

Firearms and Suicide: Lethal Means Safety Counseling in Dialectical Behavior Therapy
DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets

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Introduction to DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling

Exploring the Dialectic Between the Benefits of Firearm Ownership and Safety

In the United States, the right to bear arms carries significant value for many. The DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling module is intended to help individuals explore when and how to enhance safe storage of firearms. To do so, we must first understand the ways in which firearms are an important part of *your* life worth living.

Below are some reasons people choose to own or access a firearm:

- ✓ **Self-protection and protection of loved ones.** A primary reason why many individuals choose to own a firearm is to protect themselves and/or loved ones in the event of a threat or danger. Threats may include assaults, home invasions, burglaries, etc. It is an unfortunate reality that there is always the potential for danger in our society. According to Gun Owners of America, firearms are used approximately 2.5 million times each year in self-defense. When considering the potential for threat, many gun-owners highlight an increased sense of safety as well as a decreased sense of helplessness should they ever find themselves in a life-threatening situation.
- ✓ **For sport.** Shooting for sport is a strong and rich tradition around the world. From seasonal hunting activities to annual competitive shooting events, there are many ways in which a firearm-owner can use a gun for purposes of sport.
- ✓ **A sense of identity.** Many of us derive a sense of self through the hobbies and activities that we feel passionate about. Hobbies can be an important outlet for self-expression and connection to oneself. This holds true for many firearm-owners as they engage in firearm-related activities.
- ✓ **A sense of community.** Many firearm-owners highlight a strong sense of community found through connecting with other firearm-owners. With meet-up groups, shooting events, and gun clubs, firearms allow many individuals the opportunity to connect with others who share a similar interest. This sense of community, as well as opportunities to connect to others socially, has been linked to many positive mental health outcomes.
- ✓ **Behavioral activation.** Behavioral activation is a term used in the mental health field to highlight the relationship between our mood and engagement in activities that give us a sense of joy or accomplishment. Research has shown that doing things that give us a sense of pleasure and mastery are important for lifting our mood and improving our overall psychological health. Participating in activities such as going shooting may be related to experiencing a sense of pleasure and/or a sense of mastery.

For many firearm-owners, their weapons are an important part of their lives and the benefits of firearm ownership are significant. With that emphasized, it is important to highlight that the primary goal of DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling is to promote your safety and the safety of those around you by exploring changes that can be made to firearm storage behaviors while also acknowledging the values of firearm-ownership. As will be discussed throughout these materials, many U.S. firearm-owners

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do not store their weapons in a fashion consistent with recommended safety guidelines. Furthermore, research has shown that the average gun-owner does not associate firearm access and storage practices with risk for suicide. Given these findings, these materials have been designed to support firearm-owners by helping them explore ways in which changes to storage practices can have a large impact on their safety as well as the safety of loved ones.

It is also important to emphasize that these handouts and worksheets are recommended for all DBT participants, even if they don't currently own a firearm or feel that they are at risk for suicide or firearm-related injury. The reason why these materials are recommended for all DBT participants, despite current firearm ownership status or perceived level of current risk, is that these materials represent an opportunity for you to take an active role in establishing your safety in not only the present but also the future.

To begin, please answer the following questions:

What personal values do you hold? How might the risk of death or firearm-related injury impact these values? _____

Who are important people in your life? How might the risk of death or firearm-related injury to yourself or others impact these relationships? _____

While remaining mindful of your answers to the questions above, please rate the following two items:

0= not important at all to 10= very important

How important would you consider your safety?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How important would you consider the safety of loved ones or those around you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The goal of the DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling module is to support you and your life worth living by promoting safe firearm storage practices. For some people, these materials will be an opportunity to reinforce the effective firearm storage practices that they are already using. For others, they may provide an opportunity to consider how their safety and the safety of others can be enhanced

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by making changes to how they store their weapon. Below is an overview of the handouts and worksheets included in the DBT Firearms Lethal Means Safety Counseling module. As is consistent with other DBT materials, many of the handouts are meant to be used in conjunction with corresponding worksheets from this module.

Overview of module content:

Module Content	To be used in conjunction with
Handout 1: Increasing Your Immediate Safety through Out-Of-Home Firearm Storage	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5
Handout 2: Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5
Handout 3: How to Install a Cable Lock	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5
Handout 4: Factors in the Way of Improving Safe Firearm Storage	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4
Worksheet 1: Beginning the Conversation about Firearm Lethal Means Safety	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5
Worksheet 2: Challenging Myths in the Way of Practicing Firearm Safety	
Worksheet 3: Check the Facts About Firearms and Self-Defense	
Worksheet 4: Pros and Cons for Increasing Firearm Safety	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 4
Worksheet 5: Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan	DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 1, 2, 3, & 4; Worksheet 1 & 4

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 1

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through Out-of-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

There are many options for safe firearm storage. Let's review some storage options that might work to increase your immediate safety as well as the immediate safety of those around you. Paired with other DBT skills, practicing safe firearm storage can help prevent impulsive behavior in a crisis and help you to build a life worth living.

