



Reducing Access to Lethal Means

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Objectives

Understand

Understand why lethal means counseling is critical

Learn

Learn tools for counseling patients/families

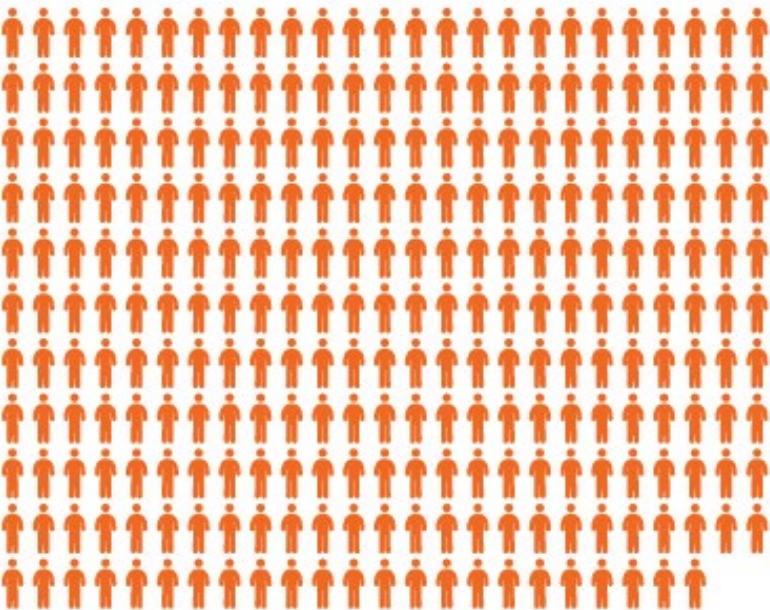
Review

Review resources for implementation

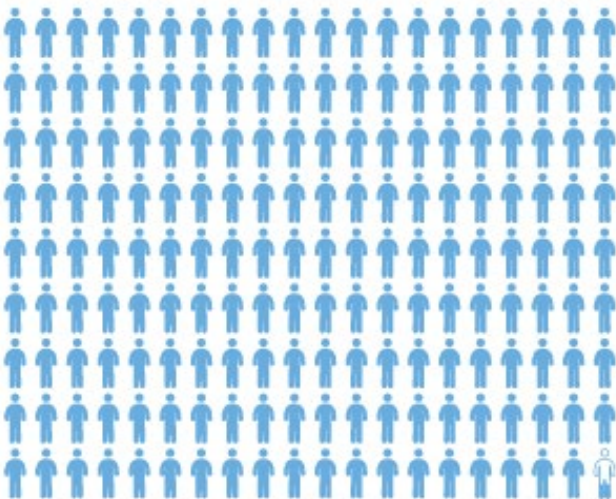
Why This Matters

46,728 lives were lost to gun violence in 2023

 = 100 gun deaths



Suicide 27,300



Homicide 17,927



Unintentional 463

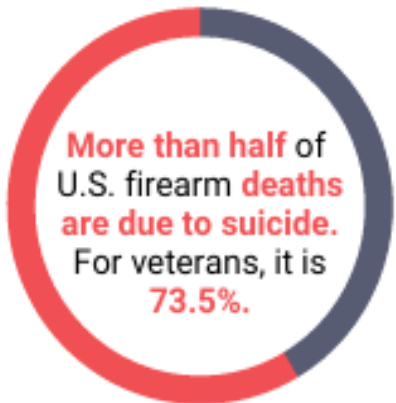


Legal Intervention* 604



Undetermined 435

* The CDC data classification "legal intervention" undercounts police-involved gun fatalities classifying them as other types of gun deaths. To address this gap, media sources like the Washington Post's Fatal Force database have tracked police-involved shootings in recent years, reporting that 1,164 people were shot and killed by police in 2023.



Firearms are the **leading cause of death** for **children and teenagers** in the U.S.



Source: Johns Hopkins Annual Firearm Mortality Report
Gun Violence Prevention Issue Brief

Maine

Deaths by Suicide by Firearm by Age Group		
Ages	2022	2021
10-24	14	14
25-44	43	56
45-64	42	52
65+	57	36
Total	156	158

