

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW  
THE SIGNS**

Suicide Is Preventable.org

# Men & Means

## Suicide Prevention Skills Building Webinar

August 8, 2017



WELLNESS - RECOVERY - RESILIENCE



# Welcome!

- Please mute your line
- If you have a question, technical problem or comment, please type it into the “Questions” box or “raise your hand” by clicking the hand logo on your control panel



# Introductions

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Sandra Black  
Yolo County



Tracy Lacey  
Solano County



Tawny Porter  
Alameda County



Stan Collins  
San Diego County



# Know the Signs

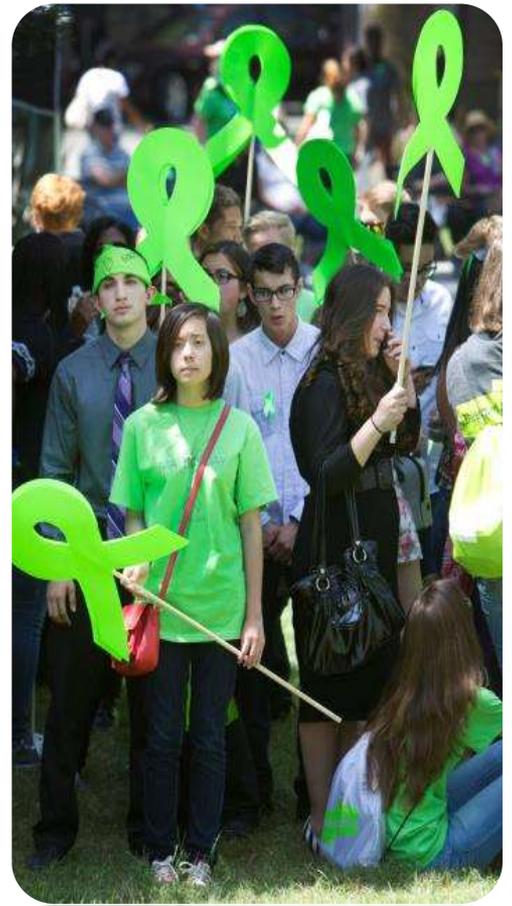
A statewide suicide prevention social marketing campaign with the overarching goal to increase Californians' capacity to prevent suicide by encouraging individuals to **know the signs**, **find the words** to talk to someone they are concerned about, and to **reach out** to resources.



[suicideispreventable.org](http://suicideispreventable.org)  
[elsuicidiodesprevenible.org](http://elsuicidiodesprevenible.org)

