

# Focus on Firearms: Data and Practical Skills for Preventing Gun Deaths Within Utah's Culture

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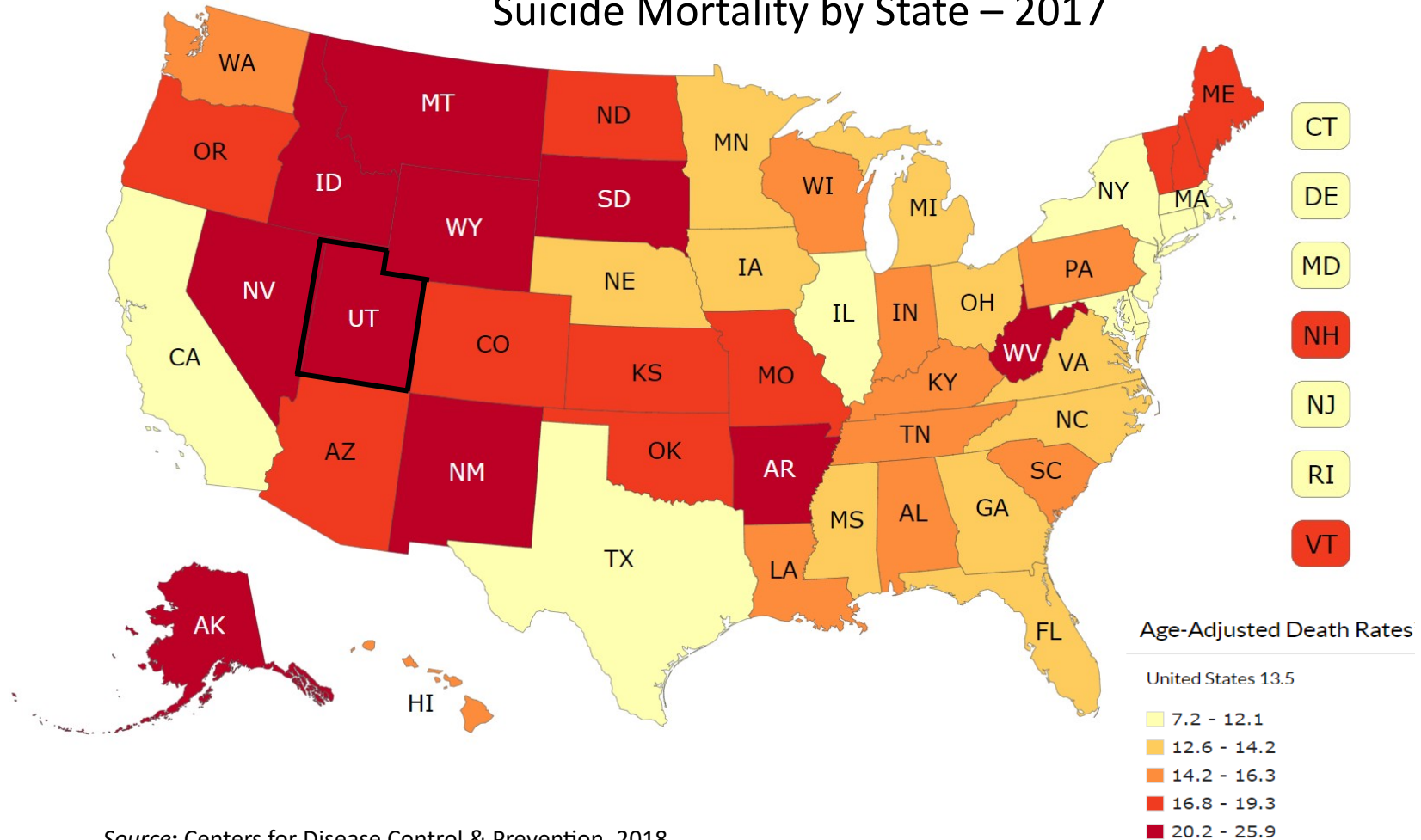
# SUICIDE IN UTAH