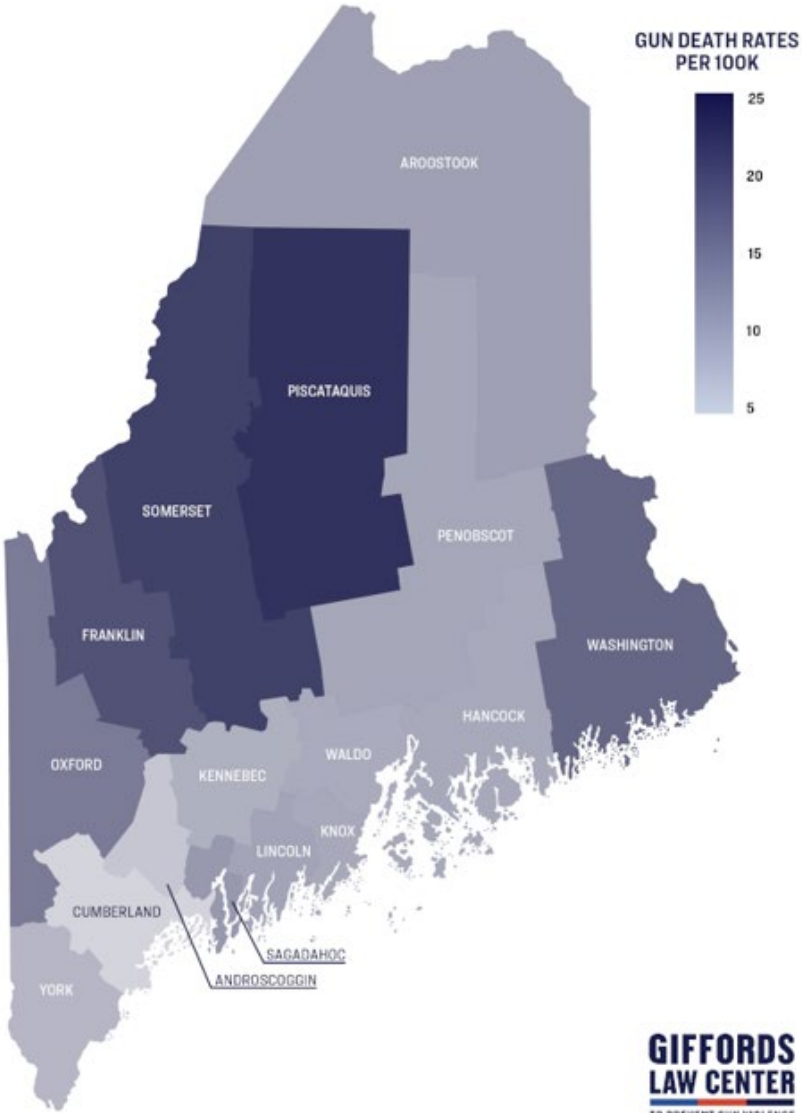
Deaths by Suicide by Firearm by Sex		
Year	2022	2021
Female	18	15
Male	138	143
Total	156	158

Source: Maine death certificates, Maine CDC Data, Research and Vital Statistics.

Gun Suicide Rate by County in Maine (2017-2021)

Suicide affects Mainers in every community across our state. In fact, 89% of gun deaths in Maine are by suicide - with 158 lives being lost in 2021 alone. These deaths are often preventable because access to guns turns a momentary impulse into an irreversible tragedy.

COUNTY	GUN SUICIDES PER 100,000 PEOPLE
Androscoggin County, ME	8.7
Aroostook County, ME	13.1
Cumberland County, ME	6.5
Franklin County, ME	16.0
Hancock County, ME	12.3
Kennebec County, ME	10.8
Knox County, ME	12.5
Lincoln County, ME	12.7
Oxford County, ME	14.1
Penobscot County, ME	12.2
Piscataquis County, ME	22.5
Sagadahoc County, ME	13.9
Somerset County, ME	17.8
Waldo County, ME	11.1
Washington County, ME	15.3
York County, ME	10.0

