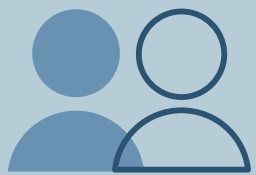


Means Safety vs. Means Restriction

Reducing access to lethal means for suicide can minimize suicide risk. Such steps are especially important for firearms, which are the most lethal method for suicide.

When discussing ways to manage firearm access and storage, the terminology matters.



Firearm ownership can be a part of a person's identity or culture.



Not all sources are perceived as credible when discussing firearm safety¹, so the wording we use is especially important to increase credibility and build relationships.



Research suggests that the term “means safety” is considered more acceptable than “means restriction”.²

Means Safety vs. Means Restriction

Means Safety

Safety-oriented

Temporary, during time of crisis

Collaborative, determine ways to increase safety together

Means Restriction

Suggests firearm ownership is being taken away

Sounds permanent

Limits autonomy

Viewed as a negative consequence

The term “means safety” can also be used for reducing access to other lethal means for suicide, like medications.

1. Crifasi, C. K., Doucette, M. L., McGinty, E. E., Webster, D. W., & Barry, C. L. (2018). Storage practices of US gun owners in 2016. *American Journal of Public Health, 108*(4), 532-537.
2. Stanley, I. H., Hom, M. A., Rogers, M. L., Anestis, M. D., & Joiner, T. E. (2017). Discussing firearm ownership and access as part of suicide risk assessment and prevention: “means safety” versus “means restriction”. *Archives of Suicide Research, 21*(2), 237-253.