

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
sdsuicideprevention.org**

*A special thanks to the Rhode Island Department of Health for sharing their materials.

**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.

Call 211



MEDICATIONS

Lock and limit.

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



SUPPORT

Listen and ask.

Fact: Millions of people 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

helpline
center

24/7 free and confidential.

1-800-273-8255

IN CASE
OF EMERGENCY:

Call 911 or visit your local
emergency room.