



Consensus Statement on Youth Suicide by Firearms

Setting
Multiple

Type of Program
Protocols & Guidelines

NSSP Goals Addressed
5.1, 5.2, 5.3

Program Description

The *Consensus Statement on Youth Suicide by Firearms* was developed by the Youth Suicide by Firearms Task Force, a consortium of professionals from a range of fields including medicine, public health, suicide prevention, firearms, and public policy. The *Consensus Statement* provides recommendations for public practice and policy based upon research findings. Recommendations are divided into universal, selective, and indicated categories, and include:

- Promoting safe firearm storage practices (i.e., inaccessible and inoperable for youth).
- Training professionals to inquire about the presence of firearms in the homes of at-risk youth and to educate parents about safe storage practices.
- Developing and evaluating technological innovations that would decrease firearm operability by youth to make it more difficult for them to use a gun for suicide.
- Promoting community and parental responsibility for supervision of adolescents.
- Maintaining alcohol and drug-free homes.
- Seeking greater cooperation among organizations that have a shared interest in youth suicide and violence.

Although published in 1998, the *Consensus Statement* recommendations remain salient. However, many of the statistics are outdated and some of the recommendations have been expanded upon by subsequent research. Current data about suicide are available from the Center for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Suicide/>. Additional information on restricting lethal means of suicide can be found at www.meansmatter.org, a website sponsored by the Harvard School of Public Health.

Program Development

The *Consensus Statement* was developed by members of the Youth Suicide by Firearms Task Force over the course of a three-day meeting in 1996. Prior to the meeting, participants reviewed the literature and prepared individual presentations. The recommendations were first published in the *Archives of Suicide Research*. See:

Youth Suicide by Firearms Task Force. (1998). Consensus statement on youth suicide by firearms. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 4, 89-94.
(Available for free at http://www.suicidology.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=235&name=DLFE-44.pdf)

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Costs

The *Consensus Statement* is available for free and can be downloaded from the website of the American Association of Suicidology at the link above.

*The content of programs listed in Section II (Expert and Consensus Statements) of the SPRC/AFSP Best Practices Registry address specific goals of the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention* and have been reviewed by a panel of three suicide prevention experts and found to meet standards of importance, likelihood of meeting objectives, accuracy, safety, congruence with prevailing knowledge, and appropriateness of development process. Programs were not reviewed for evidence of effectiveness. Additional information about the Best Practices Registry can be found at www.sprc.org.

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