

Nation's Largest Suicide Prevention Organization and the Firearms Industry Trade Association Join Forces, Launch New Education Program to Potentially Save Thousands of Lives



This Unprecedented Program Supports the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's Project 2025 Goal to Reduce the Annual Suicide Rate 20 Percent by 2025

NEWS PROVIDED BY

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention → , National Shooting Sports Foundation →

Jan 17, 2017, 13:00 ET

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 17, 2017 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Of all firearms-related deaths in the U.S. in 2015, almost two-thirds were suicide deaths, according to the 2015 Fatal Injury Report, Center for Disease Control and Prevention. To help stem this tragic loss of life, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) today announced at the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show in Las Vegas a partnership to launch a new firearms and suicide prevention education program nationwide in 2017.

The program brings together AFSP community-based Chapters and NSSF-member organizations, including firearms retailers and range owners across the country, to educate the gun-owning community about suicide, warning signs, risk factors and the importance of securely storing firearms to help prevent access in times of distress. A pilot of this program has been ongoing in four states since August 2016.

WHAT LEADS TO SUICIDE?
There's no single cause. Suicide most often occurs when several stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Depression is the most common health condition associated with suicide, and is often undiagnosed or untreated. Most people who actively manage their mental health conditions lead fulfilling lives. Conditions like depression, anxiety and substance use problems, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide.

RESOURCES

- 1 Visit
Your Primary Care Provider
Psychiatric Hospital
Walk-In Clinic
Emergency Department
Crisis Care Center
- 2 Find a mental health provider
Treatment.com, centerforhope.org
- 3 Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Mention: Project 1
- 4 Crisis Text Line
761-761
- 5 CrisisChat.org
- 6 Call 911 for emergencies

FIREARMS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION | NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION

Source: afsp.org



"Of all suicide deaths in our nation, nearly 50 percent are by firearm. By increasing public education of firearms and suicide prevention, and by encouraging the use of safe storage options and thus reducing access to lethal means, we give suicidal individuals something they desperately need: time. Time for the intense suicidal risk to diminish and time for someone to intervene with mental health support and resources," said Dr. Christine Moutier, AFSP's Chief Medical Officer at a press conference today at the SHOT Show in Las Vegas, the largest trade show in the world for professionals involved with the shooting sports, hunting and law enforcement industries. "Research has shown that separating suicidal individuals from a variety of lethal means can prevent suicide."

Firearms retailers and range owners are in a unique position to help disseminate mental health and suicide prevention education materials, and safe storage options to those who frequent their stores. With these public education resources, the firearms-owning community can help spread the word to those who may be concerned about a friend or family member who may be at risk, and who may have access to a firearm.

"Our partnership with AFSP allows us to expand our decades-long firearms safety efforts to include suicide prevention education," said Steve Sanetti, NSSF's President and CEO. "As the industry's trade association with more than 12,000 members, we want to help. By making gun owners and the public more aware of suicide and responsible firearm storage, we are confident that we will help save lives."

The firearms and suicide prevention program is an expansion of a pilot that began last August, in four states including Alabama, Kentucky, Missouri, and New Mexico. In these four states, relationships between AFSP Chapter volunteers and local shooting range owners, firearms retail stores and gun show vendors shared resources on recognizing the risks and warning signs of suicide and ways of reaching out to those who may be struggling, including:

- *Talk Saves Lives: Firearms and Suicide Prevention™*, a community-based presentation that provides an overview and understanding of mental health and suicide, and the benefits of connecting with those who may be struggling
- *Firearms and Suicide Prevention*, a new brochure which includes sections on safe storage options, statistics about suicide, how to recognize the risks and warning signs of suicide, how to reach out to someone when you're worried about them, and where to go for further resources
- *Firearms and Suicide Prevention: Facilitator's Guide* for AFSP volunteers involved in the program who need instructional information on leading community-based programs
- A new webpage which will showcase an overview of the firearms and suicide prevention program and the latest news. The organizations are currently creating a short training video on how to have a caring conversation with someone who may be suicidal, which will be featured on the webpage, and is due to be released in spring 2017

"When I first heard about this partnership I was really encouraged. Working with experts in the field, we have been trying to teach gun owners about suicide prevention on a local level for a while – and so far it's been a bootstrap effort, recruiting one firearms retailer at a time. But by expanding the education and suicide prevention program nationally, we will have a much easier time convincing retailers to get involved because NSSF is a name they trust," said Dick Abramson, President and CEO of the Centennial Gun Club in Colorado. "At a weekly ladies' night we hold at the Centennial Gun Club, we have already brought in a suicide prevention expert to speak on this topic. The questions asked were insightful and the audience was extremely interested. So we know there is a real thirst in the community for this kind of education."

About Project 2025

Launched in October 2015, Project 2025 is a high-impact, collaborative initiative developed by AFSP, aimed at achieving the organization's bold goal of reducing the annual suicide rate 20 percent by 2025. Using a dynamic systems model approach based on what the evidence tells us about suicide, AFSP has determined a series of actions and critical areas to help us reach our goal. With this approach we reach across all demographic and sociological groups to have the greatest impact for suicide prevention and the potential to save thousands of lives within the next 10 years. If we work collectively to expand the above interventions in key area (Firearms, Emergency Departments, and in Large Healthcare Systems) – cumulatively, we can expect to save nearly 20,000 lives through 2025.

About NSSF

The National Shooting Sports Foundation 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 12,000 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. AFSP celebrates 30 years of service to the suicide prevention movement. 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.

SOURCE American Foundation for Suicide Prevention; National Shooting Sports Foundation

Related Links

<http://www.afsp.org>