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October 2016 Newsletter

FLORIDA SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

*A statewide, grassroots organization
of survivors, crisis centers, & interested citizens*

WHAT DID SHE SAY?



"I strongly believe that the way to help eliminate suicide is through community collaboration and the implementation of programs that teach positive life affirming coping skills and acceptance of one another, regardless of differences." Betsey

Westuba, FSPC Chair, and Regions 6 & 14 Director

NEWSWORTHY

*National Shooting Sports Foundation Press Release
From August 10, 2016*

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the National Shooting Sports Foundation Partner to Help Prevent Suicide

New Partnership Supports AFSP's Project 2025 Goal to Reduce the Annual Suicide Rate 20 Percent by 2025

NEW YORK, N.Y. — A new partnership between the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) (AFSP), the nation's largest suicide prevention organization, and the [National Shooting Sports Foundation®](#) (NSSF®), the trade association for the firearms industry, will allow for both organizations to embark on a first-of-its-kind national plan to build and implement public education resources for firearms retailers, shooting ranges and the firearms-owning community about suicide prevention and firearms.

According to recently released data by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly half of all suicides were by firearm in 2014, and suicide accounted for almost two-thirds of gun deaths in the same year. In addition, 90 percent of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal. By working together to develop and deliver

suicide-prevention resources, AFSP and NSSF hope to help stem this loss of life.

“This partnership has been a true collaboration since we started conversations last year. AFSP sees this relationship as critical to reaching the firearms community,” said Robert Gebbia, AFSP CEO. “One of the first areas identified through Project 2025 was a need to involve the gun-owning community in suicide prevention. By joining forces with NSSF, we reach both firearm owners and sellers nationwide to inform and educate them about suicide prevention and firearms, and offer specific actions they can do to prevent suicide. Through Project 2025 analysis and the work of this partnership, we know that this public education has the potential to save thousands of lives.”



FIREARMS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION



“The firearms industry has long been at the forefront of successful accident-prevention efforts and programs aimed at reducing unauthorized access to firearms. Since two-thirds of all fatalities involving firearms are suicides, we are now also in the forefront of helping to prevent these deaths through our new relationship with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention,” said Stephen L. Sanetti, NSSF President and CEO.

Currently, the two organizations are collaborating on this initiative through AFSP’s firearm and suicide prevention pilot program, which involves six AFSP chapters, located in Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri and New Mexico. The goal is to take the program nationwide within two years.

More about Project 2025

Launched in October 2015, Project 2025 is a high-impact, collaborative initiative developed by AFSP, aimed at the organization’s bold goal of reducing the annual suicide rate 20 percent by 2025. Using a dynamic systems model designed by CALIBRE Systems, AFSP has determined a series of actions and critical areas reaching across all demographic and sociological characteristics to have the greatest impact for suicide prevention and the potential to save thousands of lives within the next 10 years.

About NSSF

The [National Shooting Sports Foundation \(NSSF\)](#) is the trade association for the firearms industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF has a membership of more than 13,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen’s organizations and publishers. Through its Project ChildSafe program, “Own It? Respect It. Secure It.” campaign and other initiatives, NSSF promotes the safe and responsible use and storage of firearms and makes available many firearm safety resources at [ProjectChildSafe.org](#).

About AFSP

The [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. AFSP creates a culture that’s smart about mental health through education and community programs, develops suicide prevention through research and advocacy, and provides support for those affected by suicide. Led by CEO Robert Gebbia and headquartered in New York, and with a public policy office in Washington, D.C., AFSP has local chapters in all 50 states with programs and events nationwide. Learn more about AFSP in its latest Annual Report, and join the conversation on suicide prevention by following AFSP on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.

IN FOCUS

Get to know a Regional Director or Officer a little better in each newsletter.



Alexandra “Ali” Martinez: FSPC Region 3 Director (Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union). Ali grew up in South Miami but has lived in Gainesville for 22 years. That means Ali is a Florida Native! Also, she is an avid equestrian and kayaker.

Ali is the Director for the Alachua County Crisis Center in Gainesville. Previously, she was a Student Counseling Specialist at University of Florida. She previously had been the Projects Coordinator & also the Training Coordinator at the Alachua County Crisis Center. Additionally, Ali has prior experience as a therapist at the Child Advocacy Center and counselor/case manager at Corner Drug Store (Drug Free Communities Program).

