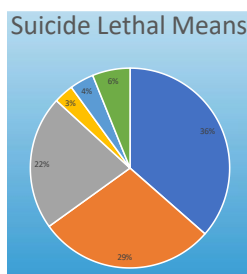


# Guide to Preventing Firearm Suicide

## SUICIDE IS NOT INEVITABLE... IT CAN BE PREVENTED



- Hanging, Suffocation
- Firearm
- Poisoning
- Sharp Instrument
- Fall
- Other

In Connecticut, firearms are the second leading method of suicide death<sup>1</sup>.

## You can make a difference!

### WHAT LEADS TO SUICIDE?

There's no single cause. Suicide most often occurs when stressors, life changes and health issues converge to create a feeling of hopelessness and despair. Conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance misuse, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide.

The good news is that people who get mental health treatment from professionals and support from family and friends can significantly reduce their risk of suicide.

### KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS



**Anyone can be in a suicidal crisis.** These are a few things you may notice when someone is considering suicide.

BEHAVIOR	SPEECH	EMOTION
Isolation: withdraws from people and stops doing activities	Says they want to die or kill themselves	Hopeless/No reason to live
Gives away prized possessions	Talks about no sense of purpose or no reason for living	Experiencing significant loss
Increase in substance use	Talks about being a burden to others	Depression
Agitated/Reckless	Talks about feeling trapped	Anxiety

### LIMIT ACCESS TO FIREARMS AND OTHER LETHAL MEANS TO HELP SAVE LIVES

Always store firearms securely. There are a variety of options available and often gun locks are available at no cost. In CT, effective October 1, 2023, all firearms must be securely stored unless the owner carries the firearm on their person, or it is under their immediate control.



<sup>1</sup> Connecticut Department of Public Health, *The Connecticut Violent Death Reporting System 2015 to 2021*.

Removing access to lethal means from someone in suicidal crisis greatly reduces the likelihood of that person dying by suicide. Measures as simple as turning over the keys to a locking device, changing the combination to a gun safe, or temporarily storing firearms offsite are options that may save a life. There are state-mandated procedures for how a firearm owner can temporarily give the firearm to another person. Know and understand Connecticut state law to avoid violations when temporarily transferring firearms. Contact CT Special Licensing and Firearms Unit (860.685.8400) for details.



As a means of last resort, if an individual shows warning signs of suicide and won't voluntarily agree to prevent access to his or her firearms, Connecticut has an Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) process that allows for the temporary removal of firearms when a person poses a risk of imminent danger to themselves or others. Contact your local police if there is no other means to keep the individual safe.

*(Laws are subject to change, check with local law enforcement, legal consult or other experts for more information.)*

### **ASK THE QUESTION – Have a Brave Conversation**

Be direct and nonjudgmental. Ask “Are you thinking about suicide?” Research shows this does not give the person the idea. It opens communication and may provide relief. Stay with the person and get them help. If you would like training or more information, go to the resources listed below.

### **MAKE A CALL (24 Hours a day, 7 days a week)**

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Call 988 or chat online at 988lifeline.org	24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for the person in crisis or anyone supporting that person (for veteran-specific services dial 988 then Press 1)
Crisis Text Line Text CT to 741741	Crisis Text Line provides free, confidential 24/7 mental health support via text messaging.

### **LEARN MORE ABOUT SUICIDE PREVENTION**

preventsuicidect.org	Connecticut Suicide Advisory Board: the single state-level advisory board addressing suicide prevention, intervention and response across the lifespan.
nssf.org/safety	National Shooting Sports Foundation: Suicide Prevention Program for Retailers and Ranges including videos and a toolkit.
afsp.org	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.
keepitsecure.net	US Department of Veteran Affairs videos and information on suicide prevention and safe storage.
211ct.org Call 211 or chat online at 211ct.org	A free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to essential health and human services 24/7.
ctclearinghouse.org	A statewide library and resource center for information on suicide, mental health disorders, substance misuse, prevention and health promotion, wellness and other related topics.