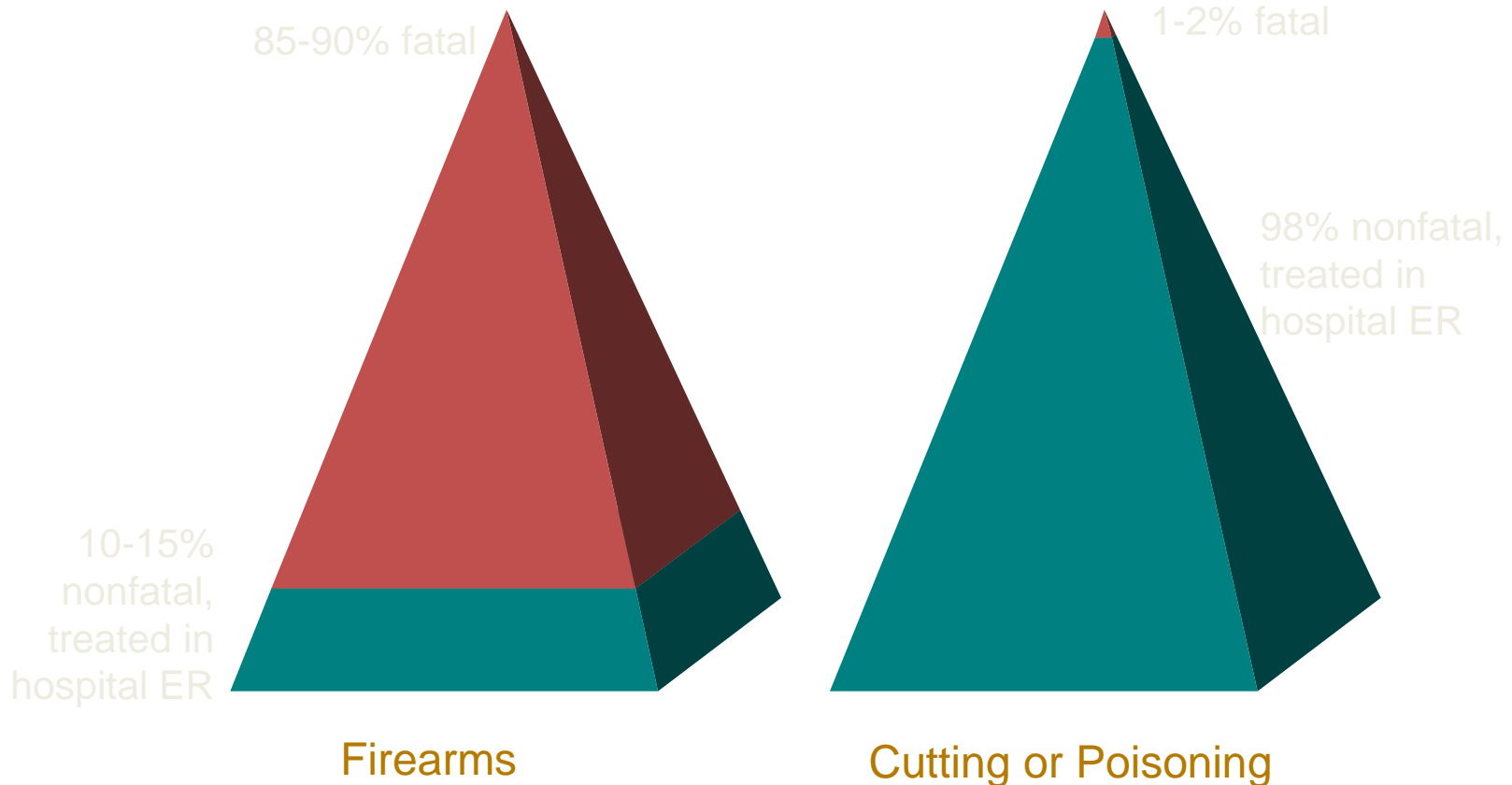
Another 47% said under an hour.

Only 13% said one day or more.