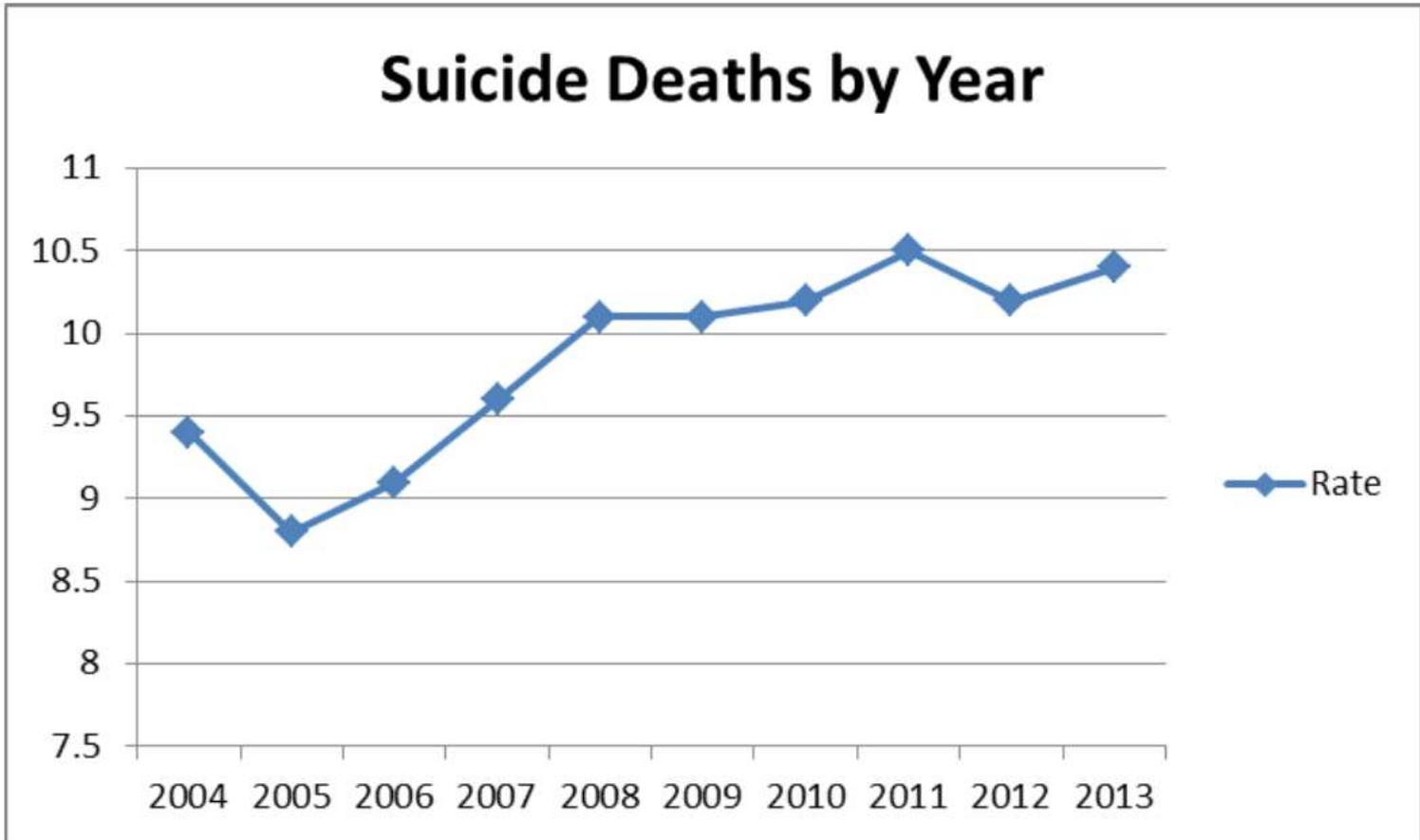
# Each Mind Matters

**Each Mind Matters is California's Mental Health Movement.** We are millions of individuals and thousands of organizations working to advance mental health.



# Today's Webinar

- Why focus on men?
- Why focus on means?
- Risk & protective factors for men
- Warning signs among men
- Suicide prevention strategies for men
- Suicide Prevention Week Toolkit
- Resources for men



# Suicide rates increase with age

- Adults (ages 20–59) account for 71 percent of suicides in California
- Older adults over 60 are 18% of the population in California, but account for one third of all suicides; adolescents account for less than 5 percent.
- The suicide rate of older adults in California is 16.9 per 100,000 - higher than the rate of 10.4 for all age groups combined.

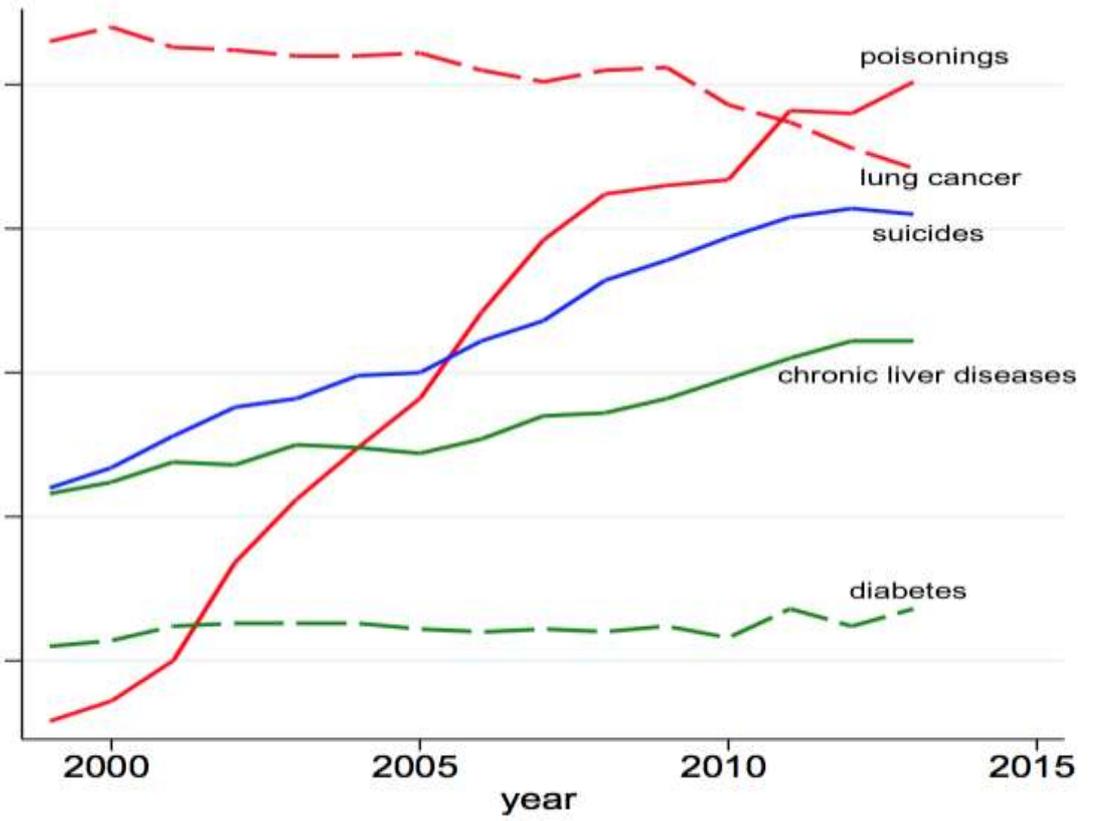


CA Dept. of Public Health Epicenter. <http://epicenter.cdph.ca.gov/>

RAND Corporation Research Brief, 2014. Suicide Rates in California.

[https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB9700/RB9737/RAND\\_RB9737.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_briefs/RB9700/RB9737/RAND_RB9737.pdf)

# ☎ “Deaths of Despair”



Mortality by cause, white non-Hispanics ages 45–54.

