

Lethal Means Safety Counseling

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Disclosures

None

Learning Objectives

At the end of this presentation participants should be able to:

- Discuss the evidence supporting safety planning
- Know how to find a template for an evidence-supported safety plan
- Be able to utilize lethal means safety questions

Harm Reduction

- Naloxone and training
- Syringe exchange & safer smoking kits
- Fentanyl test strips
- Connect to overdose education, counseling and referral to treatment for infectious diseases and SUD
- Info on PrEP
- Condoms
- Medication lock boxes

Safety Planning

- Identifying warning signs
- Identifying coping strategies
- Identifying distractions
- Identifying social supports and professional supports
- Taking steps to make the environment safer

Safety Plan Template

- Use of a safety plan template + two follow-up phone calls was associated with 45% reduction in suicidal behavior during the 6-month follow up period (OR: 0.56)
- This intervention doubled the odds of attending at least 1 outpatient mental health visit (OR: 2.06)

Stanley B, Brown G, et al. Comparison of the Safety Planning Intervention With Follow-up vs Usual Care of Suicidal Patients Treated in the Emergency Department. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2018;75(9):894-900

Patient Safety Plan Template

Step 1: Warning signs (thoughts, images, mood, situation, behavior) that a crisis may be developing:	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
Step 2: Internal coping strategies – Things I can do to take my mind off my problems without contacting another person (relaxation technique, physical activity):	
1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
Step 3: People and social settings that provide distraction:	
1. Name _____	Phone _____
2. Name _____	Phone _____
3. Place _____	4. Place _____
Step 4: People whom I can ask for help:	
1. Name _____	Phone _____
2. Name _____	Phone _____
3. Name _____	Phone _____
Step 5: Professionals or agencies I can contact during a crisis:	
1. Clinician Name _____	Phone _____
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # _____	
2. Clinician Name _____	Phone _____
Clinician Pager or Emergency Contact # _____	
3. Local Urgent Care Services _____	
Urgent Care Services Address _____	
Urgent Care Services Phone _____	
4.	Suicide Prevention Lifeline Phone: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Step 6: Making the environment safe:	
1.	_____
2.	_____
<small>Safety Plan Template ©2008 Barbara Stanley and Gregory K. Brown, is reprinted with the express permission of the authors. No portion of the Safety Plan Template may be reproduced without their express, written permission. You can contact the authors at bhs2@columbia.edu or gregbrow@mail.med.upenn.edu.</small>	

The one thing that is most important to me and worth living for is:

Lethal Means Safety Counseling ¹

A conversation to help identify lethal means in the household

Recognizes that:

- Those who use drugs and alcohol are at greater risk of harm from lethal means than those who do not use substances ^{2,3}
- Limiting or reducing access to lethal means during periods heightened suicidality can reduce risk of dying by suicide ²
- Interviews with people who were experiencing SI with intent and had a history of self-harm, reported that a barrier such as a gun lock could or did cause a delay - - giving them time to change their mind. ⁴

1. Betz ME, Boudreaux ED. Managing suicidal patients in the emergency department. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*. 2016;67(2):276.

2. Branas CC, Richmond TS, et al. Acute alcohol consumption, alcohol outlets, gun suicide. *Substance Use and Misuse*. 2011;46(13):1592-1603.

3. Bruce ML, Ten Have TR, et al. Reducing suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms in depressed older primary care patients: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA*, 2004;291(9):1081-1091.

4. Waliski A. *Veteran Suicide by firearm: Presentation of pilot results and consultation conference for future research*, Little Rock, AR: University of Arkansas - Medical Sciences Research Conference Series.

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Who to engage in this conversation:

- Utilize with patients who have a history of self harm or suicide attempts
- Utilize with patients who have a hx of problematic substance use

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How to have this conversation in a non-stigmatizing way?

Lethal means assessment can be easily integrated into other means of social determinants questioning, such as the WellRx ¹

WellRx: Social Determinants of Health Questions

In the past 2 months:

1. Did you or others you live with eat smaller meals or skip meals because you didn't have money for food?
2. Are you homeless or worried that you might be in the future?
3. Do you have trouble paying for your utilities?
4. Do you have trouble finding or paying for a ride?
5. Do you need daycare, or better daycare for your kids?
6. Are you unemployed or without regular income?
7. Do you need help finding a better job?
8. Do you need help getting more education?
9. Are you concerned about someone in your home using drugs or alcohol?
10. Do you feel unsafe in your daily life?
11. Is anyone in your home threatening or abusing you?

Lethal Means Safety Counseling Questions

“We’ve had previous experiences of other patients getting into risky situations when medications aren’t stored safely in the home.”

Where do you store your medications?

How easy is it to access them?

How about your Suboxone?

- We talk about safety storing medications because it's a way to keep you and others safe. What ideas do you have to keep your medications safe and harder to get to if you or others were ever in a crisis situation? Would it be ok if I shared some ideas with you?
 - Throwing out unused medications
 - Storing in locked drawer or box
 - Discuss avoiding mixing with alcohol or non-Rx'd substances

National Suicide Hotline 988

- Call/Text 988 or Chat [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)
- Emotional Support
- Connection To Resources
- Crisis Intervention

Questions or Discussion