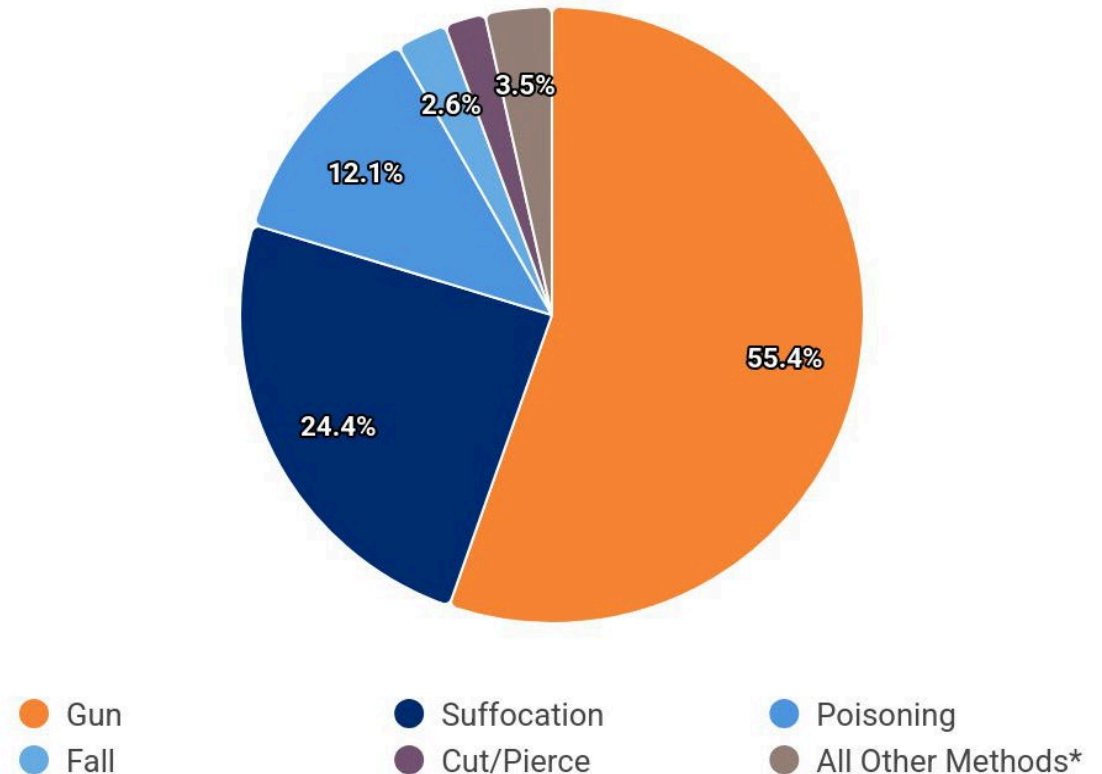


GIFFORDS
LAW CENTER
TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Role of Firearms in Suicide

- Firearms used as method in suicides more than all other methods combined
- Gun ownership is independent risk factor for firearm injury
 - 1/3 of households have guns
 - 1/2 store firearms unsafely
 - 75% of youth age 5-14 know where weapons are and how to access them
 - Less than 2/3 of gun owners have received formal gun safety training
- 82% of firearms used in pediatric suicide are found within the home

Suicide by Method, 2023



Annual Gun Violence Data | Center for Gun Violence Solutions (publichealth.jhu.edu)

Role of Lethal Means Safety Counseling

- Reducing access to lethal means is a key prevention strategy
- Lethal means reduction puts time and space between a suicidal person and lethal means until the crisis has passed
 - Time from crisis to suicide attempt is 5-10 minutes in 25-50% of suicides
- Research suggests that when one means is unavailable or not accessible, people rarely substitute with different means
- Safe storage is proven to reduce both suicide and unintentional injuries by 75–80%



Principles of Lethal Means Safety



Start from a common purpose

Non-judgemental, non-political, and focused on safety



Present a variety of options

Encourage collaboration on which options are accessible and reasonable for family



Take a harm reduction approach

Any step towards means access limitation is a good step



Provide problem-solving strategies in advance

Having an accessible list of local resources and cable locks to provide to families

Examples of Starting the Conversation

How to Start the Conversation:

- "We ask all families with children or teens about safety in the home, including firearms."
- "How do you store your weapons?"
- "I know guns are important to you. Let's work on a plan to keep you safe that will work well for you"

Sample Strategies:

- Motivational interviewing
- Normalize the discussion: liken to bike helmets or medications
 - Address stigma and defensiveness
- Use scripting tailored by patient scenario (adult, teen, parent)

Options to Discuss

- Locked storage
- Temporary transfer (trusted family, police, storage units, gun ranges, dealers)
- Firearm storage options in Maine
 - Police, storage units, friends, gun ranges, gun shops
- Medications in home



Locked:
“Is it locked?”



Loaded:
“Is it loaded?”



Little children:
“Are there little
children present?”



feeling Low:
“Is the operator
feeling low?”