1. **Specialty firearm storage companies:** Certain companies will store your firearm(s) for a fee. In many cases, rental units vary in size and some offer storage drawers or bins which may be less expensive.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Often is a recurrent, monthly charge depending on locker size, number of firearms stored, type of storage program, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lawful way to store firearms out of the home• Some companies include multiple programs such as basic storage or temporary transfer of ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Costs vary• May not be available in all areas• If you hold the key, you would still have access to the firearm in a crisis situation

2. **Friends or relatives:** Storing firearms with a trusted person is an excellent and free option, provided the person is legally allowed to hold them. For many people, this is the most feasible option for out-of-home firearm storage. However, it is really important to note that state laws vary greatly with regard to transferring a firearm from one person to another. For example, some state laws require a background check prior to transfer to ensure the individual is not prohibited from possessing firearms. Given the different laws that exist, it is important to work with your DBT therapist prior to transferring your firearm to make sure you are operating within your state laws. A good resource for reviewing your state laws regarding firearm transfers is the Gifford Law Center: <https://lawcenter.giffords.org> (select "Gun Laws" tab, then select "State Law").

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A good way to elicit help from safe and appropriate friends and family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The laws around the transfer of a firearm from one individual to another vary greatly by state

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Increasing Your Immediate Safety through Out-of-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

3. **Shooting ranges:** Many shooting ranges will rent gun lockers at their facility which can be an excellent and safe way to store your firearm outside of the home. Typically, only the owner holds the key and no background check is required because the ownership of the firearm is not transferred. It is important to note that firearms should be unloaded and locked when stored.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
An often relatively low monthly fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•No background checks•Don't need to worry about transfer laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Not all shooting ranges allow for firearm storage (it is a good idea to call around and ask local shooting ranges if they offer this service)•If you are at risk of harming yourself, you would still have access to your firearm.

4. **Local police department:** Some law enforcement agencies will temporarily store firearms for safety purposes. If you are interested in this option, it is highly advised that you contact your local police department prior to handing over your firearm, as walking in unannounced with firearms could be perceived as a threat.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Some agencies will pick up the firearms at the owner's home•Don't need to worry about transfer laws•Most agencies offer disposal services if you are interested in removing a firearm from your possession permanently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Not all agencies allow for firearm storage•A background check to retrieve your firearm may be required

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 1

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through Out-of-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

5. **Gun shops:** Some firearm retailers offer storage services and a few specialize in this service.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Prices vary, although some shops will provide regular customers with free storage when there is a safety concern	•Some shops provide pick-up services and offer discounts for longer-term or multiple firearm storage	•A background check to retrieve your firearm may be required, depending on the type of storage the shop uses

6. **Pawn shops:** Pawning firearms for a small loan amount can be a relatively low cost, secure storage option. To reclaim a firearm, the owner must repay the loan and go through a background check to verify they are not prohibited from owning firearms.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Relatively low cost- likely will have an interest charge that must be paid monthly	•Is allowed in most states	•A background check to retrieve your firearm is required •They may sell your firearm before you retrieve it.

7. **College Campuses:** Many college campuses offer a storage service for students actively enrolled at their school. While this is not universally offered, this can be an excellent solution if you are currently attending a school that provides storage services. If you are currently enrolled in college and would like to see if this is an option your school provides, contact your campus police using their non-emergency contact number.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free to relatively low cost	•Relatively low cost and easy to arrange for current college students	•Not offered at all schools and likely only to be an option for students actively enrolled at that school

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 1

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through Out-of-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

A few important tips when considering out-of-home storage options:

1. Do some research before taking your firearm(s) to an out-of-home storage location. Specific questions to ask of a potential storage site are:
 - a. What is their process for storing a firearm?
 - b. What are the costs, if any, associated with their storage options?
 - c. Are background checks conducted as part of the storage process?
 - d. Are there any limits on how long a firearm can be stored at that location?

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 2

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage


(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

Storing firearms outside of your home is the absolute safest way to increase your immediate safety as well as the safety of those around you. However, if any of the out-of-home storage strategies are either not an option or are not something that you are willing to do, there are several ways you can still increase your safety and the safety of those around you through in-home storage methods. Let's consider some possibilities.

