



Lock and Talk Virginia

Suicide Prevention Initiative

www.lockandtalkvirginia.org

Lock and Talk Virginia was developed in May 2016 as a Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Region 1 suicide prevention initiative. Led by the Prevention Teams of Region 1 Community Services Boards, the initiative has expanded to 26 Community Services Boards across the Commonwealth.

Promoting safe and responsible care of lethal means – while encouraging community conversations around mental wellness – is vital to the mission of preventing suicides and promoting wellness.

The foundation of Lock and Talk Virginia is based directly on the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention and the input of key consultants involved in suicide prevention strategy and research.

Key components include:

- **Limiting access to lethal means for a person in crisis is an essential strategy for preventing suicide.** Any objects that may be used in a suicide attempt, including firearms, other weapons, medications, illicit drugs, chemicals used in the household, other poisons, or materials used for hanging or suffocation, should not be easy for someone at risk to access. In crisis, objects such as firearms should be temporarily removed from the vicinity of the vulnerable individual.
- People at risk for suicide should be part of the lethal means safety conversation, as should their families. **Safe handling and secure storage of lethal means at home at all times is encouraged**, even after a crisis has passed. Lock and Talk Virginia distributes safety devices and instruction for locking medications and firearms. Safety devices provided include gun trigger locks, gun cable locks, medication lock boxes, and medication deactivation kits.
- **Talking about the problem of suicide helps to save lives and reduce stigma.** Talking encourages help-seeking behaviors and helps attempt survivors and survivors of suicide loss in their personal healing.

Lock and Talk Virginia gives community members the opportunity to become educated about the signs of suicide risk and how to act as a catalyst to care. Available trainings include: Mental Health First Aid; Youth Mental Health First Aid; Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST); and safeTALK.

Lock and Talk Virginia includes the Gun Shop Project in consultation with the Means Matter Campaign. Suicide prevention education is disseminated through firearm retail and range partners. Identifying possible signs of suicide risk, who will be a trusted individual to temporarily hold on to firearms, and connecting to crisis resources are key messages relayed through retail partners and firearm safety instructors.

“We are a Lock and Talk Family” campaign is underway. Lock your guns, lock your meds, talk safety, and talk often is the primary message of the campaign. We are promoting the importance of everyone recognizing the benefit of becoming a Lock and Talk Family. A Lock and Talk Family may be in the home, work organization, school, or community. This campaign is used in conjunction with safety campaigns, and in DBHDS efforts for the Governor’s Challenge (aimed to prevent veteran and service member suicides).