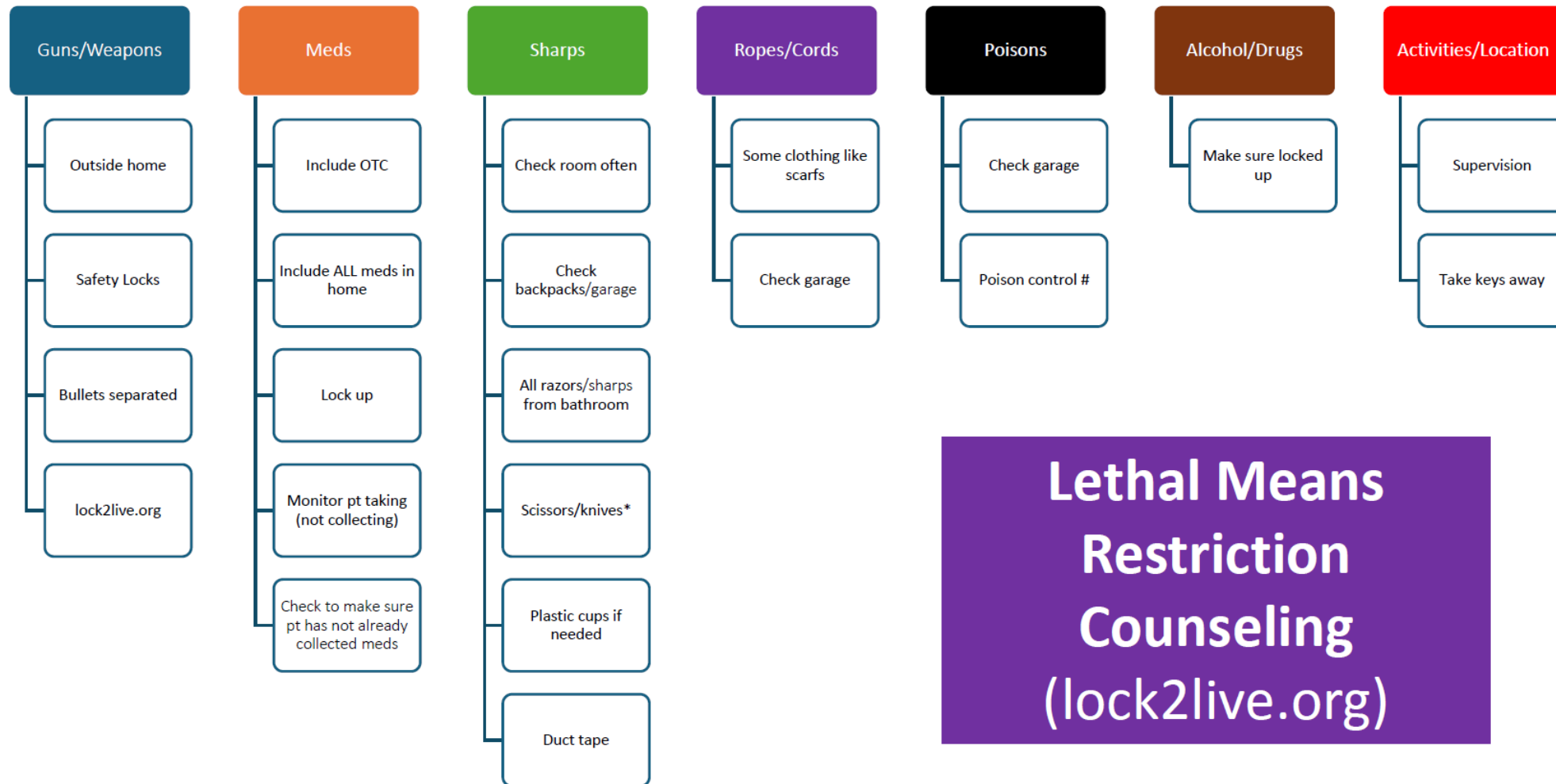


Learned owner:
“Is the operator learned
about firearm safety?”