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**AP** Associated Press

*Suicide, at 50-year peak, pushes down US life expectancy*

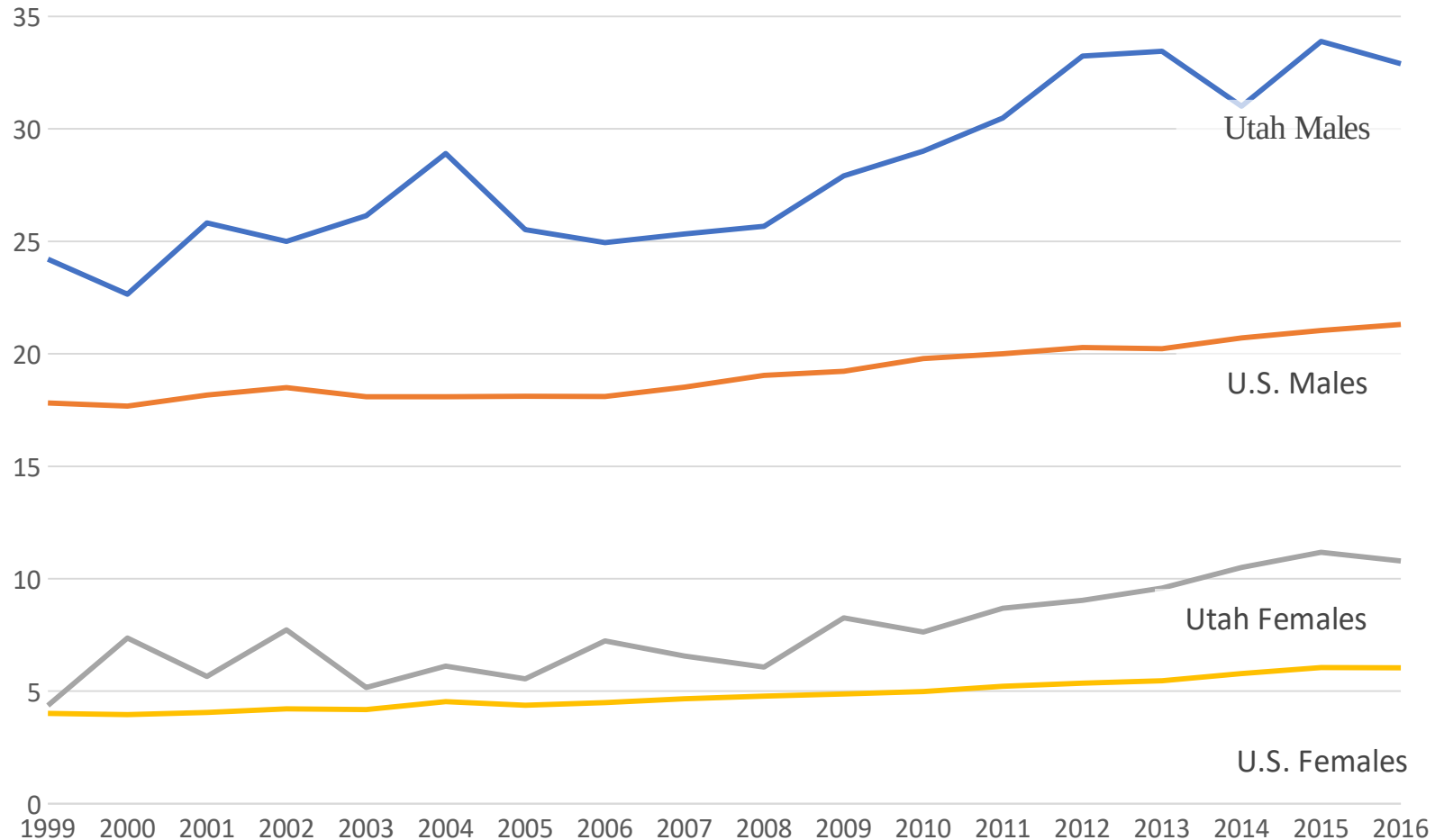
### Suicide Mortality by State – 2017



Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2018

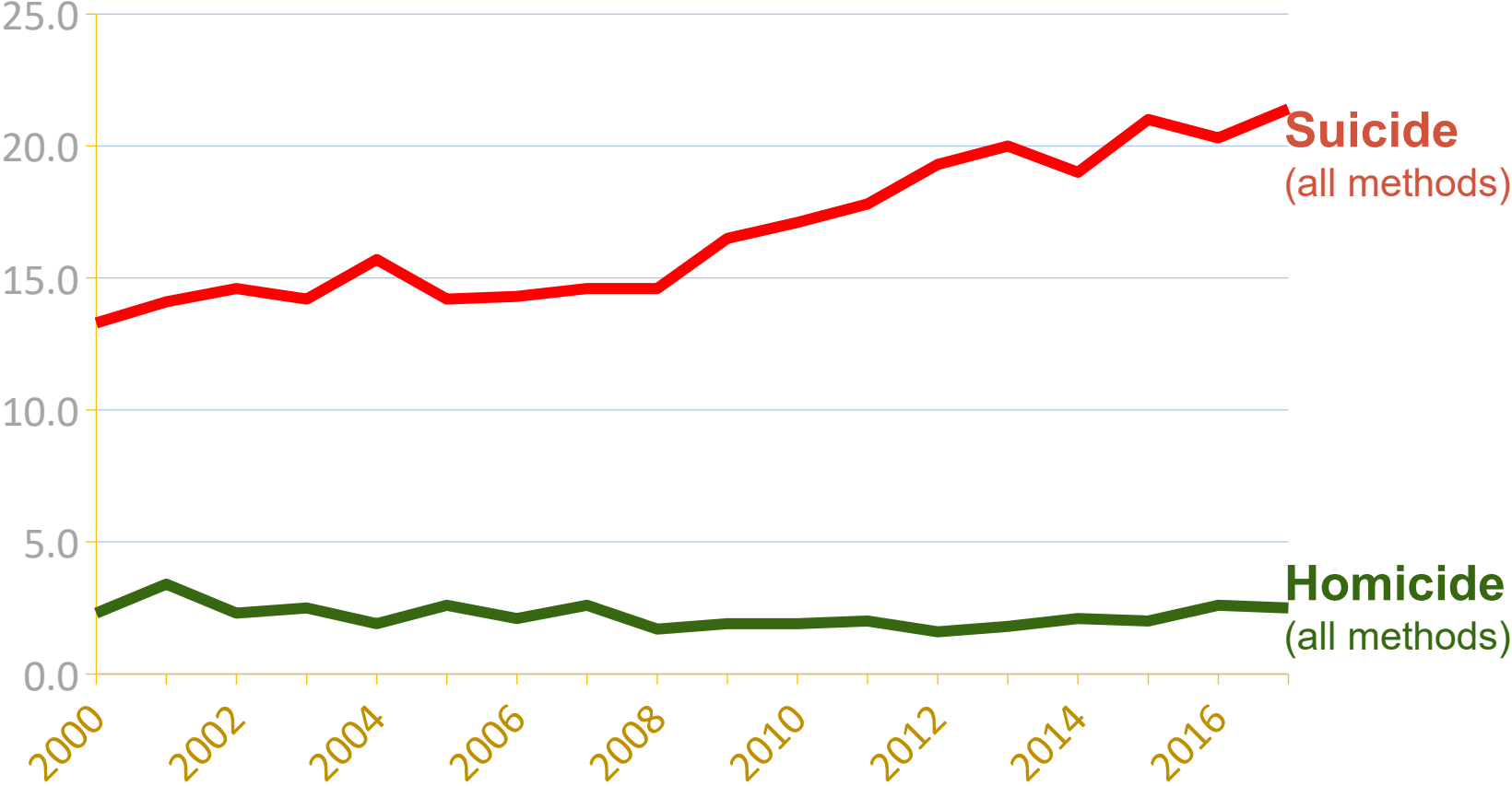
# Suicide Rate, Utah & U.S., 1999-2016

(Per 100,000 population)



# Deaths in Utah, 2000-2017

(Per 100,000 population)



Source: Barber et al., 2019

# SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

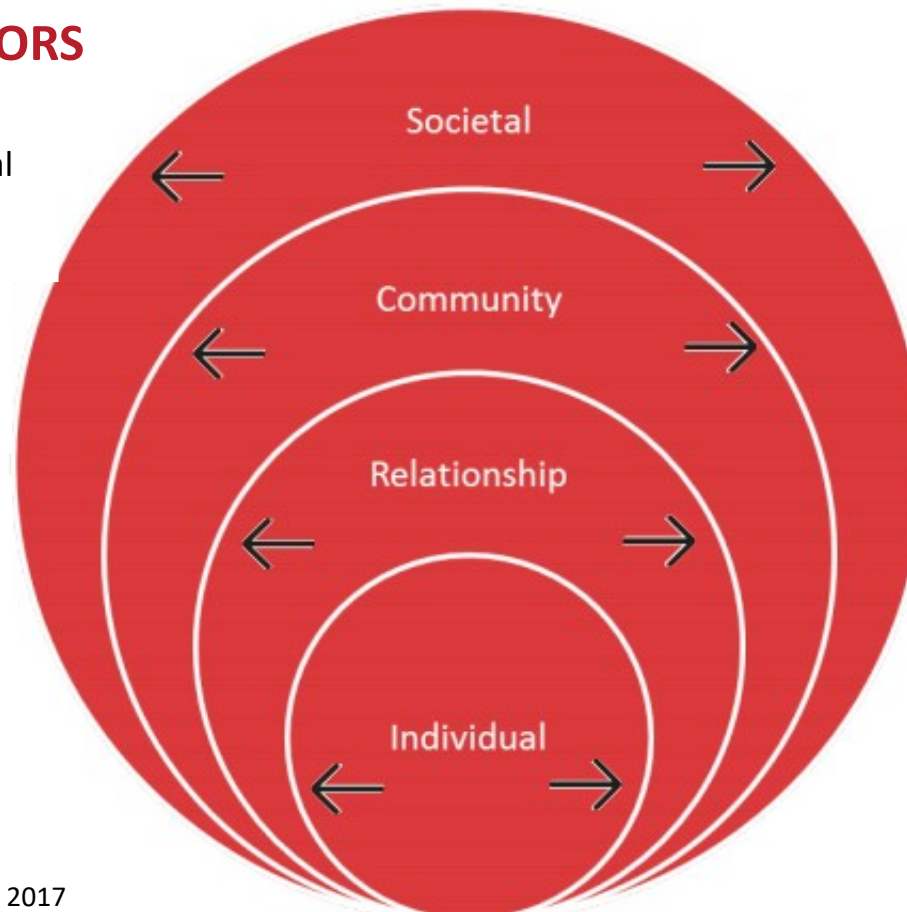
## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Quality education that address social-emotional development