1. Cable Locks: A cable lock is a device that blocks the chamber to prevent a cartridge from being fired.


**Safety enhancement option- reference item #6 below.*

How it works: Chamber locks are inserted in or through the magazine well or chamber. Some are inserted through the barrel and chamber to block a cartridge from moving into position. A combination or key opens the lock. For instructions on how to install a cable lock, please reference *Handout 3. How to Install a Cable Lock*.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free-\$50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Inexpensive•Often more versatile than trigger locks (i.e., fits a wider variety of firearms)•Long cables may be threaded through several firearms•Often available for free through the VA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Thin cables can be cut•Must install according to directions•Makes it difficult to use firearm for protection

2. Lock Box: A small box that is designed for securing a firearm. **Safety enhancement option- reference #6 below.*

How it works: The handgun is locked inside the box. The box is opened with a push-button, combination, digital keypad, biometric keypad (e.g., use of fingerprint), or key.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Between \$25-\$350 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Quick access if the lock is push-button or digital•Difficult to steal if permanently mounted•May allow storage for more than one handgun• Keeps guns out of sight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Costs more than a trigger lock or cable lock•Box can be stolen•May require replacement of batteries if it is an electronic version


DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 2

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)


3. **Trigger Lock:** A two-piece lock that fits over the trigger guard. Trigger locks cover the trigger mechanism on either side of the firearm with two steel or plastic blocks that rest on the trigger guard and lock together. Trigger locks are best suited for unloaded firearms. **Safety enhancement option-reference #6 below.*

How it works: A rigid cylinder fits behind the trigger so that the trigger cannot be pulled. A push button keypad, combination, or key opens the lock.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free-\$50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Inexpensive•Widely available•Quick access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Most of these locks are not that difficult to remove•They may break easily•If the firearm is loaded, putting on or taking off the trigger lock can cause the firearm to fire

4. **Gun Safe:** A metal locking container that is designed to store both long guns and handguns. It is either free-standing (a safe) or built into the wall of a building (a vault) and comes in a variety of sizes. Many can house multiple firearms at once. **Safety enhancement option- reference #6 below.*

How it works: The firearms are locked inside it. A push-button, combination, digital, or biometric keypad opens the lock.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
\$100-\$2,500 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Difficult to steal•Allows storage of multiple firearms including long guns and handguns•Usually fire resistant•Keeps firearms and valuables out of sight	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Costs more than other options•Heavy and difficult to move


DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 2

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

5. **Internal Locks:** A lock that is built into a handgun. Once the lock is employed, the firearm will not work. Some firearms are equipped with an internal lock that is built into the firearm.

How it works: Internal locks work differently with each firearm manufacturer. Generally, a small key is inserted into a keyhole on the firearm and turned to lock the hammer and engage the lock. If the hammer is locked or down when the trigger is pulled, nothing will happen.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Included with the purchase of certain firearm models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Nothing additional needs to be bought•The lock is designed specifically for the firearm model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Depending on the model, it can be difficult to tell from the outside whether the lock is engaged•Internal locks can be removed, and it may be unclear from the outside whether the lock is still intact

6. **Change the combination or key location:** If you already have access to a lock box, safe, or locking device, DEAR MAN a friend or family member to change the combination or temporarily store your key elsewhere for you. This can be an excellent strategy for enhancing the use of many of the in-home storage options listed above. Again, the goal is just to get some temporary distance between you and firearm(s) in order to increase safety until your wise mind says the achieved distance is no longer necessary. *Special Note: When asking a friend or family member to temporarily take your key or change the lock combination, it is important to consult your wise mind and identify concrete signs that would suggest when it is ok to return firearm access back to you. These wise mind signs will also be important for your support person to know. Make sure to work with your therapist to identify these signs and note them on your wise mind safety storage plan (Worksheet #5).*

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free DEAR MAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Increases safety when using in-home storage options•Opportunity to enlist positive support from family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•There is a chance that your support person could misplace the combination or key. One recommendation is that they write the combination


DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 2

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage


(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

		or key location down somewhere only they have access to.
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7. **Remove ammunition:** Remove ammunition from all of your firearms and store ammunition separately from the firearm. Enhance this safety option by storing the ammunition outside of the home, with a trusted friend or family member.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Increases safety when using in-home storage options•Opportunity to enlist positive support from family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None. All in-home firearm storage should occur with ammunition stored separately.

8. **Disassemble firearm:** Taking your firearm apart is a good way of ensuring that your firearm cannot be fired while being stored in the home.


Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases safety when using in-home storage options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Requires firearm knowledge•May not always be practical•May lose parts

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 2

Increasing Your Immediate Safety through In-Home Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

9. **Use cues to remain mindful of your values:** Another way to enhance your safety when considering in-home firearm storage is to use cues that help you stay connected to your values and remind you of effective ways of coping. Examples of this might include taping your Firearm Safety Plan to your refrigerator, securing pictures of family or loved ones to your gun safe, or placing reminders of your life worth living around your home.

