



LETHAL MEANS SAFETY TOOLKIT

Tiplist for Commanders



To prevent death by suicide, PAOs and Command Teams may use the following tiplist to effectively communicate how to secure and safely use lethal means.

- ☐ **Start the Conversation**
If you notice a Soldier's unusual behavior, try the following approach:
 - 💡 "I've had a rough day. How's yours going?"
 - 💡 "Visiting the Chaplain really helped clear my mind. Have you thought of stopping by?"
 - 💡 "Are you having thoughts of suicide? Let's talk."
 - ☐ **Use Adaptive Messaging**
Even on the same installation there are different living/working environments and populations – each with unique lethal means safety requirements and challenges. Adapt your communications for each specific audience.
 - ☐ **When Developing Messaging Consider**
 - 💡 Housing arrangement: Barracks, On-post, Off-post
 - 💡 Single, Family or Roommate status
 - 💡 Component; Active, Guard, Reserve
 - 💡 Rank
 - 💡 Age/time in service
 - 💡 Exposure to discussions on suicide and mental health
 - 💡 Background
 - ☐ **Communicate Safe Storage Options in a Positive Manner**
Anything that disrupts a suicide attempt can save an individual. Every second counts. Safe storage of lethal means can provide these life-saving seconds.
 - 💡 Highlight safe storage options for all lethal means: firearms, drugs and weapons.
 - 💡 Options in the home: gun locks, safes, storage of ammunition, drugs out of reach of young Family members
 - 💡 Promote options for storing firearms outside the home: police departments, firearms shops, armory, or shooting range
 - ☐ **Normalize the Conversation**
Make lethal means safety discussions a part of your organization's normal conversations.
 - 💡 Include lethal means topics in all weekend, drill, and holiday safety briefs
 - 💡 Routinely post lethal means safety content on social media platforms
 - 💡 Share what you are doing as leader to address lethal means safety
 - 💡 Promote through installation newspapers and magazines
 - 💡 Discuss with unit Family organizations
 - ☐ **Address Misconceptions with Facts – not Opinions or Perceptions**
DOD studies indicate that over half of service members believe that if someone wants to act on suicide, they will find a way. This is not true. Other misconceptions exist, both locally and Army-wide. Address them using statistics and research from credible sources.
 - 💡 Focus messaging on evidence-based recommendations
 - 💡 Show correlation between securing lethal means and suicide prevention
- Resources**
- 💡 Army Resilience Directorate website: <https://www.armyresilience.army.mil/suicide-prevention/index.html>
 - 💡 DSPO Leaders Suicide Prevention Safe Messaging Guide: <https://go.usa.gov/xJ6Kb>
 - 💡 DOD Lethal Means Communication Guide: <https://go.usa.gov/xJ6KN>



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