Source: Pinholt, Mitchell, Butler, Kumar

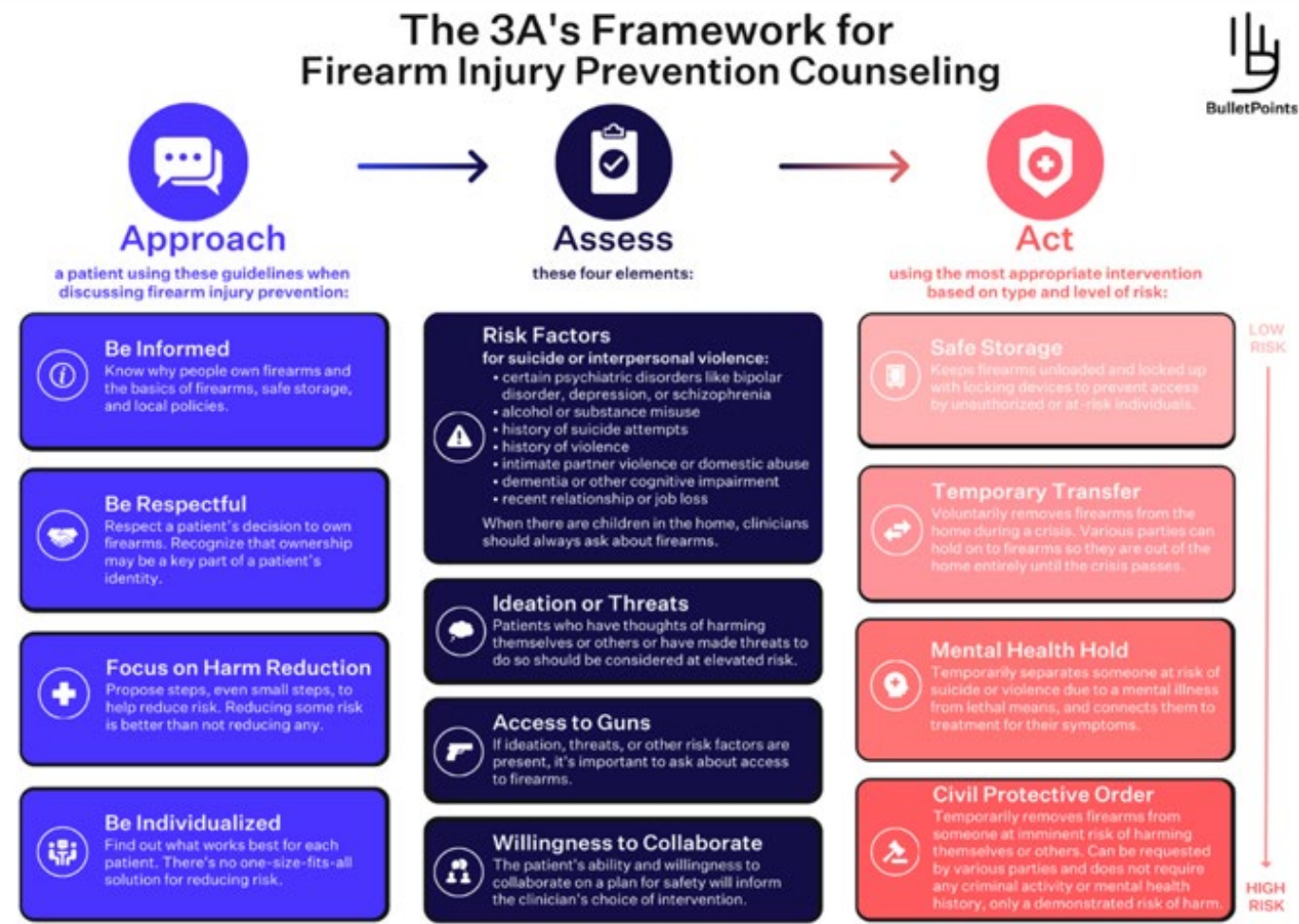


Cal-MAP



Source: Hohui Wang, MD & Shelly Nakaishi, NP

Counseling Tool Example



Source: BulletPoint

Safety Planning Examples

STANLEY - BROWN SAFETY PLAN

STEP 1: WARNING SIGNS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 2: INTERNAL COPING STRATEGIES – THINGS I CAN DO TO TAKE MY MIND OFF MY PROBLEMS WITHOUT CONTACTING ANOTHER PERSON:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

STEP 3: PEOPLE AND SOCIAL SETTINGS THAT PROVIDE DISTRACTION:

1. Name: _____ Contact: _____

2. Name: _____ Contact: _____

3. Place: _____ Address: _____

4. Place: _____ Address: _____

STEP 4: PEOPLE WHOM I CAN ASK FOR HELP DURING A CRISIS:

1. Name: _____ Contact: _____

2. Name: _____ Contact: _____

3. Name: _____ Contact: _____

STEP 5: PROFESSIONALS OR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES I CAN CONTACT DURING A CRISIS:

1. Professional/Services Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

2. Professional/Services Name: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

3. Emergency Department: _____

Emergency Department Address: _____

Emergency Department Phone: _____

4. Crisis Line Phone (e.g. 988): _____

STEP 6: MAKING THE ENVIRONMENT SAFER (PLAN FOR LETHAL MEANS SAFETY):

1. _____

2. _____

The Stanley-Brown Safety Plan is copyrighted by Barbara Stanley, PhD & Gregory K. Brown, PhD (2008, 2021). Individual use of the Stanley-Brown Safety Plan form is permitted. Written permission from the authors is required for any changes to this form or use of this form in the electronic medical record. Additional resources are available from www.suicidesafetyplan.com.

Stanley-Brown
Safety Planning Intervention



Mental Health Plan Questions To Answer

Most gun owners diligently prepare for potential threats, such as home invasions, with detailed plans and training. However, we often overlook a far more probable and impactful issue: our mental health. Statistically, over half of all firearm-related deaths are due to suicide. At Walk the Talk America, we urge you to consider the following questions before they are ever needed.

How do I plan to stay mentally healthy?

💡 Example: Take a free & anonymous mental health screening on WTTA's website every four months.

Who can I rely on to tell me I'm starting to depart from the ordinary?

💡 Example: My roommate can offer to do one of the things I wrote down to stay mentally healthy with me and check in on me during that time.

