



## End Family Fire Campaign: Suicide Prevention Launch Messaging September 2020

### Key Messages

- **In a nutshell:** When someone attempts suicide with a gun, they rarely get a second chance to live a full life. By storing all guns in our homes securely, we can help ensure a temporary crisis doesn't turn into a permanent tragedy.
- **In a slightly bigger nutshell:**
  - Guns are by far the deadliest method of suicide: 90% of suicide attempts with a gun are fatal, compared to only 4% of suicide attempts with other methods, on average.
  - Access to a firearm in the household triples the risk of a suicide death.
  - By storing any guns in our homes securely, we can give our loved ones a second chance at life.
  - This safe storage message is especially critical now that gun sales and suicidal ideation have both increased dramatically amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **What We're Doing About It:** The national *End Family Fire* campaign from the Ad Council and Brady encourages all gun owners to store guns securely – locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition – to reduce the risk of family fire.
  - “Family fire” refers to a shooting involving an improperly stored or misused gun in the home that results in death or injury. Unintentional shootings, suicide, and intentional shootings are all forms of family fire.
- **CTA:** Give your loved ones a second chance at life: store your guns locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition. Learn more at [EndFamilyFire.org](https://EndFamilyFire.org).

### Key Soundbites:

- A temporary crisis shouldn't become a permanent tragedy.
- With gun suicide, there is no extra life.
- By storing all guns in our homes securely, we can give our loved ones a second chance to live a full life.
- Protect your loved ones by storing guns securely: locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition.
- Incidents of family fire – including suicide – can be prevented.
- Safe storage saves lives.
- Get tips to make your home safer at [EndFamilyFire.org](https://EndFamilyFire.org).

### Supporting Statistics for our Key Points

- **We need to talk about gun suicide – so we can talk about how to prevent it.**
  - We lose 63 people to gun suicide in America every day – more than are lost to firearm murders and unintentional shootings combined. ([Source](#))



- Over half of all gun deaths in America (61%) are suicides, but these deaths are underrepresented in the news; media coverage frequently focuses on less common events like mass shootings, which account for less than 1 percent of gun deaths. ([Source](#))
- Since the CDC began publishing data in 1981, gun suicides have outnumbered gun homicides every year.
- **Safe gun storage is an essential part of suicide prevention. Even when we own guns for protection, they can put us and our loved ones at risk.**
  - Guns are by far the deadliest method of suicide: 90% of suicide attempts with a gun are fatal. In comparison, suicide attempts with other methods are only fatal in 4% of cases, on average. ([Source](#))
  - Access to a firearm in the household triples the risk of a suicide death. ([Source](#))
  - 90% of law enforcement officials recommend not having a gun in the home when someone is in crisis. ([Source](#))
  - In 75% of youth firearm suicides for which the gun storage method could be identified, the gun was stored loaded and unlocked. ([Source](#))
- **Storing guns securely can give our loved ones a second chance at life.**
  - Many suicide attempts are undertaken impulsively during moments of temporary crisis. ([Source](#))
  - Delaying someone's access to a gun by even a few moments—by storing guns unloaded, locked, and separately from ammunition—can give them a second chance at life.
  - The second chance is real. The vast majority of people who survive a suicide attempt – over 90% – do not go on to die by suicide. 70% never make another suicide attempt. ([Source](#))
- **This safe storage message is more critical than ever amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as gun sales and mental health challenges have both increased dramatically.**
  - CDC data shows that 11% of Americans have seriously considered suicide amid the pandemic. ([Source](#), August 2020)
    - If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or text HOME to 741741.
  - From March to August, the FBI completed over 20.4 million background checks for gun sales or transfers - nearly 6.4 million more than in the same time span last year. ([Source](#))

### **Watchouts & Guidelines**

- Messaging should always be empathetic and respectful, and without judgment toward gun owners or guns. Many people own guns out of a desire to protect their families—something we can all empathize with.



- In the context of the *End Family Fire* campaign, don't mention politics, political figures, or laws around gun ownership. The campaign focuses on safe gun storage, not policy changes or laws.
- How to talk about mental health and suicide:
  - Don't say "committed suicide," instead say "died by suicide"
  - Don't say "successful" suicide attempts, instead say fatal attempt, or suicide death
  - Don't say "mentally ill people," instead say "people living with mental illness" or "people in crisis"