



Gun Lock Talking Points

For distribution at Intermountain facilities

What are some key messages for the conversation?

1. Send messages that normalize gun ownership and 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 to their firearms even temporarily.
4. Build on values of family protection and “friends helping friends.”
5. Frame everything as part of a preventive, not prohibitive, strategy. Avoiding words like “restrict,” and “remove,” in favor of words/phrases like “temporarily reduce access while someone is struggling.”

AVOID	USE
Restrict gun use	Increase safety/reduce access from unintended use
Remove	Reduce access
Gun Rights	Gun safety
Lock up your guns	Secure firearms safely

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY IDEAS

- *"Did you notice that we are giving away gun locks? Gun locks are a safe effective way to reduce access to a firearm. They are simple to use, and I'd love for you to take one for yourself or for a family member or friend."*
- *"We are supporting Firearm safety in the community and are giving away free gun locks to anyone who comes in. These are a first come first serve item, so take one and if you don't own a firearm, share it with someone who does."*

Background

- **Yes, guns are a sensitive topic.** Ownership of and attitudes toward guns are steeped in deeply held traditions, family histories, social policy views, conceptions of risk, and identity politics. Gun control advocates often view guns as objects of violence—and gun regulations as decreasing violence. By contrast, proponents of gun rights often view firearms as symbols of personal freedom—and gun regulations as a limiting freedom.
- **But there is a crucial area of common ground here in the Intermountain West:** All of us are universally horrified by the fact that in the United States 57% of gun deaths are suicides, and that in the Intermountain West those numbers are even higher. We all want to keep our loved ones safe. The political, moral, and cultural beliefs of gun owners are not adverse to the goals of suicide prevention. Gun owners tend to have a strong culture around protecting loved ones, handling firearms responsibly, and preventing unintentional shootings — values that are well-aligned with suicide prevention goals.
- **Firearm suicide prevention is not anti-gun.** This mistaken assumption, in combination with the general perception that suicide is non-preventable, may have slowed the spread of lethal means reduction efforts in the United States by focusing attention on political contentiousness rather than the core tenet of safety. Now's our chance to change that.
- **Recognizing our common ground is critical.** It turns out that we can have very different political, moral, and cultural beliefs as it relates to firearm AND still work together to prevent suicide. This is why coalitions of gun owners and health professionals have been so successful in our suicide prevention work together: we have the same common goal to ensure that no person in suicidal crisis has access to a firearm. Like the way shifts in social norms around drunk driving did not require all-out bans on cars or alcohol, a shift in voluntarily putting space and time between a suicidal impulse and a gun is a preventive, not prohibitive, strategy.
- **Respecting pro-gun values is more effective.** Changes in how guns are stored ultimately depend on the buy-in and behaviors of the people who own them. Rural gun owners in Oregon who received messages that respect their pro-gun values were more likely to remove firearms temporarily (for a family member, friend, or self) than those who received standard suicide prevention messaging. The effect was more pronounced for those respondents who were politically conservative, lived in more rural areas, and/or had stronger belief in the right to bear arms.
- **Owning a gun means accepting responsibility. Be ready. Be safe.**

What Ifs

- If the individual or group is requesting a larger quantity of locks, please refer them to [Intermountain's online gun lock order form](#).

Reminder – This is about safety. People may be upset, but we are not talking about gun control, we are talking about gun safety and this cable lock is one way we can prevent unintended injury or harm with firearms.