



End Family Fire Campaign: 'Safe Stories' of Those Impacted by Gun Suicide July 2023

Key Messages

- The new addition of the [End Family Fire](#) campaign shares the stories of seven people, from across the U.S. and a variety of backgrounds, impacted by gun suicide. All current gun owners featured in this campaign are advocates for keeping their firearms safely secured – locked, unloaded and away from ammunition. [View the new campaign here.](#)
- **Why it matters:**
 - Unfortunately in America, 65% of gun owners have at least one unlocked firearm, allowing children and others access to them, too often with deadly results. [Annals of Internal Medicine](#)
 - 67 people a day die by gun suicide, more than those lost to firearm murders and unintentional shootings. <https://www.bradyunited.org/key-statistics>
 - Access to a firearm also [triples the risk of death by suicide](#), with [suicide attempts with a gun being fatal 90% of the time on average](#).
 - Gun suicide rates have had the largest one-year increase from 2020 to 2021. [John Hopkins Gun Violence Report](#)
 - Access to a firearm increases the risk of death by suicide by 300%. [The Annals of Internal Medicine](#)
 - Having a firearm stored securely — locked, unloaded, and away from ammunition — can prevent fatal outcomes in a moment of crisis.
- **What We're Doing About It:** "Safe Stories" feature the stories of gun owners and how safe gun storage helps prevent gun suicide. By putting time and distance between a person in a moment of crisis and their gun, both of these strategies are proven in preventing "family fire" - a shooting caused by someone having access to a gun from the home when they shouldn't have it. [EndFamilyFire.org](#)
- **CTA:** Help prevent suicide. Store your guns securely: locked, unloaded and away from ammunition.

Key Soundbites:

- End Family Fire is changing the way gun owners think about and store their firearms, and is the only national program that uses the power of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to bring gun owners into the conversation to reduce preventable firearm deaths.



- Now in its fifth year, the public education effort has had proven success at changing attitudes and behaviors around gun usage and safe storage. According to an Ad Council study, 74% of respondents who are aware of End Family Fire’s gun suicide prevention PSAs agree that storing all of their guns locked and unloaded reduces the risk of someone dying by suicide in their home, compared to 56% of those not aware
- The importance of safe storage of firearms helps prevent a moment of crisis from turning into a tragedy.
- Gun owners can protect their loved ones from gun violence or suicide by storing guns securely: locked, unloaded, and separately from ammunition.
- Incidents of family fire – including suicide – can be prevented.
- Safe gun storage saves lives.
- Learn more about what's available at EndFamilyFire.org, including more stories of gun owners who have contemplated suicide, information on safe storage, and resources for those in crisis.
- The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Supporting Statistics for our Key Points

- **We need to talk about gun suicide – so we can talk about how to prevent it.**
 - The new “Safe Stories” campaign comes as gun suicide rates have reached a [record high](#), with the largest one-year increase in over 40 years.
 - We lose 67 people to gun suicide in the U.S. every day – more than are lost to firearm murders and unintentional shootings combined. ([Source](#))
 - Over half of all gun deaths in America (54%) are suicides, but these deaths are underrepresented in the news. ([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. ([Source](#))
 - Most suicide attempts are undertaken during moments of temporary crisis. ([Source](#))
 - Increasing time and distance between a person in crisis and an available firearm—by storing guns unloaded, locked, and separately from ammunition—can help prevent a suicide attempt.

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.

- *End Family Fire* is a non-political public health campaign that takes no stance on policy. In the context of the campaign, don't mention politics, political figures, or laws around gun ownership. The campaign focuses on safe gun storage, not policy changes or laws.

Don't Say This	Say This
committed suicide	died by suicide, took their own life, ended their life
"unsuccessful" attempt "successful" attempt "suicide death"	"interrupted" or "non-fatal" attempt or just say "suicide attempt" "completed" attempt or "completed" suicide, fatal attempt, suicide death ("attempted suicide" is not preferable but sometimes unavoidable)
<i>don't describe a method or specific attempt in detail</i>	<i>OK to provide statistics about different kinds of methods (with language caveats above)</i>
<i>don't suggest that suicides are due to a single cause or precipitating event</i>	<i>do note that warning signs may be hard to recognize, that suicide is multi-determined and complex.</i>
<i>suggest that suicide is inexplicable</i>	<i>Research is teaching us more everyday about what contributes to suicide risk.</i>
More people die of suicide each day than have died in the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S.	More people die of suicide each day than from firearm murders and unintentional shootings put together.



<p>Guns are the most lethal method of suicide <i>[without directly connecting to a safe storage CTA]</i></p>	<p><i>[for example]</i> Guns are the most lethal method of suicide. That's why storing firearms securely can help give our loved ones a second chance at life.</p>
<p>Mentally ill people</p>	<p>Those living with mental illness; people in crisis; people "living with a mental health condition or "experiencing mental health struggles"</p>