Ali was invited to join FSPC as a Regional Director in fall 2015 after becoming the Director of the Alachua County Crisis Center. Ali was honored to be a part of FSPC and to be working alongside people who feel so passionate about Florida suicide prevention efforts. Ali was an invited presenter at the first Florida Suicide Prevention Coalition Mini-conference and hopes to continue supporting the FSPC’s efforts in the area of training for both professionals and laypersons in suicide prevention and postvention.

RESEARCH FOR THE REST OF US



Sometimes important research is filled with jargon, is hard to understand, or doesn’t seem to make sense. We’ve tried to summarize research in common English language.

State laws regulating access to handguns are associated with reduced suicide rates.

In 2013, over 20,000 people in the United States died by suicide from self-inflicted gunshot wounds. Research reveals reducing access to firearms (and other means of suicide) is associated with lower suicide rates. These researchers analyzed the impact on a state’s suicide rate of legislation associated with firearm access, specifically required waiting periods for completing handgun purchases, required background checks before purchasing handguns, required locks on privately owned handguns (in some circumstances), and restrictions for openly carrying handguns.

Researchers analyzed data on state’s suicide rates (*overall* suicide rate, *firearm* suicide rate, and proportion of *suicide deaths accounted for by firearms*), and were able to consider the statistical influence of other important factors such as poverty, population density, education, race/ethnicity, and age. Generally, states with one of the four laws had significantly lower overall suicide rates, firearm suicide rates, and proportion of suicide deaths accounted for by firearms. The single exception was that the correlation between a waiting period and *overall suicide rate* was not significant but the association was fairly high. However, the correlation between a waiting period and *firearm* suicide rates and proportions of *suicide deaths accounted for by firearms* were both important and significant.

Four states added or repealed one or more of these four laws from 2009 to 2013. Three states that passed firearms-restriction legislation showed a significant decrease in suicide rates while one state, that repealed a 48-hour waiting period for handgun purchase, recorded an increase in its suicide rate.

The researchers concluded that legislation associated with restricting firearm access, during and after purchase, can have a strong and positive influence in improving public safety and saving lives through reducing suicide rates. (Summary by Stephen Roggenbaum & Eliezer DeJesus)

Anestis, M.D., & Anestis, J.C. (2015). Suicide rates and state laws regulating access and exposure to handguns. *American Journal of Public Health, 105*(10), 2049-2058.
doi:10.2105/AJPH.2015.302753

WHAT'S HAPPENING



International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is Saturday November 19, 2016. *Survivor Day* supports people affected by suicide loss who gather at local community events to find comfort and gain understanding as they share stories of healing and hope.

Gatherings include a screening of *Life Journeys: Reclaiming Life after Loss*, a new AFSP-produced Survivor Day documentary that traces the grief and healing journey that follows a suicide loss over time. Events may also include presentations by loss survivors and mental health professionals, as well as small group discussions that bring together people who have experienced similar losses. Eight events are currently scheduled in Florida, scroll down and search at: <https://afsp.org/find-support/ive-lost-someone/survivor-day/#section2>

Save the Date: *Suicide Prevention Day at the Capitol*. This advocacy event will be April 6, 2017 (Tallahassee)

Save the Date: FSPC 2017 *Second Annual Florida Taking Action for Suicide Prevention Mini-Conference*. The two-half day mini-conference occurs on April 4 & 5, 2017 (Tallahassee).

AWARENESS and ACTION

Stephen Roggenbaum, Vice Chair



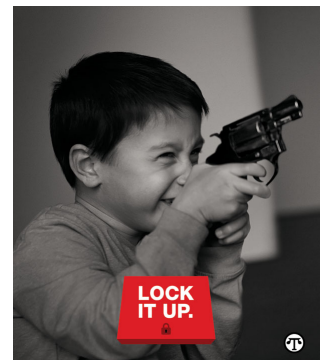
There is a substantial amount of research indicating that if we make obtaining or accessing a way or means to take one's life challenging, we can save lives. A mean reduction approach to suicide prevention has been effective and reported in population studies (cited below by Cather Barber and in this month's *Research for the Rest of Us* column). Disposing of unused medicines from our homes and safely storing firearms are two action steps than many of us can implement to improve safety. Firearms and poisoning are consistently two of the top three leading means for suicide in the US with half of all suicides association with guns. Actions on a large scale to reduce access to lethal means would have significant impacts on the suicide rate and save numerous lives.

