



**Agree to Agree – Youth Gun Violence Prevention
Health Care Professionals
Ad Council
February 2025**

Zac Shepherd, RN Longform

ZAC: I really have always valued the relationship building that happens in health care.

SUPER: Zac Shepherd, RN
ICU Travel Nurse
Aya Healthcare

ZAC: And I have always seen nursing as a position of power in that sense.

I am an ICU travel nurse and when a patient comes into the hospital, the first person that they see is a nurse and the last person that they see before they leave is a nurse. That is such an opportunity for nursing specifically to have those conversations about firearm safety that can lead to real solutions for people.

SUPER: Firearm injuries are the leading cause of death for children and teens
Source: Gun Violence in the U.S. 2022, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

ZAC: The emotional toll of firearm injury is devastating. And it's not statistics and it's not headlines – it's people and it's lives.

Prevention is a part of health care. The data shows that prevention works.

So, this is something that is near and dear to my heart. You know, I grew up in Texas and so, so much of my approach to these conversations has been informed by conversations with people who own firearms and who take these conversations so seriously.

I always like to start with a normalizing statement of saying “These are questions that we ask everyone. This is a part of our screenings” - in the same way that we ask questions about smoking or vaping.

You know, the framework already exists for us to assess what's going on and who they are. When a parent brings a child or a teen into a hospital, how do we add this piece of firearm safety into that conversation.

It's not about our personal beliefs. It's not about our comfort level with those conversations. The person in front of us, the community that we are in, that is



what we are responsible for advocating for. And whatever that looks like – if it looks like screening, if it looks like education, if it looks like hard conversations – then we have to do those things. That’s what health care is all about.

As a nurse, we are spending more time in direct patient care than any other specialty in the hospital. And because of that, we have an opportunity to build relationship.

My advice would be to have those conversations, to get educated and informed about how to have them and to go and do it.

Let’s agree to agree that gun violence is everyone’s problem to solve.

SUPER: [AgreeToAgree.org/HealthCare](https://www.agreetoagree.org/HealthCare)

LOGOS: Agree to Agree, American Medical Association, and the Ad Council