Strong physical and mental healthcare supports

Family support

Coping and problem-solving skills



## RISK FACTORS

Access to lethal means

Few available sources of supportive community relationships

Family history of interpersonal violence and suicide

Substance use

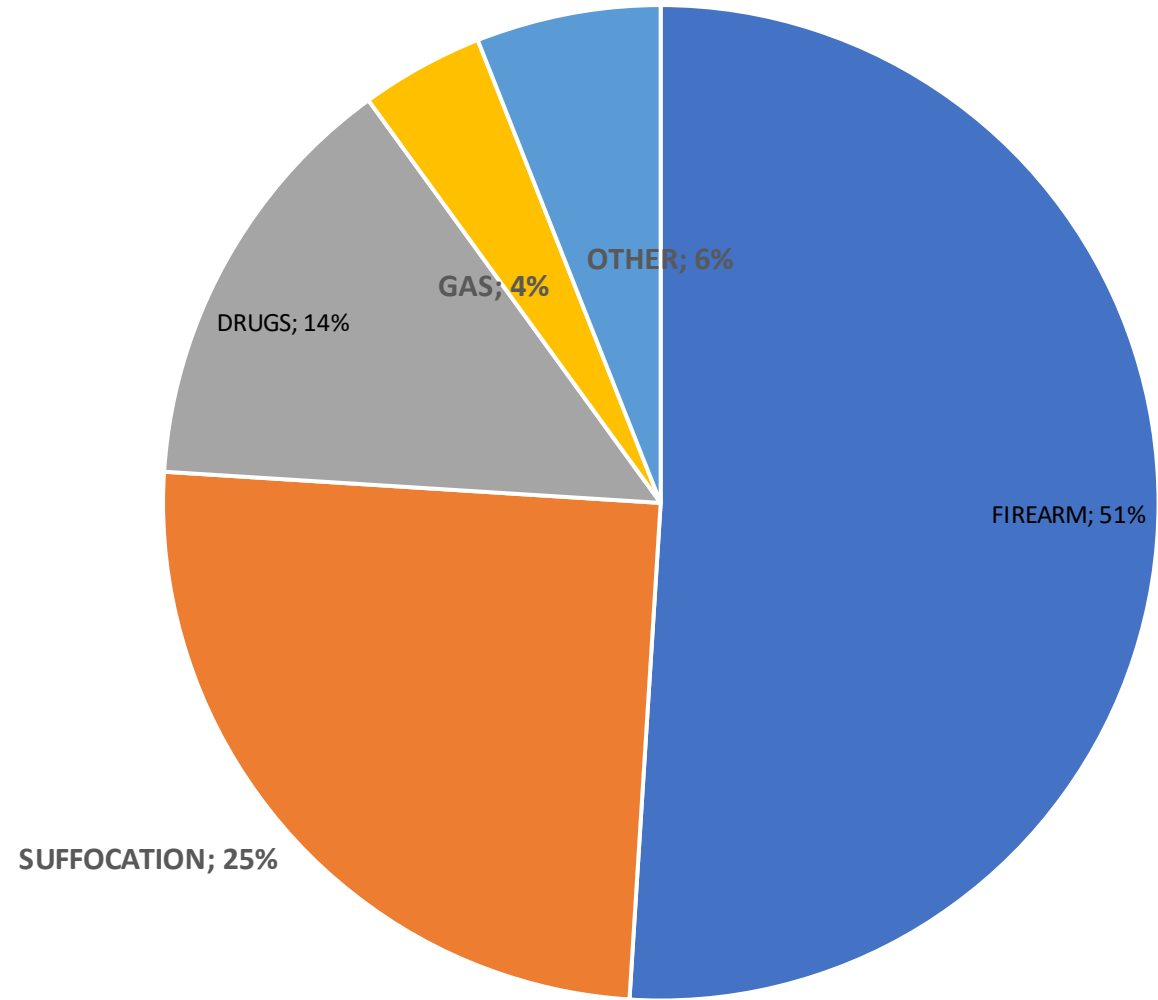
# COMPARING SUICIDES IN STATES WITH HIGH VS. LOW GUN OWNERSHIP

## **Suicides in the 15 U.S. States with the Highest vs. the 6 U.S. States with the Lowest Average Household Gun Ownership**

	High-Gun States	Low-Gun States
Population	39 million	40 million
Household Gun Ownership	47%	15%
Non-Firearm Suicide	5,060	5,446
Firearm Suicide	9,749	2,606
Total Suicide	14,809	8,052

# Method of Suicide, Utah, 2016

- 51% of all suicides are by firearm
- 85% of firearm deaths are suicides





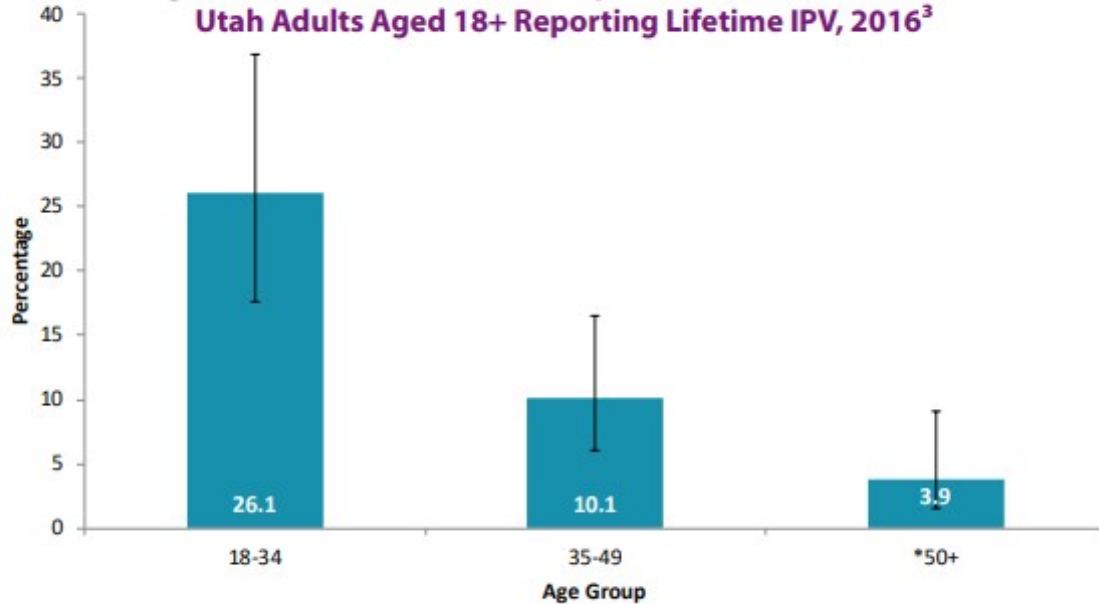
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# IPV IN UTAH

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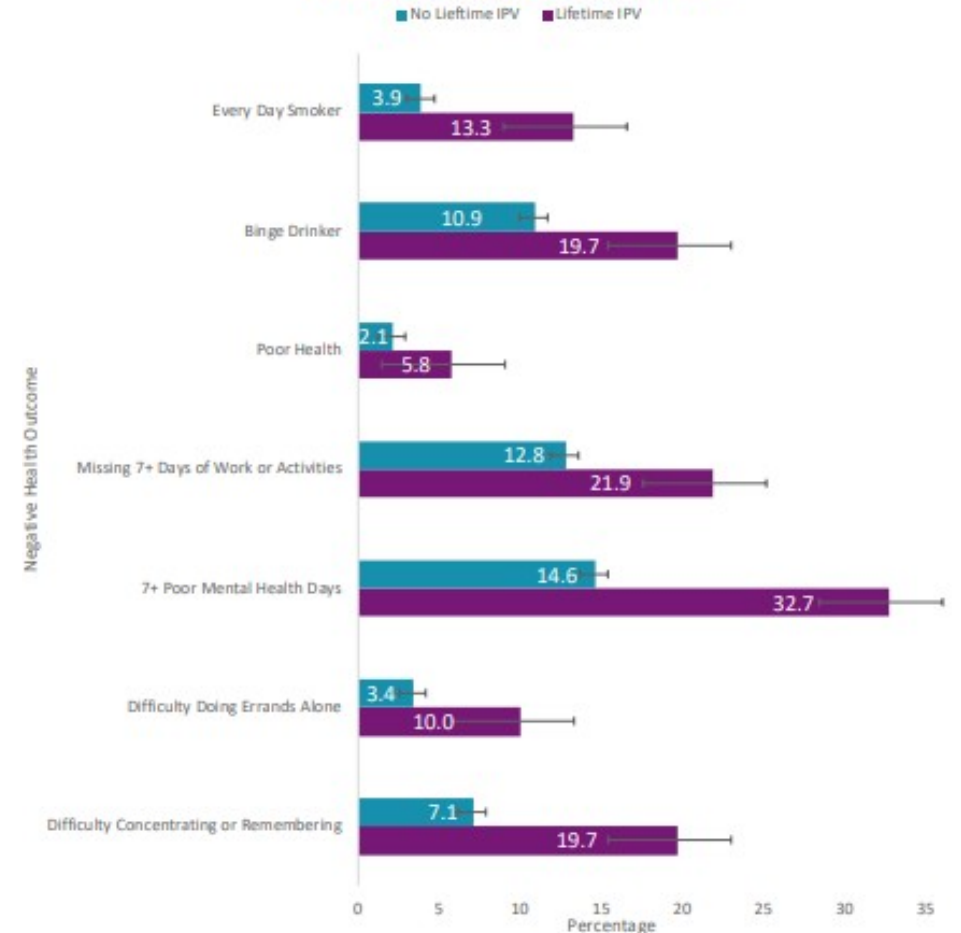
# IPV SOMEWHAT COMMON AND WITH LASTING IMPACTS