2. Lethality varies greatly by method.

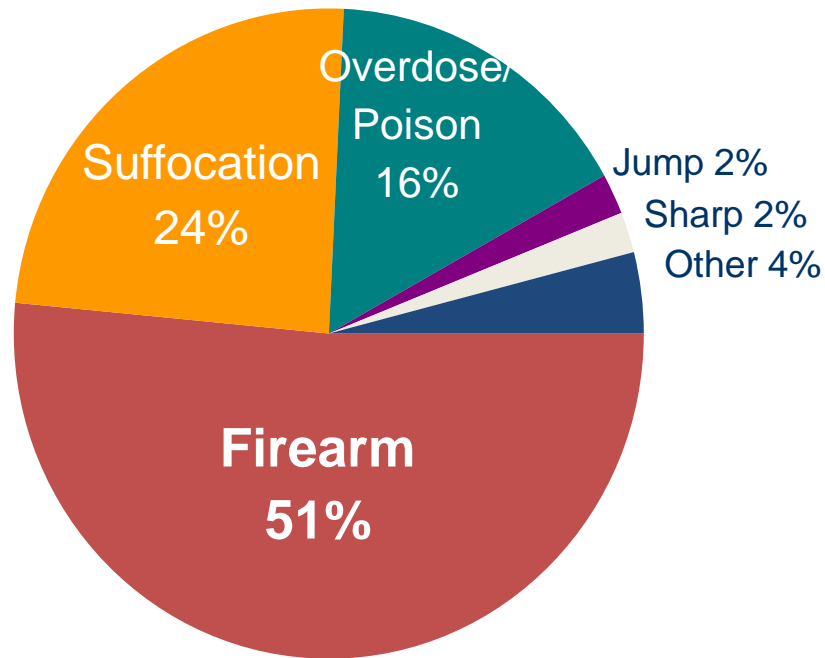
The lethality of the method easily at hand during a suicidal crisis plays a role in whether the person lives or dies. Intent matters, but means also matter.

Self-Harm Case Fatality Rates

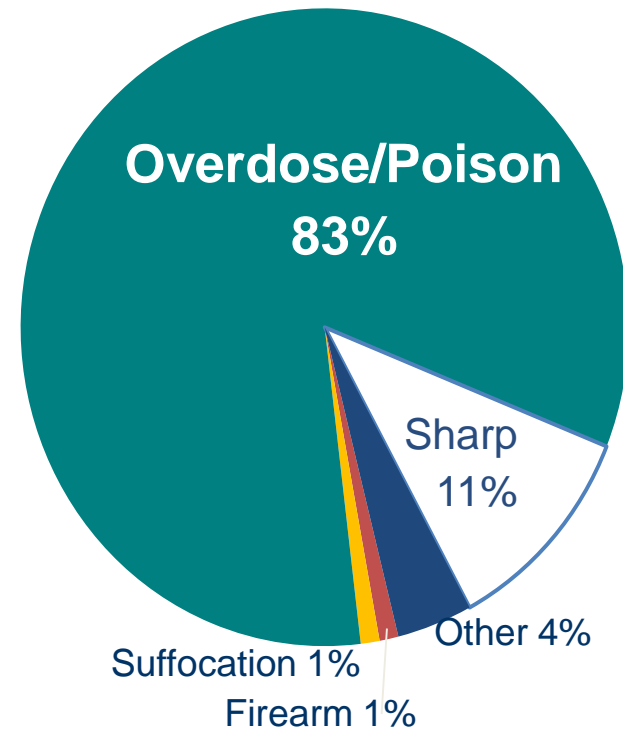


NOTE: People's perception that overdose and cutting are more lethal may indirectly save lives. Broadly publicizing their actual lethality may be ill-advised.

Methods of Self-Harm, U.S.



Suicide



Nonfatal Self-harm

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

3. But Is It Truly a Life Saved?

- History of suicide attempt is a risk factor for suicide.
- What proportion of serious attempters eventually die by suicide?

75%

45%

25%

10%

Review of 90 studies: 90% or more of attempters did not later kill themselves, even those making very serious attempts like jumping in front of a train. 20-25% made a nonfatal reattempt.

