Lethal Means Survey

An important component of keeping youth safe following a stated or perceived risk for suicide is to assess the individual’s access to lethal means. While this is not an exclusive list, it is intended to help guide caregivers to assess their environment so that they may remove/restrict potential lethal means from the environment.

1. Medication Access
   Prescription medications should be limited to non-lethal doses (Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222). Any medications or poisons not being used should be disposed of properly. (Crush and mix with used coffee grounds and put in trash or take to local PD drop site). Any other potentially lethal products (such as over the counter medications) should be removed or locked.
   
   ____ Assess Access to Medications (prescription and over the counter)
   ____ Plan Developed for Removing/Restricting Access
   ____ Medications/Poisons Secured from Access

2. Firearms Access
   • The most effective means for reducing suicide with a firearm is to remove all firearms from the home/environment.
   • Do not believe that the location of guns in the home is unknown to the person at risk.
   • Locking up guns/ammunition only provides a modicum of security/safety.
   • Focus on risk (not the firearm). Hunters, hobbyists and others may dislike the idea of a firearm being focused on as “bad”. Focusing on the risk of suicide instead can avoid a roadblock. If reluctant, focus on temporary need for risk reduction.
   • If removing firearms to another’s home, discuss how and when the firearms will be returned and to whom.
     o Police departments will accept firearms and ammunition that you want destroyed.
     o Never bring a firearm to the PD without calling first.
   • If removal is not an option:
     o Store all firearms unloaded and locked.
     o Any ammunition should be stored separately and locked.
     o Trigger locks can be purchased.

3. Cutting/Stabbing
   ____ Assess Access to Knives and Blades (this includes kitchen knives)
   ____ Plan Developed for Removing/Restricting Access
   ____ Knives/Blades Secured from Access (this includes kitchen knives)

4. Hanging
5. **Alcohol**
   - ____ Assess Access to Alcohol
   - ____ Plan Developed for Removal/Restricting Access
   - ____ Alcohol Secured from Access

6. **Jumping**
   Survey and assess proximity to jumping areas. This typically includes but is not limited to: overpasses, bridges, towers. Know the environment and what is near. Should you call the Police Dept with a concern, they will ask if you have any idea where the individual may have gone.
   - ____ Survey completed

7. **Automobiles**
   Be aware of access to motor vehicles (both driving and the ability to asphyxiate through carbon monoxide poisoning).
   - ____ Survey completed