Who can be involved in pointing out I'm in a temporary crisis?

💡 Example: My wife can be the one who can suggest temporarily changing the gun safe combination.

MAINE PREVENTION STORE

SAFETY PLANS WORK

There is Hope.



1 Write 3 warning signs that a crisis may be developing.

2 Write 3 internal coping strategies that can take your mind off your problems.

3 Who/What are 3 people or places that provide distraction? (Write name/place and phone numbers)

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

4 Who can you ask for help? (Write name/place and phone numbers)

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

_____ Phone _____

5 Professionals or agencies you can contact during a crisis:

Clinician _____ Phone _____

Local Urgent Care or Emergency Department:

Address _____ Phone _____

Text or call 988 or chat 988lifeline.org

6 Write out a plan to make your environment safer. (Write 2 things)



988
SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

Modified from Stanley & Brown (2021)

PEP24-08-03-007

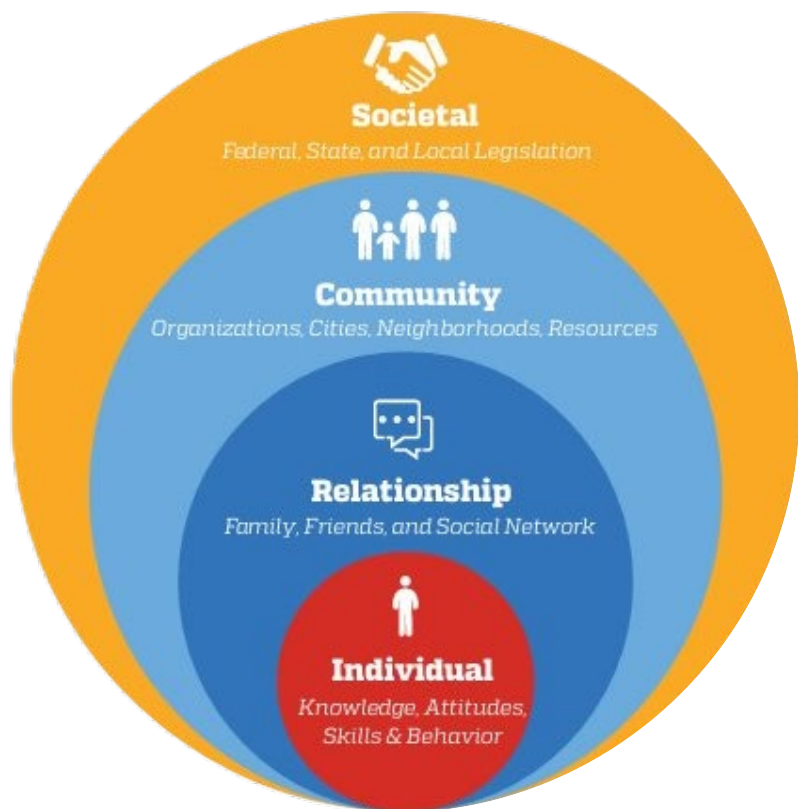
Follow-up

- Check-in with family about safety plan
 - Set time frames for check-ins
- Prompts for families & caregivers
 - What worked?
 - What adjustments are needed?
- Acknowledge success or changes of storage big or small!

Barriers & Sensitivities

- Cultural and political sensitivities around firearms
- Lack of training
- Not confident having these conversations
- Discomfort around topic
- Time pressures in clinical settings

Community Based Strategies & Advocacy



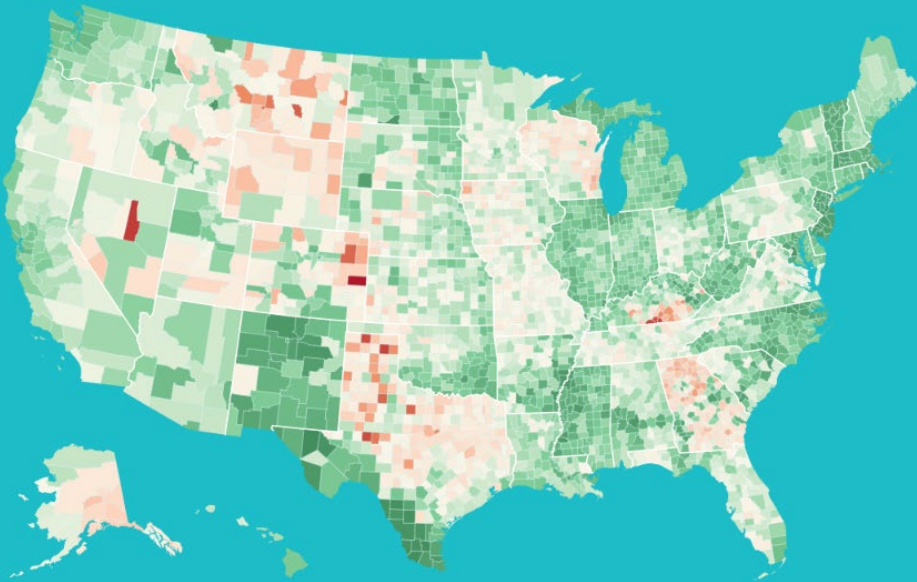
97Percent

What Do Gun Owners Think?