What is it about Firearms?

• Leading U.S. method.
• Highly lethal.
• AccessibleLead

– **lethal.** **Leading U.S. method.**

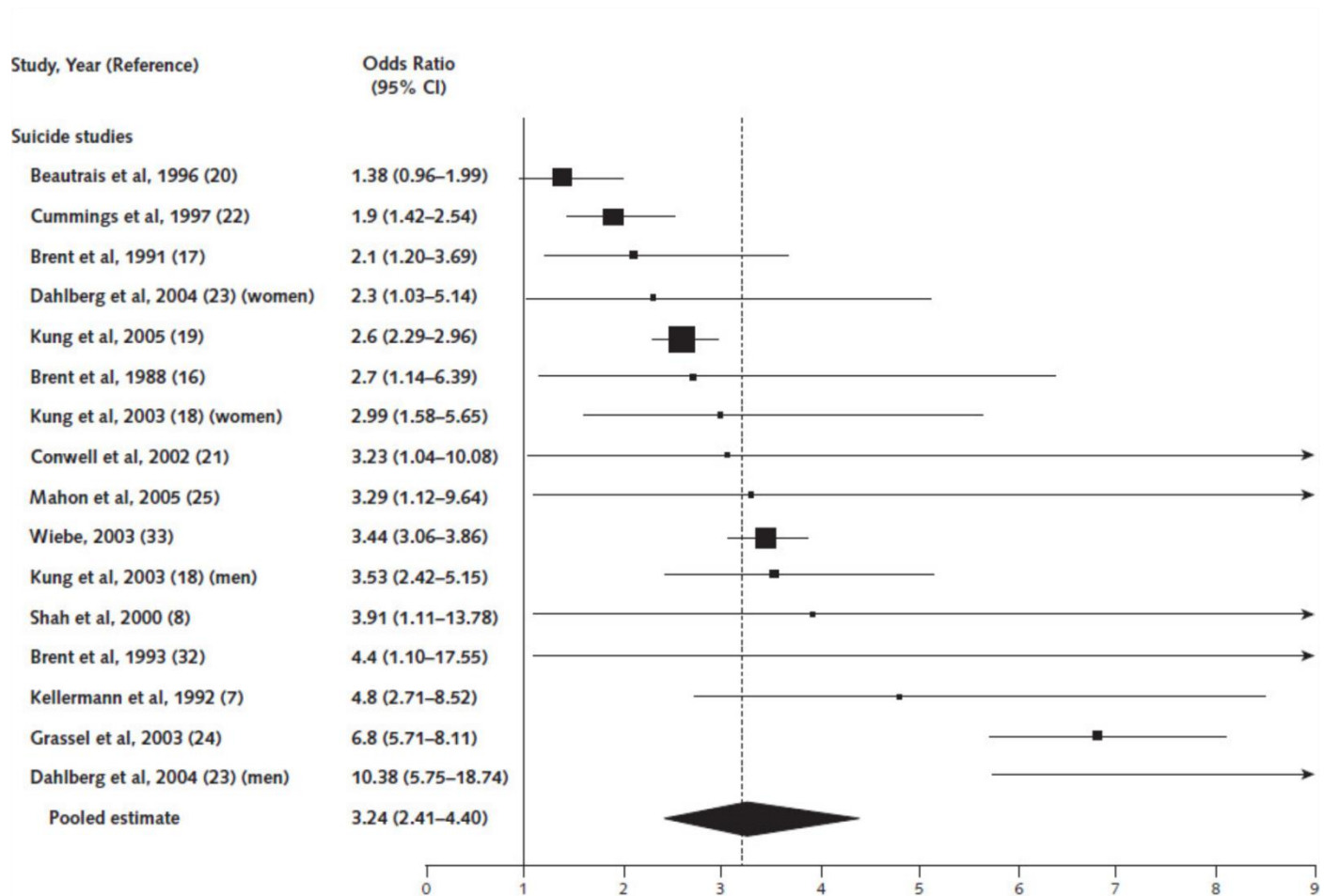
- **Highly lethal.**
- **Accessible.** >1/3 of homes have guns
- .
- **Culturally “acceptable.”** Some methods, like fire, are accessible but unacceptable to most U.S. attempters.
- **Fast, irreversible.** No chance for rescue or change of heart once the trigger is pulled--unlike nearly all other methods.
- **Risk factor.** All U.S. case control studies that have examined it (15+) find firearm access a risk factor for suicide.

