

Hunters Can Help Prevent Gun Suicides



Minnesota has a long and proud history of hunting and hunters have a long and proud history of gun safety. The exception is suicide: the presence of a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide by *anyone* living in the household by 300%.

One Minnesotan dies by suicide with a gun every day. Suicides account for 80 percent of gun deaths in Minnesota, and have increased 65 percent since the year 2000. Gun suicides take place disproportionately in rural Minnesota, where there is the highest rate of gun ownership. Males between the ages of 15-25 have the highest rate of gun suicide in Minnesota, followed by males ages 55-60.

Responsible Gun Owners of Minnesota urges all hunters and gun owners to learn the warning signs of suicide on the back of this card, and then watch out for your friends and neighbors. **All firearms should be removed from the home during times of crisis — friends don't let friends keep guns when they are unsafe.** If you need more information or have questions, call:

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

or text "START" to 741-741.

Protect Minnesota

RESPONSIBLE GUN OWNERS OF MINNESOTA

285 Dale Street N, St. Paul, MN 55103

651-645-3271 info@protectmn.org

Warning Signs of Suicide

Feeling things like:

unimportant, trapped, hopeless, alone, angry, overwhelmed, unmotivated, depressed, sad, irritable, impulsive, chronic pain, frustrated

Saying things like:

"It won't matter soon anyway."

"I'm so useless, I'm just taking up space."

"Things will never get better for me."

"You're my best friend. I'll miss you."

"I've thought about how I'd kill myself."

"Life is so hard. Lately I've felt like ending it all."

"They'll be sorry when I'm gone."

Doing things like:

Using drugs or alcohol more than usual.

Engaging in self-harming or risky behavior.

Talking about guns and killing.

Giving away their most valuable possessions.

Losing interest in their favorite activities.

Admiring people who have died by suicide.

Planning for death by writing a will or letter.

Eating or sleeping more or less than usual.

Feeling more sick, tired or achy than usual.

Don't Ignore the Warning Signs!

If someone you know is having suicidal thoughts,

- 1) Tell them that you are concerned and ask if they have made a plan to take their own life.
Your first priority is to keep them safe.
- 2) Offer to hold their guns temporarily until they are no longer suicidal. Insist on this: it's better to lose a friendship than a friend.
- 3) Offer to drive them to a hospital or their clinic so they can get professional help immediately.
- 4) Make sure to inform their family.

**You can also call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
or text "START" to 741-741.**