# California Data on Suicide

- From 1993-2013, 73,705 Californians died by suicide: **78% of those who died were male**
- In 2013, more than one-third of California men who died of suicide were between the ages of 45-64.
  - 70% of the men were White, followed by Hispanic (17%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (8%).



# Why focus on Men?

Although men in the middle years—that is, men 35–64 years of age—represent **19 percent** of the population of the United States, they account for **40 percent** of the suicides in this country.

*Source: UR Center for the Study & Prevention of Suicide, Washington, DC: Scientific Consensus Conference, June 11-12, 2003. 12p.  
([http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/SPRC\\_MiMYReportFinal\\_0.pdf](http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/SPRC_MiMYReportFinal_0.pdf))*

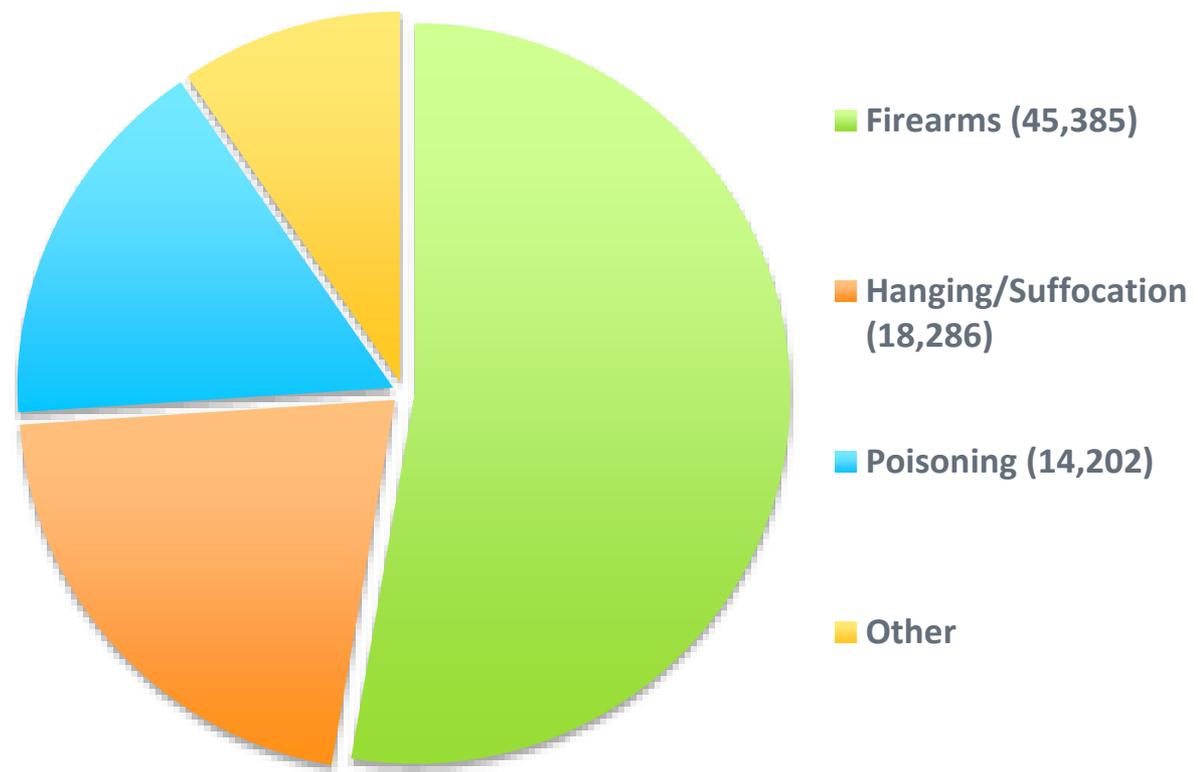
# Why focus on men?

- Men are at disproportionately high risk of suicide
- Depression and warning signs of suicide may be missed – or misinterpreted
- Men often use highly lethal means, such as firearms, in their attempts