Some argue that if we reduce access to a specific lethal means, individuals would just choose another option. Catherine Barber of *Harvard's Means Matter* is part of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center and recently posted relevant information on the American Association for Suicidology listserv (reprinted here with her permission). "*There are a few things I'd consider regarding means substitution. First, to what extent does substitution occur; second, and*

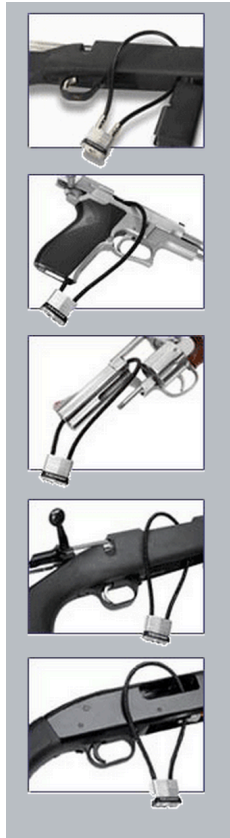
perhaps more importantly, to what extent does that substitution prove fatal. For example, say that somehow, magically, everyone who was intent on suicide and would otherwise use a gun in a suicidal act goes to the gun cabinet and finds it empty. Certainly, some proportion of them will try another method. We don't know what proportion that is. When a person uses a gun in an act of intentional self-injury, in 85% of cases or more the injury proves fatal. Nearly everything that most people would substitute is less likely to kill them -- in some cases dramatically less likely. So some will substitute pills or sharps [knives and cutting instruments], and the majority of those people won't die, and some will substitute, say, carbon monoxide or ligature [hanging], and a higher proportion of them than the pill takers will die, but fewer than had they used a gun (judging from case fatality ratios derived from emergency department and death certificate data). And, of course, some won't substitute at all but may decide to find some other way to get their hands on a gun. Among those who decide to persist in getting a gun, some will remain suicidal and will eventually find another source of a gun and will die, but for many the acute phase of the suicidal crisis will have passed and they will not go on to kill themselves.

We actually don't know a lot about means substitution at the individual level: that is, what predicts whether a person who is thwarted in obtaining their go-to method will substitute another method (and what predicts the lethality of the method they substitute) vs. seek another way of getting their go-to method vs. drop the attempt altogether. Our strongest evidence about the effectiveness of means reduction comes from population-level studies. The two best examples come from the United Kingdom in the '60s (where domestic gas was the leading suicide method, and the suicide rate dropped when the region switched to a non-toxic gas source) and from Sri Lanka in the '90s (where pesticides are the leading suicide method and the most human-toxic pesticides were banned in the mid-90s and the suicide rate dropped by half). In both cases, an existing method simply became less toxic. In effect, this was passive substitution -- people were still swallowing pesticide, for example; they just weren't dying from it as often because the pesticide was less toxic. And there have been many studies of people who have survived a suicide attempt: 90% do not go on to kill themselves at a later time. This is true even in a study that followed people who had survived jumping in front of the London Underground - very serious suicide attempts."

However, Florida enacted Florida Statute 790.338 – Medical privacy concerning firearms, which makes encouraging safe firearms storage a little more challenging. The law inhibits physicians from routinely asking about firearms during children's wellness visits. Pediatricians ask parents about using car seats, how their babies sleep, and about using bike helmets and other concerns during children's wellness check-ups to prevent injuries. When doctors ask parents about guns, they're trying to prevent injuries, too. Doctors call this "anticipatory guidance:" teaching and encouraging parents how to safeguard against accidental injuries. For decades, the American Academy of Pediatrics has encouraged its members to ask questions about guns and how they're stored as part of well-child visits. Guns account for more suicides than all other suicide methods combined, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, because they are much more lethal. Over 21,000 people died from suicide by firearms in the United States in 2013. Additionally, more than 11,000 individuals were killed by firearms in 2013, more than 500 were killed in accidents with guns, and more than 33,600 individuals were injured by firearms (over 2,400 in Florida). According to researchers, almost 7,400 children were hospitalized because of injuries related to firearms in 2009.



Michael D. Anestis, Nina Bell Suggs Professor of Psychology & Director of the Suicide and Prevention Laboratory, University of Southern Mississippi, published a guest column for the Clarion-Ledger of the USA Today Network August 28th. More eloquently than I, Dr. Anestis wrote a call to action: *"Despite the fact half of all US suicides result from firearms each year — more than by all other methods combined —and promising evidence that efforts to decrease access to or increase the safe storage of guns result in lower suicide rates, there remains no systematic nationwide effort to promote means safety to prevent suicide.*



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Gun owners and gun educators can reach across the aisle, put aside tangential discussions of the Second Amendment and embrace the promotion of means safety. With support of the gun owning community, such efforts would encourage individuals to store their private firearms unloaded, separate from ammunition, and locked and to temporarily remove their guns from the home when they feel distress just as they give someone else their car keys when they have had too much to drink."