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Scientific Evidence Overwhelming

- Sixteen case-control studies



Ecological Studies: State Suicide Rates

	High Gun States*	Low Gun States**
Population	31.5 million	31.3 million
% household with firearms***	50%	15%
Suicides 2008-2009		
Firearm suicides	?	?
Non-firearm suicides	4,397	4,341
Total suicides	?	?
Suicide attempts (est.) 2008-2009	246,000	303,400

* LA, UT, OK, IA, TN, KY, AL, MS, ID, ND, WV, AR, AK, SD, MO, WY

** HI, NJ, MA, RI, CT, NY

*** Estimate based on 2004 BRFSS. No more recent state-level data are available.

Variation in State Suicide Rates

	High Gun States*	Low Gun States**
Population	31.5 million	31.3 million
% household with firearms***	50%	15%
Suicides 2008-2009		
Firearm suicides	7,492	1,697
Non-firearm suicides	4,397	4,341
Total suicides	11,889	6,038
Suicide attempts (est.) 2008-2009	246,000	303,400

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Maybe it's not the guns...

- Perhaps the higher suicide risk has nothing to do with gun access. Maybe people who have guns are at higher risk for suicide for another reason, like living in a rural area.

Are people who live in homes with guns more likely to have...		
...a mental health problem?	Yes	No
...seriously considered suicide?	Yes	No
...attempted suicide?	Yes	No

Disseminating the Message

- Providers
 - Gatekeepers
 - Gun-owning Community
- Lethal Means Counseling
- Expanding firearm safety to include suicide prevention
-
- The diagram consists of a list of three blue bullet points on the left: 'Providers', 'Gatekeepers', and 'Gun-owning Community'. To the right of these points are two red text blocks. A red bracket on the left side of the top two points ('Providers' and 'Gatekeepers') connects them to the text 'Lethal Means Counseling'. A second red bracket on the left side of the bottom point ('Gun-owning Community') connects it to the text 'Expanding firearm safety to include suicide prevention'.

Training: CALM-Online

- Counseling on Access to Lethal Means – Free online training by Harvard, Dartmouth, & SPRC <http://training.sprc.org>



The screenshot shows the SPRC website with a navigation menu (Home, About, Courses, FAQ, Contact) and a main banner image of a diverse group of people. Below the banner is the heading "SUICIDE PREVENTION ONLINE TRAINING" and a welcome message. The "ENHANCED COURSES" section highlights the "COUNSELING ON ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS (CALM)" course, which includes a description and two buttons: "ENTER COURSE" and "DESCRIPTION".

SPRC
SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER

You are not logged in [login]

Home About Courses FAQ Contact

SUICIDE PREVENTION ONLINE TRAINING

Welcome to SPRC's online training site. Our mission is to train service providers, educators, health professionals, public officials, and community-based coalitions to develop effective suicide prevention programs and policies.

SPRC's online courses are listed below. All courses are available free of charge and can be completed at your own pace.

ENHANCED COURSES

COUNSELING ON ACCESS TO LETHAL MEANS (CALM)



Access to lethal means can determine whether a person who is suicidal dies or survives. This course is designed for providers who counsel people at risk for suicide, primarily mental health and medical providers, but also clergy and social service providers. The first module explains why reducing access to lethal methods of self-harm saves lives. The second module teaches practical skills on when and how to ask suicidal clients about their access to lethal means and how to work with them and their families to reduce their access.