The answer may surprise you. For example, [our research](#) shows that **72% of gun owners** across the nation support Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), commonly known as red flag laws, to temporarily remove firearms from someone deemed by the courts to be a danger to themselves or others.

ERPO Support by County

28% 100%



count of ERPO supporters / total modeled gun owners registered to vote in county
Note: ERPO support is modeled based on nationwide support for the following policy, not flag from that model's policy or policy, modeled to capture a state's ability to model the temporary removal of firearms from a person who may pose a danger to
themselves or others. Source: Citizen Data - Freedom and Datawrapper

Maine 2025 Legislative Session

- Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) Laws
- Secure Storage Requirement did not pass
- Ghost Gun Serialization passed
- Expanded background checks and 72 hour waiting period was protected

A 2024 multi-state study estimated that one life was saved for every 17-23 ERPOs issued.





79% of Mainers
support a law requiring
secure storage of firearms.


Maine Prevention Store Resources

IF YOU LOVE THEM, KEEP THEM SAFE

If someone you love is struggling with thoughts of suicide, there are some important steps you can take to keep them safe until they're feeling better. Make a plan based on the options below:


- 


Temporarily remove firearms from your home to keep your loved ones safe until they are feeling better.
- 


Store all firearms in a locked safe, or use trigger locks. Remove access to combinations or keys.
- 

Make sure all firearms are unloaded. Store ammunition safely in another location.

SAFEST CHOICE


- 


Remove any medications from your home to keep your loved ones safe until they are feeling better.
- 


Store any medications in a locked box or cabinet. Be sure keys and combinations are in a secure location.
- 

Keep only small amounts of medications in your home. Talk to a pharmacist about what quantities of medication would be safest.

SAFEST CHOICE

- 

Until your loved one is feeling better, do not leave them alone. Make sure someone has "eyes on" them to ensure they are safe.
- 

Create a "safety plan" so your loved one knows how to get help at any time. Identify activities that help them feel better, and people they can reach out to for support.
- 

Make sure your loved one knows how to access the 24-hour Maine Crisis Line at 1-888-568-1112.

SAFEST CHOICE


MAINE PREVENTION STORE



STEPS I CAN TAKE

TO PROTECT A LOVED ONE WHO IS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE

It can feel overwhelming when someone you care about is struggling with their mental health. You can help by creating a plan to keep your loved one safe while they get the support they need. If possible, focus on the safest options – but it's most important that you take some kind of action to protect your loved one until they're feeling better.

- ☐ Remove or store firearms safely.

My Plan: _____

- ☐ Remove or store medication safely.

My Plan: _____

- ☐ Stay connected and supervise.

My Plan: _____



1-888-568-1112
MAINE CRISIS LINE
CALL. TEXT. CHAT.



Maine Specific Storage Resources

- Maine Gun Safety Coalition & Maine AAP – cable & lockbox for pediatric offices
- MMC Lockbox Pilot
- Veteran's Administration Lockbox Programs
- [Pause to Protect](#) – find local options for temporary, voluntary firearm storage

Out-of-Home Storage

Find local options for temporary, voluntary firearm storage.

Sometimes, the safest option is to move firearms out of your home. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as selling or renting your home, going on an extended trip or deployment, or having visitors who should be effective to store firearms outside of your home during a family crisis, or if you or a family member is having thoughts of suicide. In some states, individuals can transfer firearms to immediate family member includes a background check.

This map is intended to help community members seeking local options for temporary, voluntary firearm storage. The map data was collected by Pierce's Pledge in 2023. The businesses listed on this map may be willing to consider requests for temporary, voluntary gun storage, although they are not official Pause to Protect partners. The map may be missing locations that offer storage, or locations shown may no longer offer storage. We encourage you to contact the location for details. The businesses noted by yellow pins on the map are official Pause to Protect partners. These partners are also listed below.

Pause to Protect Partners
Businesses participating in Pause to Protect will offer free, exclusive, or reduced cost secure storage options to service members.

[OPEN TO VIEW LOCATIONS](#) ▼

Other Locations
The businesses listed on this map are willing to consider requests for temporary, voluntary gun storage. We encourage you to contact the location for details.