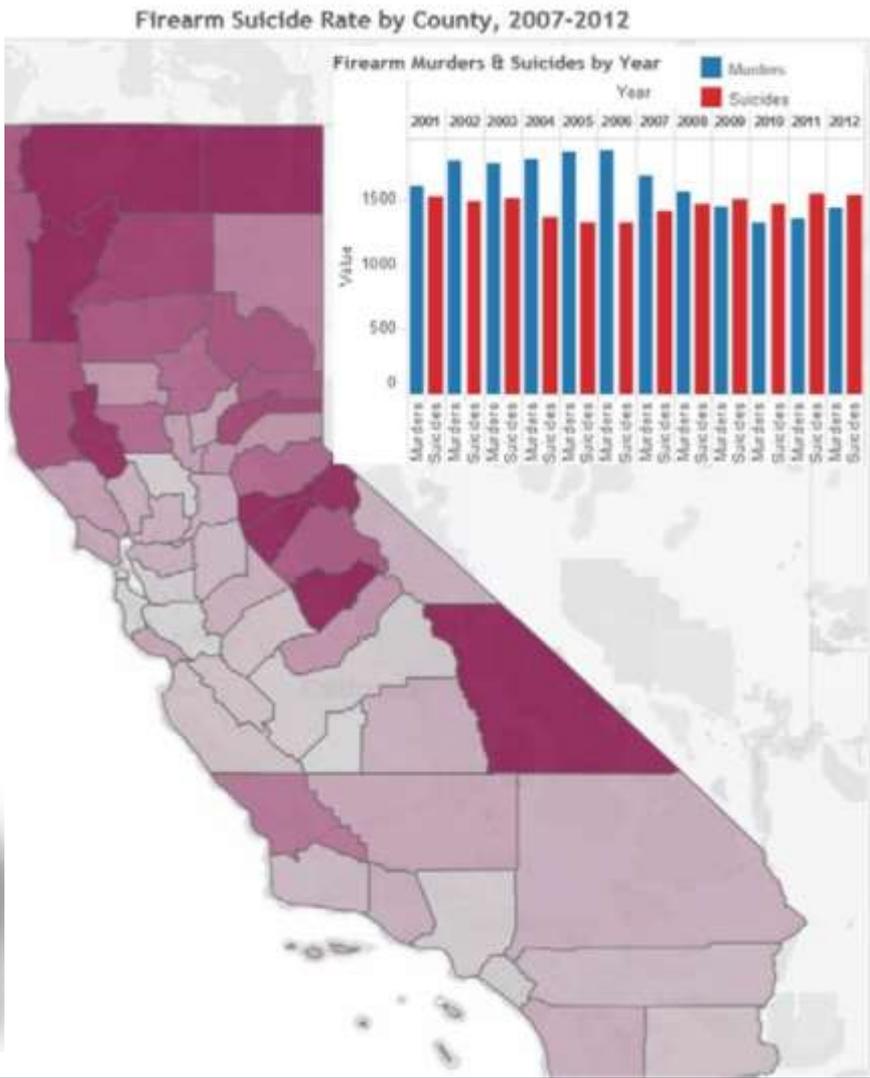
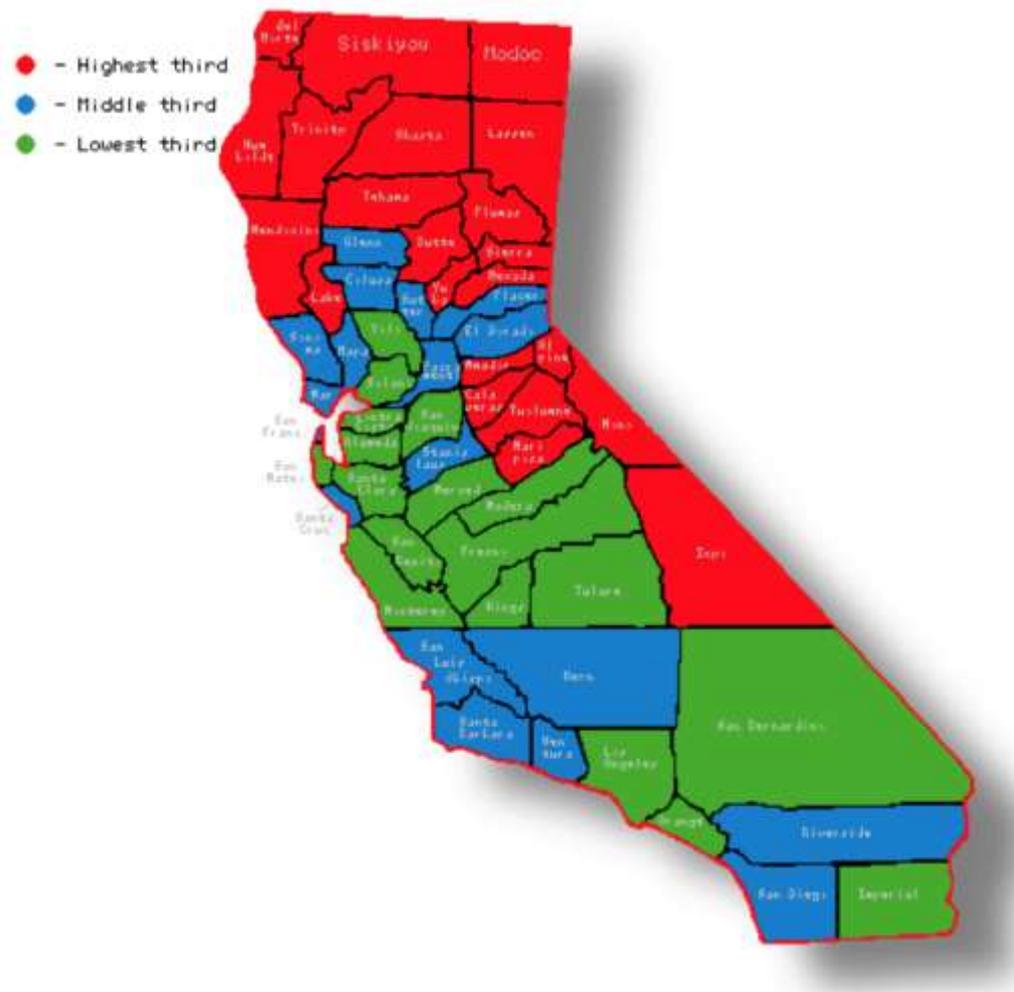


