

# Southern Utah **ASK** a Question . . . **SAVE** a Life Newsletter

AUTUMN, 2018



## **FIREARM SAFETY**

Firearm access increases suicide risk among all members of a home where a firearm is present, and risk is greatest when household firearms are stored unlocked and loaded; however, it is vital to note that evidence consistently indicates firearm ownership is not associated with suicidal thoughts. In other words, owning a firearm does not prompt an otherwise non-suicidal individual to suddenly develop thoughts of suicide. Instead, firearms increase the risk of death by suicide.

*Means safety – defined as actions that render a specific method for suicide less deadly or less accessible during a suicide attempt – represents a promising path towards reducing firearm suicides and, consequently towards lowering the overall suicide rate.*

As such, means safety efforts in the United States must focus specifically on firearms in order to have optimal effects because firearms are the leading method of suicide; the most lethal, and easiest to access.

Avenues for increasing effectiveness of means safety include:

- lethal means counseling
- improving locking technologies
- increasing access to and knowledge about safe and legal options to temporarily store firearms during times of crisis.
  - ◆ Store firearms locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition in a secure location
  - ◆ Encourage storing firearms away from home when a household member is at increased risk of suicide

Recent research indicates that we have not improved in our ability to prospectively predict suicide risk since the 1950s.

One component is that the individuals most likely to die by suicide, particularly those who would die using a firearm (e.g. men in general, middle aged or older white men, military personnel) tend to avoid mental health care altogether and to underreport thoughts of suicide. Because of

this, we are typically ill equipped to identify individuals at risk for suicide until they are dead.

By implementing means safety at the population level, we can ensure our communities as a whole are at lower risk of suicide death.

- ✓ Approximately 50% all suicide deaths in the United States result from self-inflicted gunshot wounds.
- ✓ 85%-95% of all suicide attempts involving a firearm result in death
- ✓ Firearms are present in at least one-third of all American households, meaning that highly lethal suicide attempt methods are widely accessible across the country.

Source: American Association of Suicidology

# Specialty Suicide Prevention Information

The links below are articles on suicide issues/prevention by individual populations/specialties. Choose your specialty/interest and click on the link to read the article.



## Suicide Awareness Activities

### OUT OF DARKNESS WALKS

September, 2018

To see local events, click [here](#).

### SUICIDE LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

Washington County

Paula Larsen  
(435) 669-8136  
Tina Hender  
(801) 529-4895

Iron County

Katy Cox  
(435) 867-7630

When life knocks you down, try to land on your back, because if you can look up, you can get up.  
-Les Brown-

### SUICIDE SURVIVORS DAY

November 17, 2018

To see local events, click [here](#).

No matter what I have been through, I am still here. I have a history of Victory.  
-Steve Maraboli-