**Figure 1: Percentage of Individuals Who Have Experienced IPV in the Past 12 Months by Age, Utah Adults Aged 18+ Reporting Lifetime IPV, 2016<sup>3</sup>**



\* Use caution when interpreting the results. The estimate has a coefficient of variance between 30% - 50%.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Reported Negative Health Outcomes by Lifetime IPV, Utah Adults Aged 18+, 2016<sup>3</sup>**

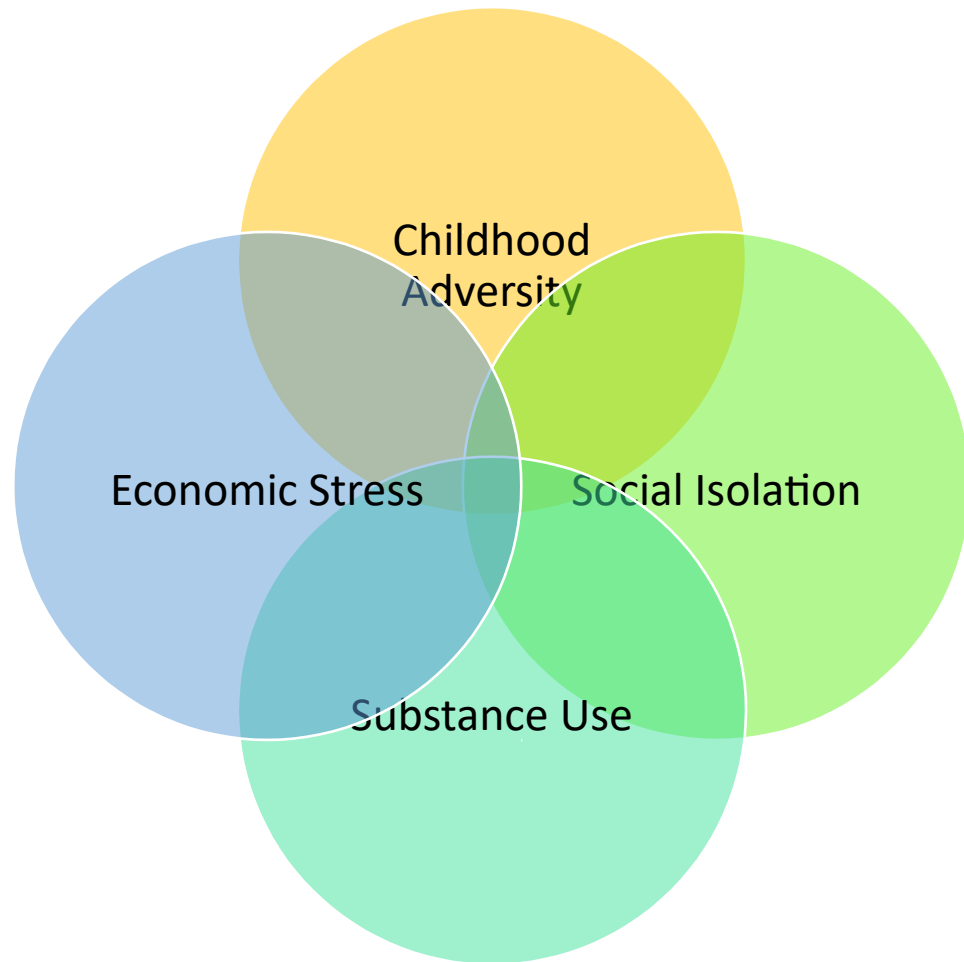


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# SUICIDE & IPV

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# 1. Suicide and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) share many risk factors



These risk factors often affect both perpetrators *and* survivors of IPV.

## 2. Prevalence of suicidal thoughts and behaviors is significantly higher among those who experience IPV

Ellsberg et al.'s 10-country analysis found that women who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence were 3x more likely to have suicidal thoughts and almost 4x more likely to have attempted suicide than those women who had not experienced such violence.

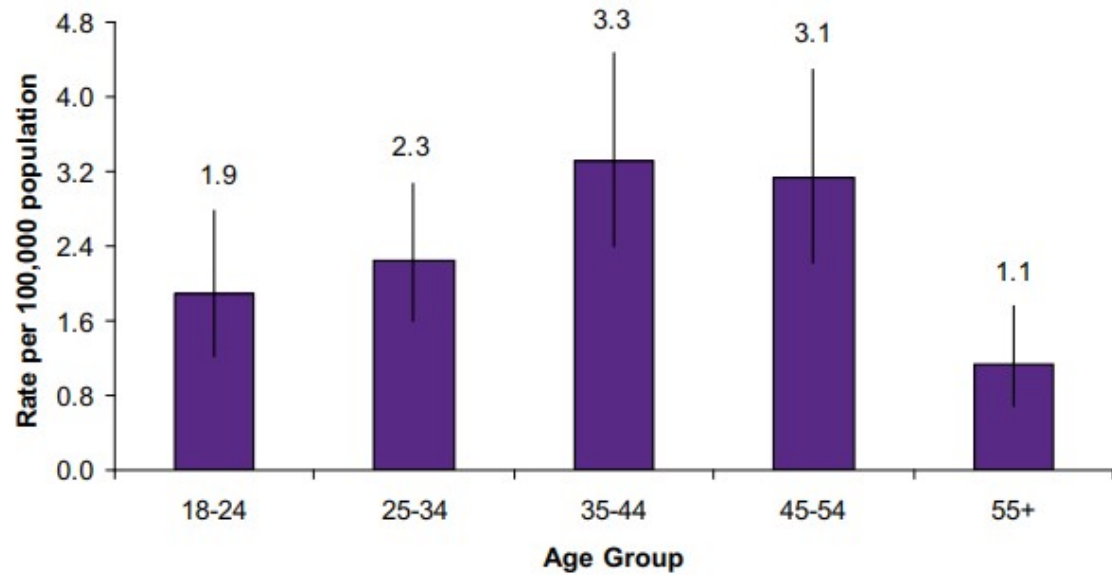


### 3. There is a high prevalence of suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviors among perpetrators of IPV

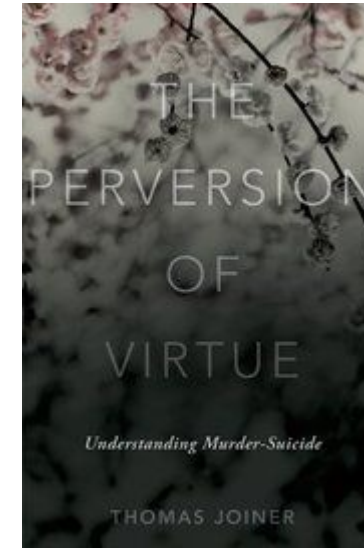


Studies have found that 25-50% of male perpetrators involved in IPV-related interventions experienced recent suicidal thoughts or behaviors.