# Why focus on means?

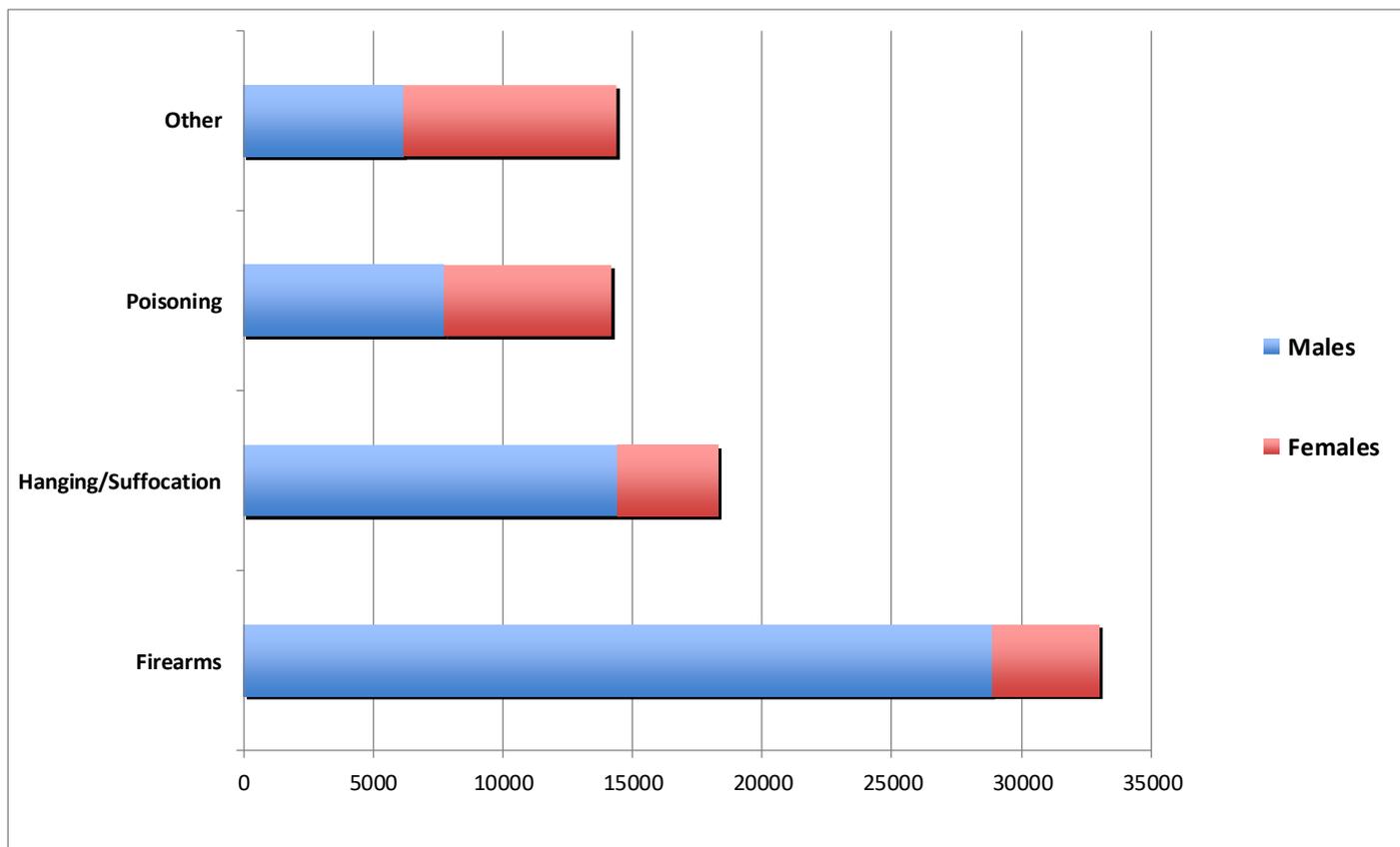
## Means of Suicide, California, 1993-2013



# California Statistics



## Means of Suicide, California, 1993-2013



# The Rock Audio File



<http://emmresourcecenter.org/resources/english-radio>



Q&A

# Warning Signs and Risk Factors

## Warning signs:

Specific behavioral or emotional clues that may indicate suicidal intent (“red flags”)

## Risk factors:

Conditions or circumstances that may elevate a person’s risk for suicide

# Critical Warning Signs

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself (purchasing a gun, stockpiling pills, etc.)
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person

***These are especially concerning when the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event , loss or change.***

# Additional Warning Signs for Men

- Seeking access to highly lethal means
- Feeling hopeless and/ or worthless; fear of becoming a burden.
- A preoccupation with death or a lack of concern about personal safety; recklessness
- Feeling trapped, a sense of downward spiral and no way out
- Increasing use of substances, especially alcohol
- Anger, irritability, resentment, seeking revenge
- Changes in sleep
- Withdrawal, isolation



# Risk Factors Among Men

- History of suicidal behavior or thinking
- Alcohol use disorders, intoxication
- Access to firearms
- Social isolation and coping strategies centered around avoidance
- Chronic or acute illness or disability
- Physical symptoms such as sleep issues, fatigue, and chronic pain
- Financial stressors both immediate (job loss, lay-offs) and/or ongoing (low income, low status occupation)
- Intimate partner problems (custody disputes, divorce, breakups, separation, intimate partner violence)
- Criminal justice involvement (arrest, incarceration, court cases, probation)
- At least one, and often many, life stressors that add up to a feeling of being overwhelmed, unable to turn things around.



