



## COLORADO: Gun Safety Group Targets Suicide at Source of Problem

August 04, 2016

News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News

State: Colorado

[Wyoming Tribune Eagle](#) [1]

The Colorado Gun Shop Project seeks to involve both suicide prevention and gun rights advocates in a suicide prevention campaign that targets the owners and sellers of firearms. The project encourages gun retailers and shooting range owners to display and distribute material about suicide prevention awareness, and to teach retailers how to identify customers who may be at risk for suicide. In a state where nearly 80 percent of suicide attempts involve a firearm, coordinators of the project are careful to frame their message as a firearms safety issue, not a political issue. Catherine Barber, a Harvard researcher who helped coordinate a similar program in New Hampshire, said “A lot of research indicated that access to a gun made a difference, but no one was talking about it in the suicide prevention movement because they thought it would mean we’re talking about gun control.” Enlisting the support of firearms advocates has allowed the project to reach those who might not normally be exposed to messages about mental health and suicide prevention, such as men, and to adopt different strategies for reaching them, such as offering to store a friend’s gun if he seems depressed. Said Barber, “A lot of guys don’t like the idea of sitting in a room with a stranger and talking about their problems. The gun community understands that culture.” Since the state-funded initiative began in 2014, it has expanded from five to nine counties in the state and plans to add half a dozen more.

**Spark Extra!** Watch this [SPARK Talk](#) [2] about the [New Hampshire Gun Shop Project](#) [3].

Populations: Men

Strategies: Reduce Access to Means

### Links within this resource

[1] [http://www.wyomingnews.com/news/gun-safety-group-targets-suicide-at-source-of-problem/article\\_6d20654e-5225-11e6-a6b0-ff52d247f088.html](http://www.wyomingnews.com/news/gun-safety-group-targets-suicide-at-source-of-problem/article_6d20654e-5225-11e6-a6b0-ff52d247f088.html)

[2] <http://www.sprc.org/video/reducing-access-to-means>

[3] <http://theconnectprogram.org/firearms-safety-coalitions-role-nh-suicide-prevention>

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# Suicide Prevention Resource Center

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