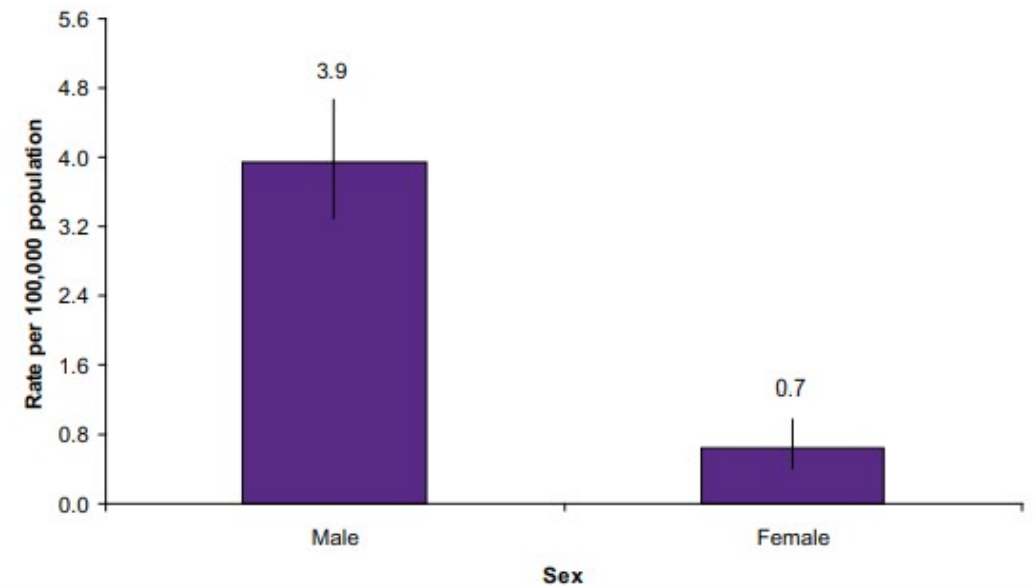
**Figure 18: Number of domestic violence-related suicides per 100,000 adults by age group, Utah 2005-2008, n=165**



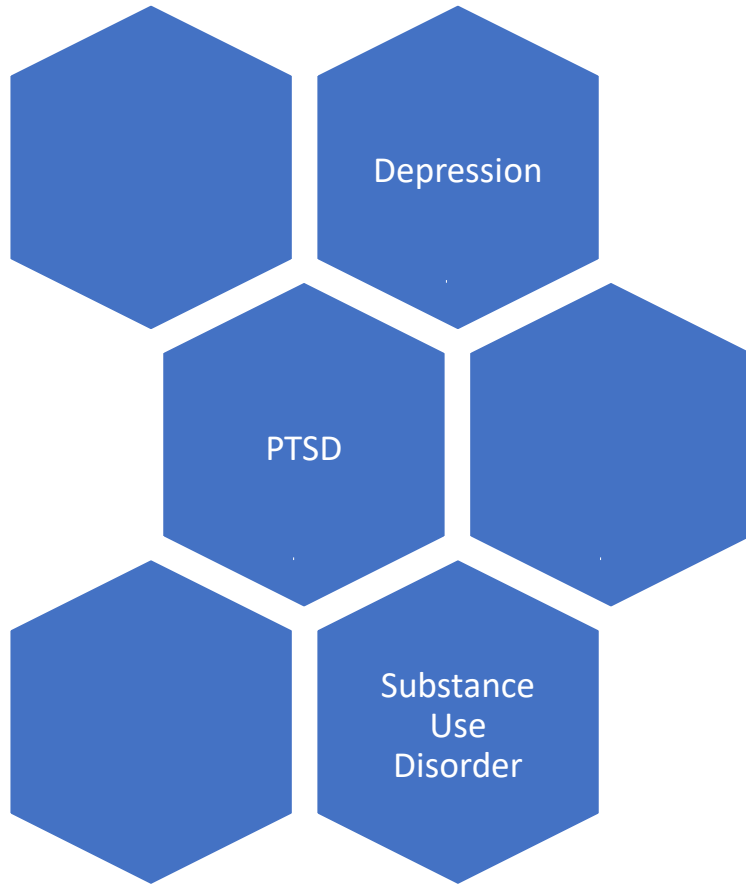
1. Mercy
2. Justice
3. Duty
4. Glory



**Figure 19: Number of domestic violence-related suicides per 100,000 adults by sex, Utah 2005-2008, n=165 (age-adjusted)**



## 4. IPV survivors are more likely to experience behavioral health issues associated with higher suicide risk



In addition, the array of lifetime adversities experienced by survivors often make it more difficult for them to access key economic and social resources, thus increasing suicide risk.



## 5. Prior IPV is the biggest risk factor for murder-suicide

- According to 2017 data, 89% of murder-suicides were perpetrated by men, 65% involved an intimate partner, and 82% occurred inside the home.
- Most (91%) of murder-suicides involve a firearm.
- Particularly vulnerable times include when a person being victimized has left or is deciding to leave an abusive relationship.

rip Takes Detour Into Murder And Suicide  
**Father kills son, self**  
Maumelle mom killed child, then herself, police say

believe officer killed girlfriend,  
then turned gun on himself  
Man kills wife, self at tag agency  
**COP IN MURDER SUICIDE**

Road Trip Takes Tragic Turn  
**Murder/suicide leaves city stunned on Sunday**

## 6. A perpetrators' access to firearms has major consequences in IPV

- Access to a firearm dramatically increases the risk of a perpetrator murdering his or her intimate partner.
- According to the FBI, among all women murdered using a firearm, half were shot by their intimate partner.
- About 4.5 million women alive today have had an intimate partner threaten them with a gun. Nearly 1 million have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner.



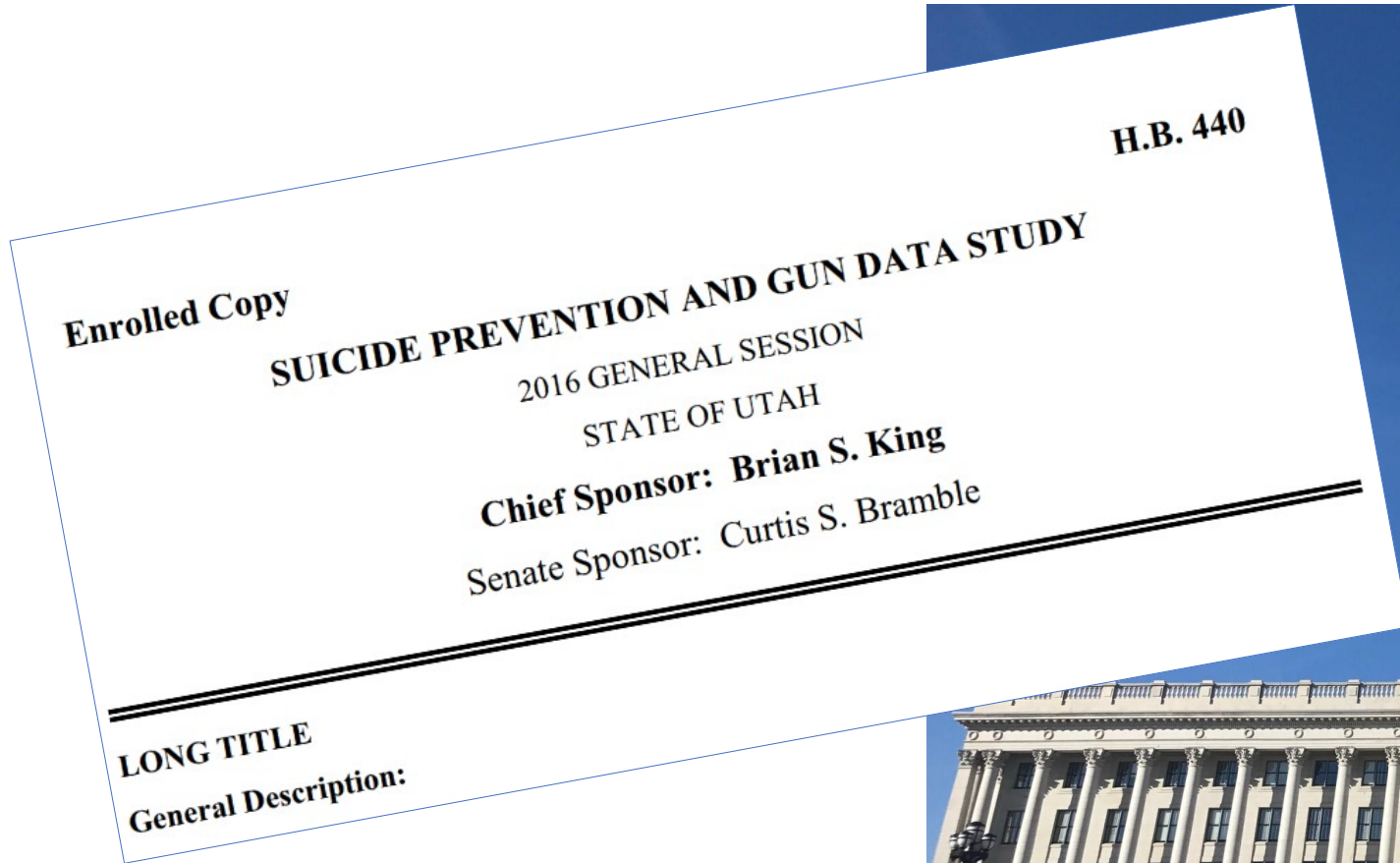
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# NEW RESEARCH

