

Lethal Means Survey

An important component of keeping youth safe following a stated or perceived risk for suicide is to assess the individual's access to lethal means. While this is not an exclusive list, it is intended to help guide caregivers to assess their environment so that they may remove/restrict potential lethal means from the environment.

1. Medication Access

Prescription medications should be limited to non-lethal doses (Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222). Any medications or poisons not being used should be disposed of properly. (Crush and mix with used coffee grounds and put in trash or take to local PD drop site). Any other potentially lethal products (such as over the counter medications) should be removed or locked.

- Assess Access to Medications (prescription and over the counter)
- Plan Developed for Removing/Restricting Access
- Medications/Poisons Secured from Access

2. Firearms Access

- The most effective means for reducing suicide with a firearm is to remove all firearms from the home/environment.
- Do not believe that the location of guns in the home is unknown to the person at risk.
- Locking up guns/ammunition only provides a modicum of security/safety.
- Focus on risk (not the firearm). Hunters, hobbyists and others may dislike the idea of a firearm being focused on as "bad". Focusing on the risk of suicide instead can avoid a roadblock. If reluctant, focus on temporary need for risk reduction.
- If removing firearms to another's home, discuss how and when the firearms will be returned and to whom.
 - Police departments will accept firearms and ammunition that you want destroyed.
 - Never bring a firearm to the PD without calling first.
- If removal is not an option:
 - Store all firearms unloaded and locked.
 - Any ammunition should be stored separately and locked.
 - Trigger locks can be purchased.

3. Cutting/Stabbing

- Assess Access to Knives and Blades (this includes kitchen knives)
- Plan Developed for Removing/Restricting Access
- Knives/Blades Secured from Access (this includes kitchen knives)

4. Hanging

- Assess Access to Ropes or other means of hanging (even bed sheets)
- Plan Developed for Removal/Restricting Access
- Ropes and other means Secured from Access

5. Alcohol

- Assess Access to Alcohol
- Plan Developed for Removal/Restricting Access
- Alcohol Secured from Access

6. Jumping

Survey and assess proximity to jumping areas. This typically includes but is not limited to: overpasses, bridges, towers. Know the environment and what is near. Should you call the Police Dept with a concern, they will ask if you have any idea where the individual may have gone.

- Survey completed

7. Automobiles

Be aware of access to motor vehicles (both driving and the ability to asphyxiate through carbon monoxide poisoning).

- Survey completed