# Sociocultural Risk Factors Among Men



- Often socialized to embody strength, toughness, stoicism
- Pressure to be the provider and protector of family and property
- Unhelpful conceptions of masculinity can become a barrier to help
- Behavior and thinking may be easily misinterpreted
  - Signs “didn't look like depression”
  - May not inspire empathy easily
  - May look like physical problems

# How to Start the Conversation



## Suggestions for conversation starters:

- *Dad, I've noticed that something seems wrong lately (give concrete examples). How are you feeling?*
- *Joe, it's not like you to avoid your friends. I know things have been hard, and sometimes people in your situation lose hope. I'm wondering if you may have lost hope, too?*

## Ask directly about suicide if warning signs are present:

- *Are you thinking about suicide?*
- *Have you been thinking about how you might do this?*

# Tips for having the conversation

- Be persistent if you are initially put off.
- Make time to listen. Ask to meet up for coffee, an activity, etc.
  - Check back in with them after a few days.
- Be prepared with a resource to suggest or specific offer of help (hotline, mental health professional)
- Ask what you can do to help, and what they need from you.



# Man Therapy



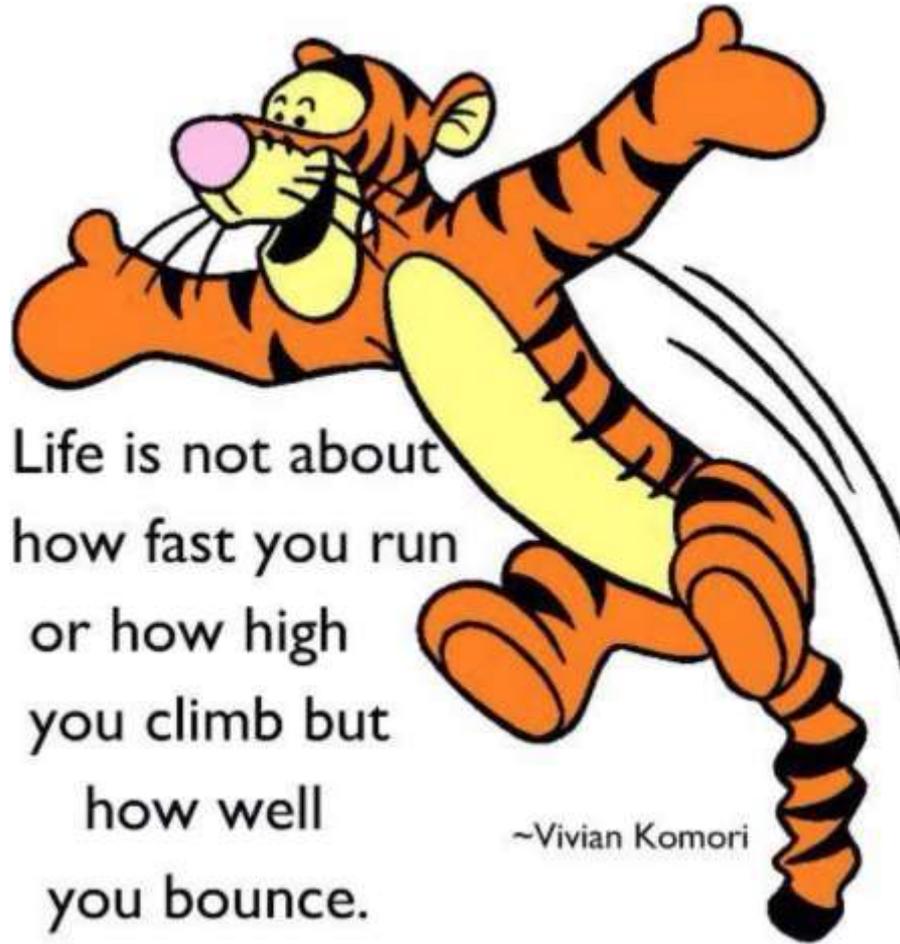
<https://youtu.be/qBMDHQlzFaA>



Q&A



“What is predictable is preventable”  
but **NOT** inevitable



Life is not about  
how fast you run  
or how high  
you climb but  
how well  
you bounce.

~Vivian Komori



# Protective Factors for Men

Factors that may make it LESS likely that a person will consider, attempt, or die by suicide

- Reasons for living and sense of purpose
- Social connectedness and emotional support
- Constructive coping and problem solving skills
- Access to effective health and behavioral health care



# Preventing Suicide in Men

- In a crisis, put as much separation between the individual and highly lethal means as possible.
- Understand how depression and suicidality may show up in men
- Encourage connection with social supports and services that can reduce the burden of life problems.
- Enhance problem solving and coping skills.
- Support boys and young men to feel more comfortable with their feelings and to reach out when needed.
- Encourage men to act as supports and role models for one another.



# Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Occupational Rank for Highest Rates of Suicide Deaths <sup>1</sup>		
RANK	Occupation	Rate per 100,000
1	Farming, fishing, and forestry	84.5
2	Construction and extraction	53.3
3	Installation, maintenance, and repair	47.9
4	Production	34.5
5	Architecture and engineering	32.2
6	Protective service	30.5
7	Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	24.3
8	Computer and mathematical	23.3
9	Transportation and material moving	22.3



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6525a1.html>

# Occupation-related factors?

- Demographics – primarily male industries
- Stoic, old-school “tough guy” culture
- Fearlessness, thrill-seeking
- Limited training for supervisors who work their way up on the job
- Seasonal lay-offs, unstable
- Culture of tolerance around alcohol and substance use
- Frequent injuries, chronic pain
  - Use of prescription opioids
- Access to lethal means
- Skills gap – sense of being trapped in a job without a lot of options, but strong need to support a family





# Construction Industry Initiative



**A CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BLUEPRINT:  
Suicide Prevention  
in the Workplace**



Carson J Spencer  
FOUNDATION

rk

Action  
Alliance  
FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION



# Workplace Strategies



- Culture of safety and wellness
- Sense of community and workplace support
  - Employees look out for each other (“buddy system”)
- Broad promotion of resources (e.g. Lifeline)
- Access to quality behavioral health care (e.g. insurance, Employee Assistance Program)
- Education for managers and employees about mental health and substance abuse and treatment
- Suicide prevention skills training for leaders and supervisors at minimum
- Postvention plan in place

# Keys to Prevention

- Reduce access to lethal means during a crisis
  - Firearms, substances
- Engage traditional AND non-traditional partners
  - Recreation, workplace, health care
- Providers, employers and families understand the signs of depression and suicidality for men





Q&A



<https://vimeo.com/175761640>

# The Gun Shop Project

The Gun Shop Project is a collaborative effort to engage gun shop and firing range owners, their employees and their customers on preventing suicide, the number one type of firearm death in the U.S.



**CONCERNED ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND?**

**ARE THEY SUICIDAL?**

- Depressed, angry, irritable?
- Going through a relationship breakdown, legal trouble, or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Asking to die?
- Feeling trapped?

**SUICIDES IN NH** are on the rise for our state.

**FIREARMS ARE THE LEADING METHOD**

**ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN ARE MORE DEADLY** than attempts with other methods.

**HOLD ON TO THEIR GUNS**

- Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life.

- For other ways to help, call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255



## Suicide Prevention Partnerships with Gun Owner Groups



# Solano County

## SOLANO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



### CCW FIREARMS TRAINING PROVIDERS

**Outdoor Gear** 707-647-2511  
Am. Canyon & Fairfield 29outdoorgear.com

**Baptist Security Training**  
Vacaville www.BaptistSecurityTraining.com

**Blue Ridge Consulting & Firearms** 707-689-0172  
Vacaville BRCArms.com

**Dobbs Firearm Training** 888-486-0250  
Fairfield & Vacaville dobbsfirearmstraining.com

**Eagle Defense**  
Sloughhouse, CA www.eagledef.com

**Kennedy Consulting** 530-617-1GUN  
Fair Oaks, CA jonkennedyconsulting.com

**Liberty Firearms Training** 916-476-4987  
Sloughhouse & Walnut Grove libertyfirearmstraining.com

**Northern Firearms Instruction** 530-776-4855  
Vacaville usgunpro.com

**R&D Training** 707-592-3113  
Napa

**Security & Firearms Training Academy** 916-500-1442  
North Highlands safta-inc.com



MILITARY • POWER • RESILIENCE



## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS OF GUN SAFETY

*get in touch*

For **24 Hour SUICIDE PREVENTION**, call  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**(800) 273-TALK (8255)**  
<http://www.suicideispreventable.org>

For **24 / 7 CRISIS SERVICES**, call the  
Solano County Crisis Stabilization Unit  
2101 Courage Drive, Fairfield  
**(707) 428-1131**

Mental Health Access  
(800) 547-0495

Brought to you by the  
Solano County Sheriff's Office  
and the  
Department of Health & Social Services



# SP Week Toolkit: Implement a Gun Shop Activity

## Toolkit includes:

- Tip sheet for implementation
- Materials from the New Hampshire project
  - Tip sheets for firearm dealers and range owners
  - Firearm Safety brochure
  - 11 Commandments of Firearm Safety brochure
  - FAQs



# SP Week Toolkit: Materials for Men

## In the Toolkit:

- Drop-In Article
- PowerPoint Slides
- Data Briefing and Talking Points
- Resources
- Gun Shop Project Activity
  - Tip sheet
  - Materials
  - Brochure and poster



### Talking Points and Data Briefing on Suicide Prevention

- Take-home Points:
- Men, particularly men in the middle years and older, are at disproportionate risk of suicide compared to other demographic groups.
  - Warning signs of acute mental health crisis and suicidality in men may be misinterpreted. But they warrant immediate concern, especially in context of STRESSORS.
  - Most suicidal crises are short-lived; putting time and space between a crisis and highly lethal means is crucial. Suicide rates, gun ownership, and an aging population that is white and male are all higher in rural areas.