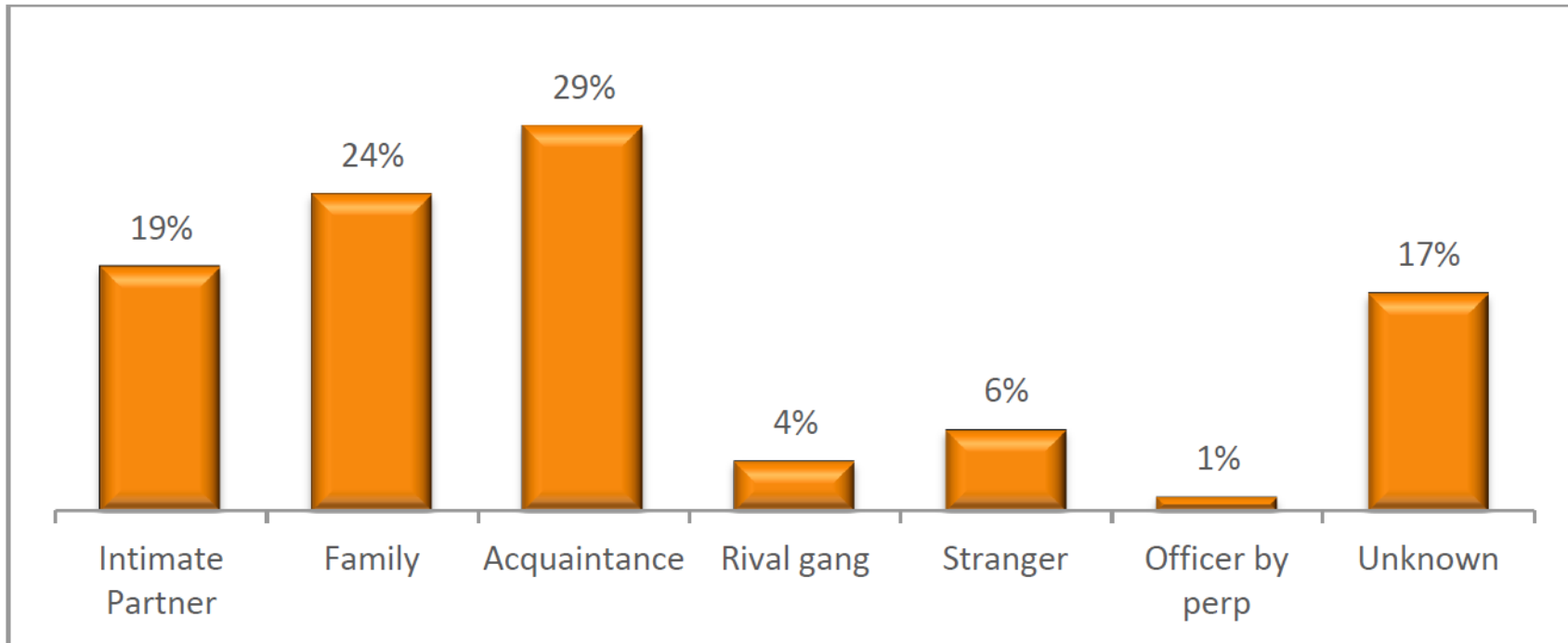
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# HB 440 (2016)

- Utah Legislature Calls for Study on Firearms and Suicide



# RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO SUSPECT – UTAH HOMICIDES, 2011-2015



Among child homicide victims 79% were killed by a family member (usually parent or mother's boyfriend)

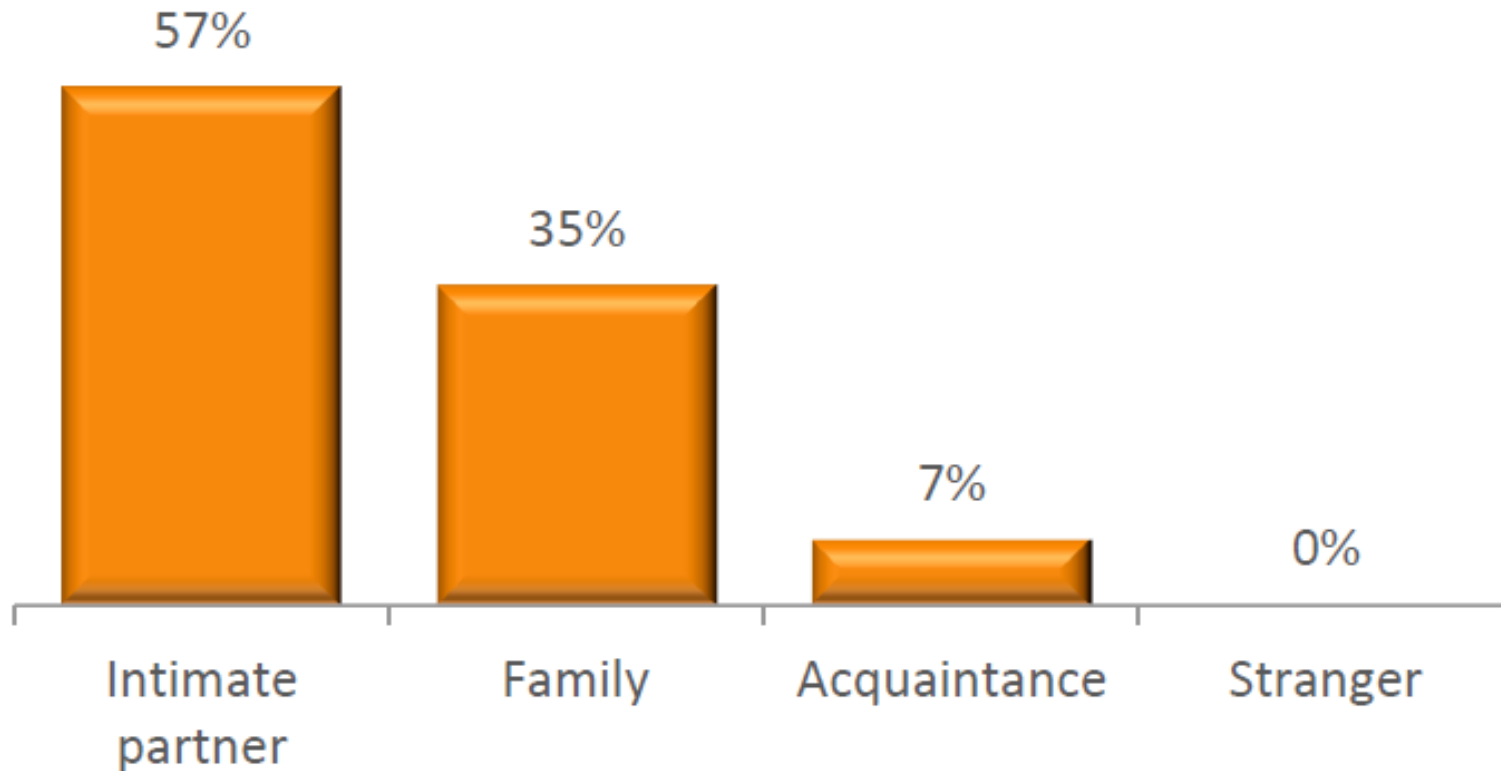
Among women (ages 18-64) homicides, 66% were killed by a current or former intimate partner, 2% by a stranger.



