

## One Father's Story

I used to always keep a gun in my house to protect my family. That is something I will regret for the rest of my life.

My teenaged son shot himself in the head with my gun; the gun that was supposed to protect him.

I kept it loaded in my nightstand drawer. I never thought that he'd take it and use it on himself. He seemed so happy, always surrounded by family and friends. He and his girlfriend broke up the night before. I knew it would be tough for him, but I figured that he'd be fine—it's all part of growing up. But he wasn't. When I found out what happened, I felt like I was responsible for putting that gun in the house and leaving it accessible to him.

If I did not have that gun in my house, my son might still be alive. I think about that every day.

### HELPLINE CENTER MISSION

Making lives better by giving support, offering hope and creating connections all day, every day.

## Further Information



### PARTNERS

**South Dakota Department  
of Social Services  
Division of Behavioral Health**

**You are not alone.  
There is help and support.**

### WEB RESOURCES

To find out more about suicide prevention efforts in South Dakota, please visit:

**[helplinecenter.org](http://helplinecenter.org)  
[sdsuicideprevention.org](http://sdsuicideprevention.org)**

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# HOW TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME



**A Guide to Suicide  
Prevention in the Home**

# How to Safeguard Your Home

If your loved one is experiencing a mental health problem or life crisis, these simple steps can help protect your family and possibly save your loved one's life.

## STORE FIREARMS OFFSITE

- Ask a trusted friend or family member to keep them temporarily until the situation improves.
- Call your local police precinct, gun range, or shooting club to see if they will offer temporary storage.
- If you can't store the firearms away from the home, store them unloaded and locked in a gun safe or lock box. You can also lock them using a cable or trigger lock. Locking devices using combinations are safer than those using keys.

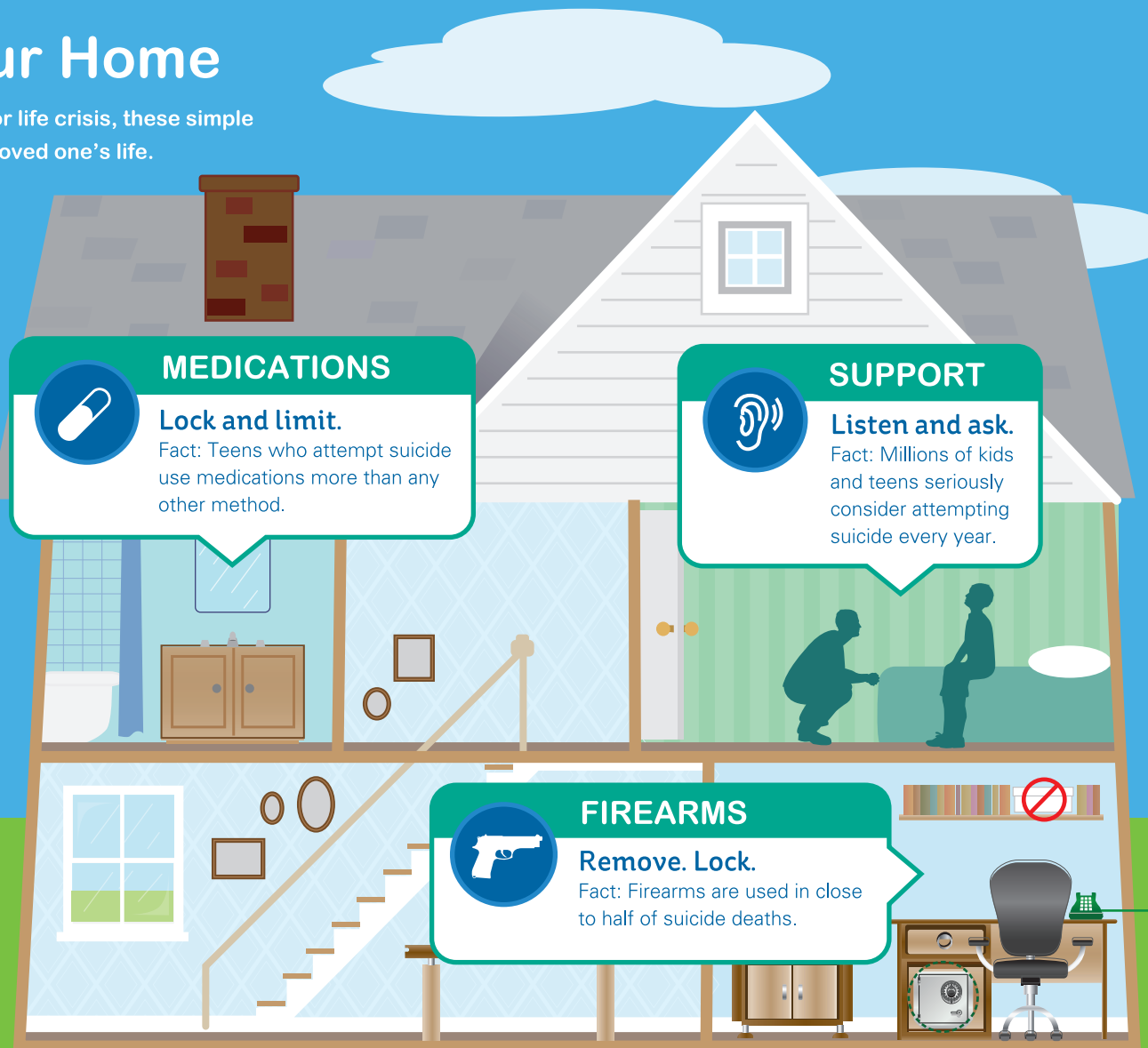
## LOCK UP MEDICATIONS

- Store all medications in a lock box or locked medicine cabinet.
- To dispose of unused medications, locate a medicine take-back program in your community or follow the FDA guidance: Mix the medicines with kitty litter or used coffee grounds in a sealable bag. Then throw away the mixture in the trash.

## PROVIDE SUPPORT

- Pay attention to your loved one's moods and behavior.
- If you notice significant changes, ask them if they're thinking about suicide.
- If you think your loved one is in crisis, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- Make sure your loved one knows how to access the suicide prevention lifeline.

For crisis support or information call the Helpline Center.  
(605) 339-4357.



### MEDICATIONS

#### Lock and limit.

Fact: Teens who attempt suicide use medications more than any other method.

### SUPPORT

#### Listen and ask.

Fact: Millions of kids and teens seriously consider attempting suicide every year.

### FIREARMS

#### Remove. Lock.

Fact: Firearms are used in close to half of suicide deaths.

**HELP IS AVAILABLE**  
if you're concerned that  
someone you care about  
is at risk of suicide.

Visit [sdsuicideprevention.org](https://sdsuicideprevention.org)

helpline  
center

24/7 free and confidential.  
**1-800-273-8255**

**IN CASE  
OF EMERGENCY:**  
Call 911 or visit your local  
emergency room.