### Suicide Prevention Resources for Men

The following resources are available to assist you in developing programs to reach men:

- California Resources
- Each Mind Matters
- **Know the Signs Radio Spots:** customizable to include local resources, these English language radio spots are aimed at the general public with an emphasis on those concerned about a man in their life.
  - **Restricting Access to Lethal Means:** archived 2013 webinar provides an overview of data and strategies to address access to lethal means.
  - **Suicide Prevention Outreach to Men and Other Therapy:** archived 2013 webinar focused on strategies to reach men and highlighted the Men's Therapy campaign.
  - **Skills Building: Materials for Suicide Prevention:** archived 2017 webinar focused on safe and effective messaging for suicide prevention.
  - **Resources for Workplace Suicide Prevention:** information about mental health and crisis supports that can be included in the workplace as part of suicide prevention efforts.
  - **Each Mind Matters Resource Center:** browse our initiatives, activities and resources to find tools you can use to improve mental health and equality in your community, prevent suicide and promote mental health.
- San Diego's ITSAFF's campaign has developed resources to support men's mental health and wellness.
- Elder Men: The Friendship Line—Initiative on Aging  
Phone: 415-763-4123

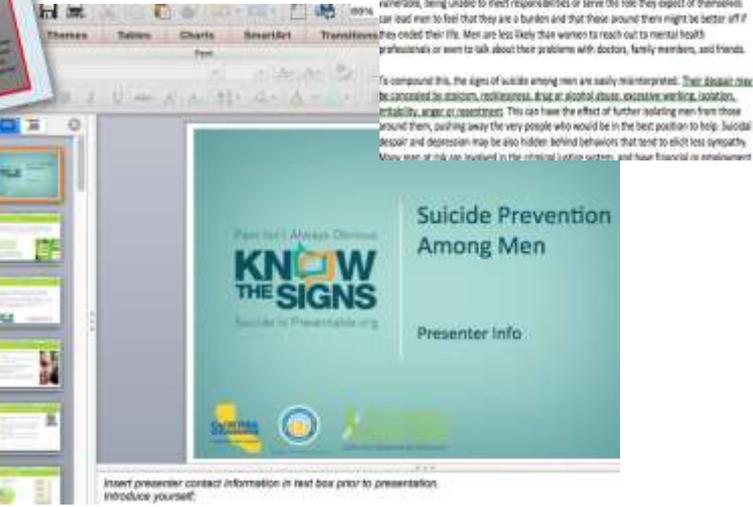


Don't Drive Like My Brother!

Sound familiar? "Car Talk" is the highly popular long-running radio show hosted by two brothers who dispense colorful advice to callers to help them solve their car problems. Imagine for a moment a similar show where men – and those who care about them – called in every Sunday morning to ask how to tune up their mental health, to keep their emotions from overheating, or their mind running smoothly!

Traditionally, men are raised to be self-sufficient, tough, and to protect their family and property. But what happens when the strong protector needs help? Fear of appearing weak or vulnerable, being unable to meet responsibilities or serve the role they expect of themselves, can lead men to feel that they are a burden and that those around them might be better off if they ended their life. Men are less likely than women to reach out to mental health professionals or even to talk about their problems with doctors, family members, and friends.

To compound this, the signs of suicide among men are easily misinterpreted. Their anger may be perceived as malice, rudeness, drug or alcohol abuse, excessive drinking, isolation, irritability, anger or apathy. This can have the effect of further isolating men from those around them, pushing away the very people who would be in the best position to help. Suicidal despair and depression may be also hidden behind behaviors that tend to elicit less sympathy. Many men at risk are involved in the criminal justice system, and have financial or employment



<http://www.eachmindmatters.org/spw2017/>

# Crisis Support Resources

## Suicide Prevention Lifeline

24/7 hotline, plus chat services

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

[1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255)



 Institute on Aging | [HOME](#) | [SERVICES](#) | [DONATE](#) | [ABOUT](#) | [WORKING AT IOA](#) | [BLOG](#) | [CONTACT](#) | [415.750.4111](tel:415.750.4111) / [650.424.1411](tel:650.424.1411)



### FRIENDSHIP LINE

"Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."  
- William Shakespeare

For older men: **Friendship Line** (Institute on Aging):  
**(800) 971-0016**  
[www.ioaging.org](http://www.ioaging.org)

# Educational Campaigns



## San Diego: It's Up to Us Campaign

<http://up2sd.org/men/>



## Colorado: Man Therapy

<http://mantherapy.org>

# Lethal Means Resources



Online training for Counseling on Access to Lethal Means:  
<http://training.sprc.org/>

Harvard School of Public Health Means Matter campaign:  
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/>

Information on California Gun Violence Restraining Orders:  
[www.SpeakforSafety.org](http://www.SpeakforSafety.org)



Q&A

# New EMM Resource Center



[www.emmresourcecenter.org](http://www.emmresourcecenter.org)

# Thank You

Sandra Black: [sandra@suicideispreventable.org](mailto:sandra@suicideispreventable.org)

Stan Collins: [stan@suicideispreventable.org](mailto:stan@suicideispreventable.org)



 EachMind  
MATTERS  
California's Mental Health Movement

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