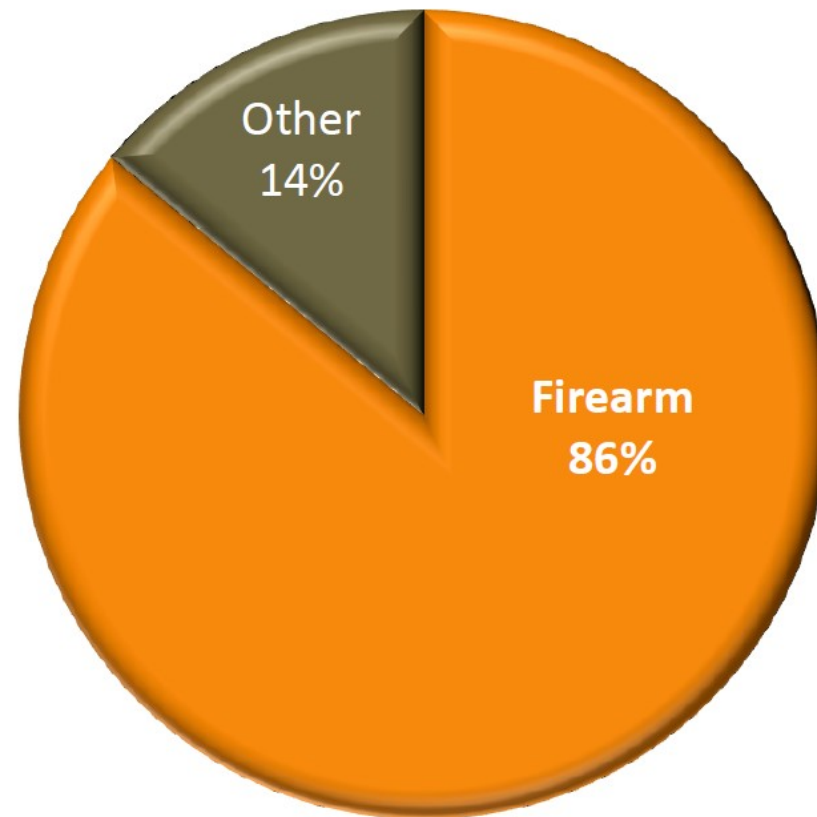
# HOMICIDES BY STRANGERS ... NOT WHAT YOU PICTURE

- For 40%, victims were involved in criminal activity at the time of the homicide (e.g. drug dealer targeted for robbery)
- Another 17% were justifiable homicides of criminals or perceived criminals
- 14% were escalating arguments
- Only 26% (n=11 over 5 years) were “what you picture” – e.g. home invasion, random attack

# RELATIONSHIP OF VICTIM TO SUSPECT IN HOMICIDE-SUICIDES, UTAH, 2006-2015



# TYPE OF WEAPON USED AND TYPE OF INCIDENT IN HOMICIDE-SUICIDES, UTAH, 2006-2015





# RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS AND FIREARM SUICIDE

Q: What proportion of people who took their lives with a gun were going through relationship problems, like a divorce or family conflict?



**Over half (52%)**

- Life crises + proximity of an unlocked and loaded gun can be a deadly combination.
- Routine locked and unloaded storage could potentially slow access enough to prevent some of these deaths

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# LETHAL MEANS REDUCTION

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**Putting time and distance between a person with a suicidal impulse and a highly lethal method is one of the most effective ways to prevent suicide.**







Israel

# Why Does Lethal Means Reduction Work?

1. Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis
2. Guns are deadly, fast, and irreversible
3. It's not true that "They will find another way"