[OPEN TO VIEW LOCATIONS](#) ▼

Continuing Education



COUNSELING
ON ACCESS TO
LETHAL MEANS



BulletPoints

Clinical tools for
preventing firearm injury

Preventing Firearm Injury: What Clinicians Can Do

This free 60-minute course focuses on areas where clinicians can help reduce the risk of firearm-related injury and death in their patients. Learners can earn one Continuing Education credit from the California Medical Association or the American Psychological Association.

Register

Portland Community Squash



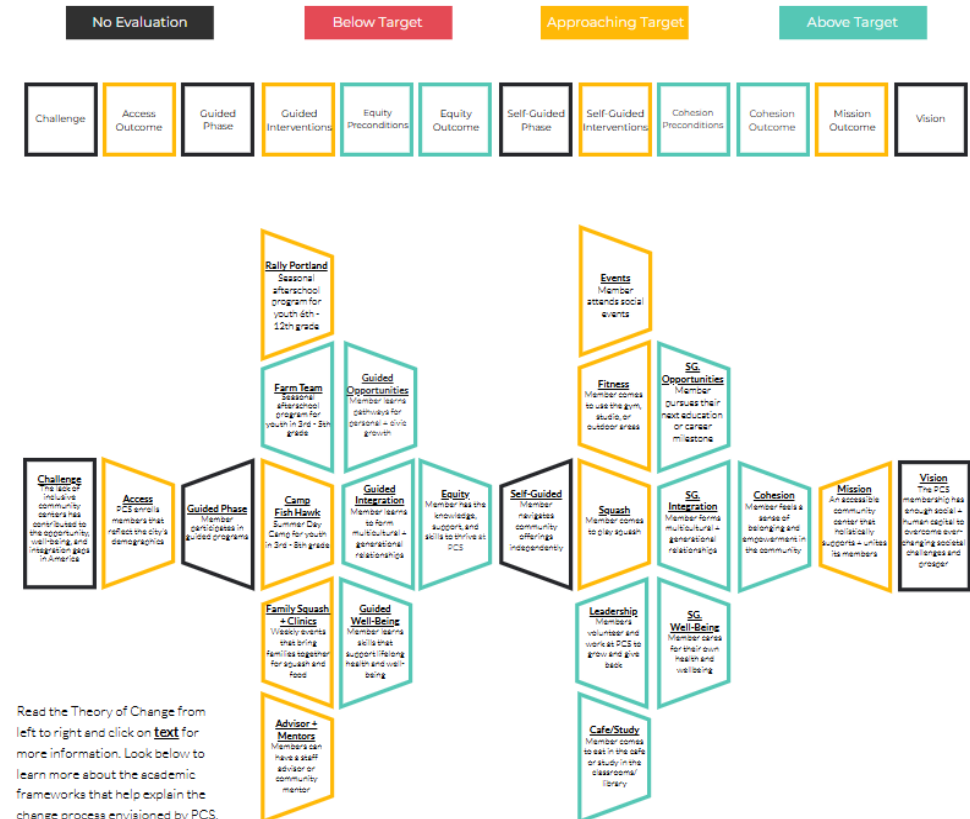
Elementary Squash
Weekly clinics for Farm Team,
and drop in Saturday mornings



Summer Camp
Camp Fish Hawk 3rd - 8th,
Opportunities for older students

THEORY OF CHANGE

Theory of Change Executive Summary + Google Slides Breaking Down the Model



14,944
YOUTH SERVED

4,790
ADULTS REACHED

327
TRAINING INSTITUTE GRADUATES

1
STRONG COMMUNITY

Introductory workshop:
Turning the Tides of Male Violence in Maine
November 14th at 12-2



Introductory Workshop

Understand how we work with youth and youth-serving adults to build safer communities.

[Register For September 12th](#)

[Learn More](#)



Boot Camp for New Dads

Gain confidence as a prospective parent. Now offered monthly!

[View Schedule & Register](#)

[Learn More](#)



Training Institute

Learn how to lead our Reducing Sexism and Violence Program (RSVP®) curriculum in your community.

[View 2025 Dates & Register](#)

LEARN ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS

[Youth Programs](#)

[Adult Programs](#)

YOUR SUPPORT COUNTS

[Donate Now](#)

[Ways To Give](#)

MAINE BOYS TO MEN

[Who We Are](#)

[Opportunities](#)

UNDERSTAND MALE VIOLENCE

[Our Story](#)

[Resources](#)

COMMUNITY EFFORT & ACTION

[Fundors/Partners](#)

[Youth Council](#)

STAY CONNECTED

[News](#)

[Youth Podcast](#)

[Social Media](#)



**What would help you have these
conversations in your clinical
practice?**

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