A New Hampshire project has been focused on this very issue for several years. The New Hampshire Firearm Safety Coalition is comprised of researchers, suicide prevention advocates, firearms instructors, and gun store owners. The NHFSC asks gun sellers and firing ranges to watch out for any buyers who might be at risk and encourages safe firearms storage at home. The group disseminated materials aimed both at reducing suicides involving recently-purchased firearms as well as existing household firearms. Discussions with and input from gun owners in the coalition and dealers around the state were invaluable in the development and

implementation of the materials and the campaign. A Harvard's Means Matter's evaluation reported 48% of commercial firearm retailers were displaying at least one product developed by the coalition following visits to all the New Hampshire commercial gun shops in 2011/2012.

In another state, Delaware Governor Markell addressed this issue and recently signed an Executive Order 63 creating the *Firearm Suicide Prevention Task Force* that is charged with:

- Examining the current outreach, education and training about suicide to firearm owners
- Reviewing models and data from other state and local governments on effective public strategies for suicide prevention among firearm owners
- Developing recommendations to reduce suicides by firearms in Delaware
- Reviewing ways to connect mental health resources with at-risk populations, and
- Engaging firearm advocates, dealers and clubs in suicide prevention efforts

But I'm not a legislator, I don't make policy, I can't make large scale changes for my community/state . . . yes, there are challenges. Each of us CAN, however, be like the man on the beach who was throwing starfish back into the ocean one by one during low tide when approached and asked why. The questioner said "there are so many starfish on the beach you can't save them all, you can't make a difference, so why are you wasting your time?" As the man threw another starfish back into the ocean he replied, "it made a difference to that one."

We can make a difference and take action on a small scale (individually) and large scale (collectively). Each of us can reach out, offer to help those struggling, get rid of outdated/

unused medication, store firearms locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition, and temporarily remove guns from the home when someone is in distress. Together, we can encourage and even participate in collaborations to reduce access to lethal means, and support common sense firearm legislation and candidates.

RESOURCES



If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call **1-800-273- 8255** (*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline*)

Crisis Text Line – text “start” to **741-741**

Project ChildSafe® is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, nonprofit charitable organization committed to promoting firearms safety among firearms owners through the distribution of safety education messages and free firearm [Safety Kits](#). The kits include a cable-style gun-locking device and a [brochure](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)) that discusses safe handling and secure storage guidelines to help deter access by unauthorized individuals. Find Florida Law Enforcement partners to inquire about a free Safety Kit from Project ChildSafe. <http://www.projectchildsafe.org/safety/safety-kit/Florida>

Harvard’s Means Matter is part of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center (Harvard School of Public Health), dedicated to reducing injury through training, research, intervention, evaluation, and dissemination. The Center has published hundreds of studies on injury topics ranging from motor vehicle crashes to alcohol use to youth violence and suicide. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/>

Florida’s Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention (DCF):

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/mental-health/suicide-prevention>

National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention: The Public-Private Partnership Advancing the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention:

<http://actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/resources>

Is there a local NAMI Chapter in my area? <http://www.nami.org/Local-NAMI?state=FL>

Controlled Substance Public Disposal Locations. Proper disposal of expired drugs or medications you no longer use can be one effective suicide prevention tool by eliminating access to lethal means. Many community-based drug *take-back* programs offer the best option for disposal. Many medicines have specific disposal instructions on their labeling or patient information leaflet: immediately flush down the sink or toilet, throw in the household trash, or other special disposal instructions once they are no longer needed. For disposal locations

<https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/pubdispsearch/spring/main?execution=e1s3>

AN EXTRA HELPING . . .

Florida Kids Count at USF guest blog [*Three thousand thirty-five (3,035) People*] for 2016 National Suicide Prevention Month by Stephen Roggenbaum (FSPC Vice Chair).

<http://floridakidscount.org/index.php/blog>

FSPC MEMBERSHIP

New FSPC Membership or Renewal information available online at:

<http://www.floridasuicideprevention.org/membership.htm>