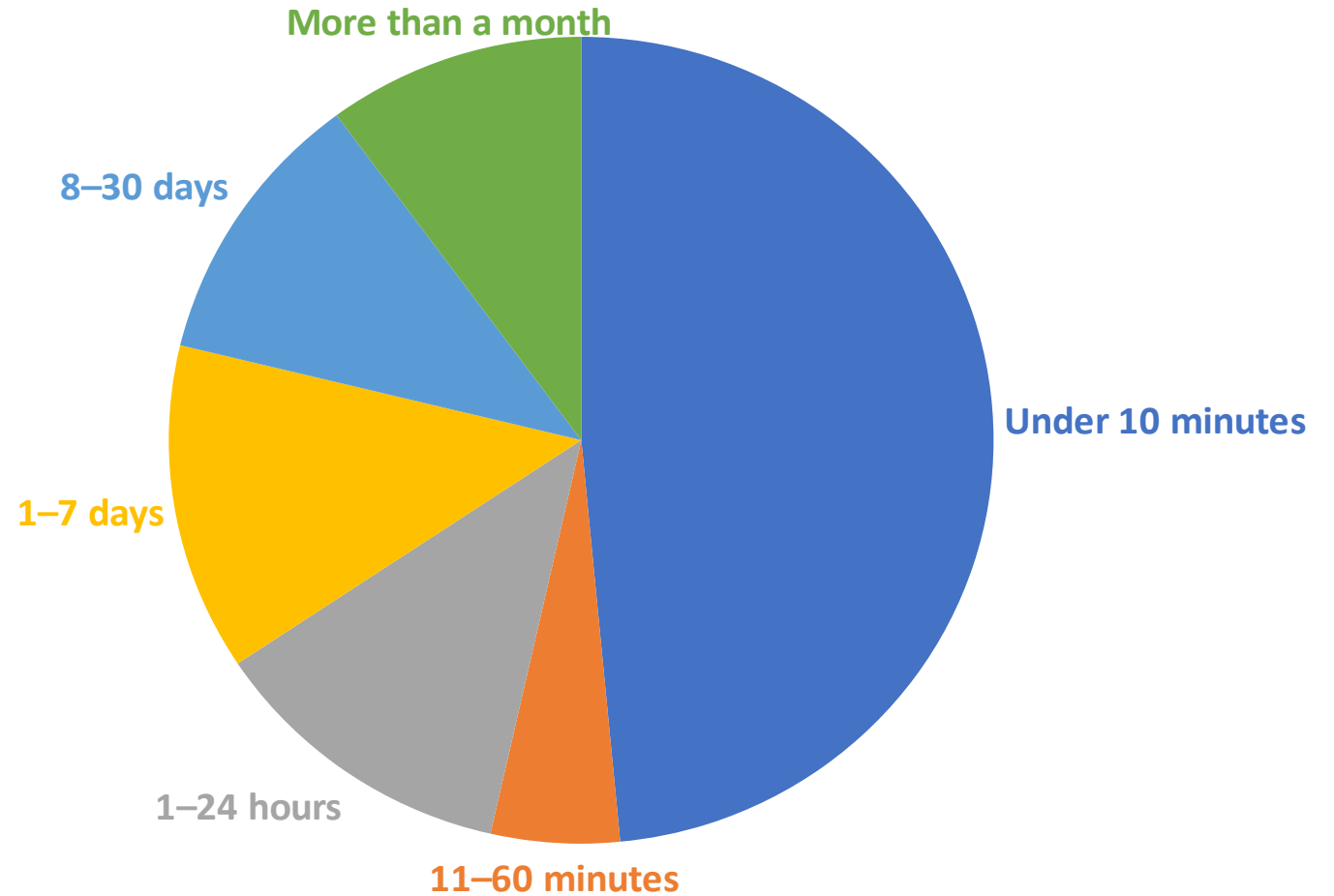




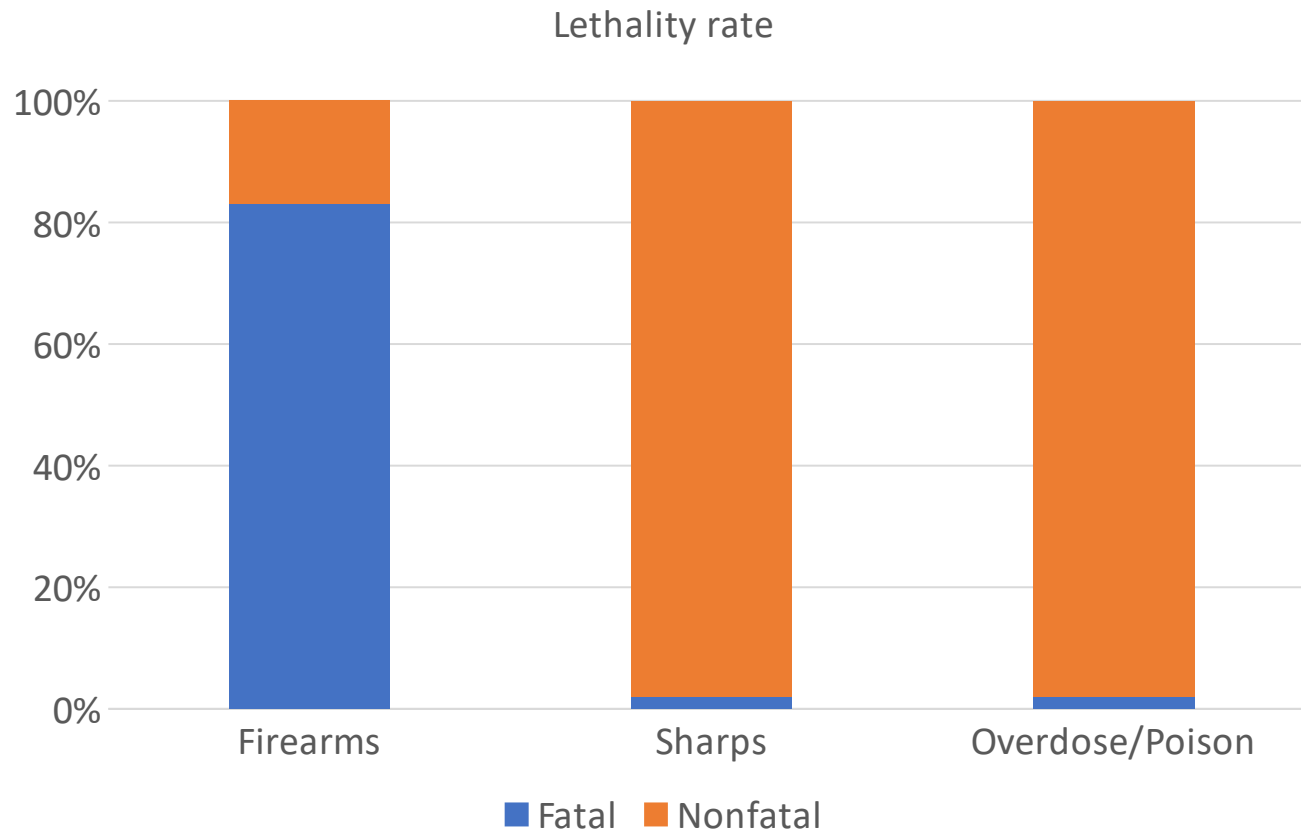
# 1. Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis

People seen in the hospital following a suicide attempt were asked when they had *first* started thinking about making that attempt.

Almost 48% responded that they first started thinking about suicide **less than 10 minutes prior to an attempt.**



## 2. Guns are deadly, fast, and irreversible



Sharp instruments and overdose/poison are lethal in 1-2% of cases

NOTE: We caution against providing information about the very low fatality for sharps and overdose to your patients.

### 3. It's not true that “they will find another way”

- Over 90% of people who attempt suicide and survive do NOT go on to take their lives
- A life saved in the short-term is usually a life a saved for good!





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# COLLABORATION WITH GUN OWNERS

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Law Enforcement

Researchers

Gun Owners

Health Professionals

Veterans Groups

Survivors



- Guns are symbols of violence
- Gun regulations increase safety
- Guns are not necessary for safety
- Guns are mostly harmful
- Gun violence diminishes personal liberty



- Guns are symbols of personal freedom
- Gun regulations limit freedom
- Guns are necessary for personal safety
- Guns are mostly beneficial
- Gun ownership is a Constitutional right

Source: Adaptation of Stewart, Kuhls, Rotundo, & Bulger, 2018





- 85% of gun deaths in Utah are suicides
- We want our loved ones to be safe



## COMMON GOAL:

A new social norm - no person in suicidal crisis should have ready access to a firearm.

## PERSUASIVE MESSAGES:

1. Respect pro-gun values
2. Focus on safety, rather than loss of access to guns
3. Respect the sacrifice gun owners make in reducing access even temporarily
4. Build on values of family protection and “friends helping friends”
5. Framed as part of a preventive, not prohibitive, strategy

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# SAFE STORAGE

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# FIREARM STORAGE: OBJECTIVE

## **SAFEST:**

**Store guns away from home while the person is at increased risk.**



## **NEXT BEST:**

**Store in a gun safe or lock box at home and keep the keys/combo from the at-risk person.**





**SAFEST APPROACH!**

## OFF-SITE STORAGE OPTIONS

- Relative or friend
- Gun stores
- Gun ranges
- Self-storage facility
- Pawn shops



**NEXT BEST APPROACH!**

## ON-SITE STORAGE OPTIONS



If patients are unwilling or unable to store guns away from home, or until they do, advise them to...

- Lock guns unloaded in a gun safe or lock box.
- Keep ammo out of the home or locked separately.
- Trigger locks and cable locks aren't as safe as locking in a secure gun safe—but are better than not locking at all and can be used in with a gun safe.
- Guns already locked? Ask the patient to enlist a trusted person to change the combination or key location.



## OTHER OPTIONS

Remove a key component of the gun, such as the slide or firing pin, and store those away from home.

Hiding guns is *not* recommended. Family members often know one another's hiding places.



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# LETHAL MEANS COUNSELING

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# LANGUAGE AND COLLABORATION MATTER

- The goal is a **collaborative conversation** aimed at helping the gun owner adjust their storage decisions in light of the current situation to **enhance safety**.
- Focus on the (hopefully) **temporary nature** of both gun relocation and mental health crisis.
- Gun owners prefer language that emphasizes options and autonomy and that **accepts gun ownership**.

## What's the difference?



Let's talk over some storage options to make sure your child can't access your guns while he's struggling.



You should surrender / relinquish / give up / get rid of your guns.

# Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

## 1. Raise the Issue

“Suicidal feelings can escalate quickly and can come and go. I’d like to work on a plan for times those feelings get bad.”

“We can keep you safer by ensuring there is no quick access to things that could easily kill. Guns are the leading method of suicide *death* and medications are the leading method of *attempt*, so let’s discuss those...”





# Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

1. Raise the Issue
2. Develop a Plan

“What some people in your situation do is store their guns away from home until they’re feeling better—with someone they trust, at a self-storage unit, or a gun shop or police department. What are your thoughts about options like these?”



# Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

1. Raise the Issue
2. Develop a Plan
3. Agree on Roles

“So what I’ve heard you say is your friend will pick up your guns after work tomorrow...and your wife will get advice from a pharmacist today on safe quantities of meds to keep on hand and lock the rest.”



# Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

1. Raise the Issue
2. Develop a Plan
3. Agree on Roles
4. Document

“I’ve written down the plan here, for you to take with you. We’ll give you a call in a couple days to see how things are going.”



# Counseling on Access to Lethal Means

1. Raise the Issue
2. Develop a Plan
3. Agree on Roles
4. Document
5. Follow-Up

“Hi! I just wanted to check in and see how you are doing and also ask about the safety plan we developed—including the plan we discussed regarding gun and medication storage. How are things going?”



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# EXAMPLE

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# Example of Counseling on Access to Firearms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bh79U6rSlk0&list=PL18STxWYFOZsj0ZLXAsYvSF8qwrNuTXnZ&index=2>



# VIDEO DEBRIEF

What were some of the challenges in helping the individual see change in storage as an option?

What helped create buy-in for a shift in storage?

Other takeaways?

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DISCUSSION:

POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF  
LETHAL MEANS COUNSELING  
TO IPV

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1. We know that there can be the unintended consequences for various prevention/intervention efforts- are there concerns about CALM and related strategies for safety of survivors or family members?

2. What are additional firearm safety measures to consider?

3. What are some additional strategies to consider for both suicide and IPV prevention and intervention?



*"I'll have an ounce of prevention."*



CARTOONSTOCK

Search ID: cwl5122

*"An ounce of prevention is now worth only half a pound of cure, but it was long overdue for a correction."*

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A landscape of rolling hills under a blue sky with clouds. The text "Thank You" is overlaid in the center.

Thank You