ENTER COURSE

DESCRIPTION

Engaging Gun Owners

- Gun owners and their families are dying by suicide at higher rates than non-gun owners.
 - Like older white men, people with family history of suicide, etc., gun owners are “our” people.
 - Do we reach them with an anti-gun agenda? No.
 - That’s like sending an anti-gay group to do suicide prevention in the gay and lesbian community.
 - Like older white men, people with family history of suicide, etc., gun owners are “our” people.
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 - If you don’t trust the messenger, you don’t trust the message.

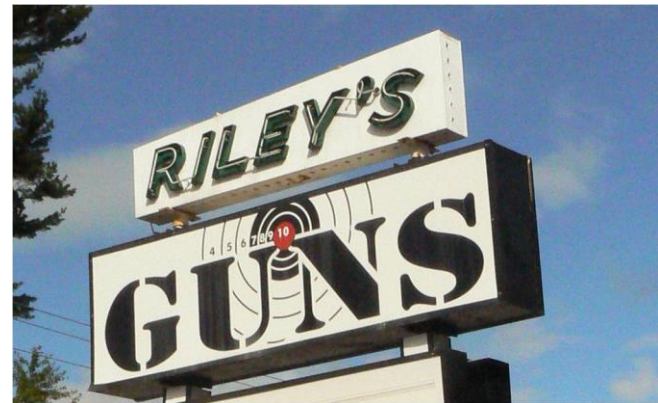
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Finding Common Ground

- Gun organizations are very safety oriented.
- Emphasis on preventing gun accidents (~500 deaths a year) and family protection.
- Expand focus to include preventing firearm suicides (21,000 deaths a year); falls within the safety culture of gun groups.
- Some gun-owner groups have already begun.

New Hampshire Gun Shop Project

- Coalition of gun retailers, suicide prevention people, and gun rights activists met together to examine whether there was a role for gun shops in preventing suicide.
- Jointly developed customer education materials for gun shops in NH with input from gun shop owners.





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 [4255]**



www.nhpsc.org

MeansMatter



SAFETY

GUN 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.

Gun Training



Training

- A) What is actually being taught?
- B) Develop and disseminate suicide prevention module(Utah, MA, New England)
- C) Forge relationships between injury prevention and firearm instruction field to improve research and practice

Means Matter website: www.meansmatter.org

Take CALM-Online — <http://training.sprc.org/>

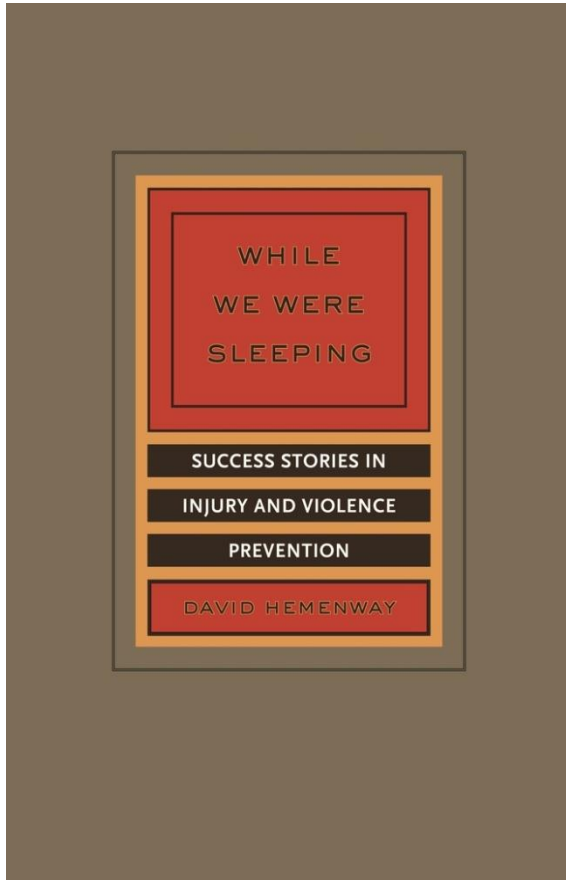
Download gunshop materials: www.nhfsc.org

Cathy Barber:

Thanks to Elaine Frank, NH Firearm Safety Coalition, Matt Miller, Deb Azrael,
and

Cathy Barber cbarber@hsph.harvard.edu

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