Price	Safety-related pros	Safety-related cons
Free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as a reminder of your life worth living as well as skills to be used as effective methods of coping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

A few important tips when considering in-home storage options:

- ☐ Hiding a firearm in your home is strongly NOT recommended.
- ☐ Layering in-home storage options is best if not able/willing to consider out-of-home storage options. Layering storage options may look like: your firearm is locked in a gun safe, unloaded, and ammunition is secured elsewhere. This storage plan could be further enhanced by securing a visual cue or reminder of your life worth living to the gun safe (e.g. a picture of a loved one or pet).

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 3

How to Install a Cable Lock

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

Below is information on how to operate a basic firearm cable lock that is often used with a variety of different types of firearms. While these instructions do apply to many of the locks distributed to firearm owners, it is important to note that some cable locks may operate somewhat differently from the one noted below. Therefore, it is vital that you make sure to thoroughly follow any specific instructions pertaining to your specific gun lock in order to ensure that it has been installed properly.

BEFORE USING YOUR FIREARM CABLE LOCK

- 1. UNLOAD THE FIREARM:** Make sure the firearm is completely **UNLOADED**, and any safety mechanism is **ON**. **ALWAYS** keep it pointed in a safe direction and never assume the firearm is unloaded.
- 2. PREP THE LOCK:** Turn the key in a clockwise direction to unlock the provided cable lock. Remove the loose end of the cable from the padlock.



For additional information, please read the OWNERS MANUAL for safe handling and storage methods

Figure 1. Before Using Your Firearm Cable Lock. Reprinted from *Firearm Safety Matters for Suicide Prevention*, by Rocky Mountain MIREC, September 6, 2019, retrieved from https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/docs/VA_Firearm_Safety_Lock_Brochure.pdf

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 3

How to Install a Cable Lock

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

HOW TO WORK THE LOCK

1. With the key in the clockwise position, insert the loose end of the cable into the padlock.
2. Turn the key counterclockwise to engage the lock and then remove the key.
3. Always double-check to confirm the cable is locked and secure.
4. Store the key to the firearm cable lock separately from both firearms and ammunition, and in a place that children can't find.

BASIC SAFETY TIPS

✦ Rectangular Snip

NEVER PUT THE CABLE LOCK WITHIN THE TRIGGER GUARD.

Do not use the firearm with the cable lock in place.

BASICS OF SAFE HANDLING INCLUDE:

- ✓ Point the firearm in a safe direction
- ✓ Keep fingers off the trigger
- ✓ Keep unloaded when not in use



Remember to keep firearms locked and unloaded when not in use.

Figure 2. How To Work The Lock & Basic Safety Tips. Reprinted from *Firearm Safety Matters for Suicide Prevention*, by Rocky Mountain MIREC, September 6, 2019, retrieved from https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/docs/VA_Firearm_Safety_Lock_Brochure.pdf

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 3

How to Install a Cable Lock

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

HOW TO INSTALL CABLE LOCK INTO A FIREARM

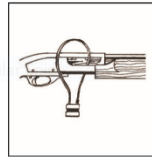
Please reference the attached Instruction Sheet

Make sure ALL firearms are
UNLOADED before they are put away.



SEMI AUTOMATIC PISTOLS:

remove the magazine, and with the slide back, insert the cable part through the ejection port and out of the magazine well.

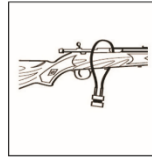


SEMI AUTOMATIC or PUMP-ACTION SHOT FIREARMS:

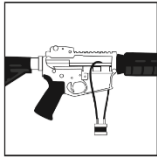
put the bolt in the open position and insert the cable part through the ejection port and out of the loading port.



REVOLVERS: open the cylinder and insert the cable part through the barrel or through an empty chamber.



BOLT ACTION RIFLES: open the action or remove the bolt from the rifle. Then remove the magazine and insert the cable through the ejection port and out of the magazine well or the receiver assembly.



MODERN SPORTING RIFLE: With the charging handle and bolt locked back and the magazine removed, insert the cable through the ejection port and out the magazine well.

This cable lock can be used with many different firearms.

Figure 3. How To Install Cable Lock Into A Firearm. Reprinted from *Firearm Safety Matters for Suicide Prevention*, by Rocky Mountain MIREC, September 6, 2019, retrieved from https://www.mirecc.va.gov/lethalmeanssafety/docs/VA_Firearm_Safety_Lock_Brochure.pdf

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 4

Factors in the Way of Improving Safe Firearm Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4)

☐ **YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT SAFE FIREARM STORAGE OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU**

YOUR EMOTIONS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

☐ You know how to improve safe storage; however, emotions (anger, fear, sadness) control what you do and how you choose to store your firearm(s).

YOU FORGET YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS FOR SHORT-TERM GOALS

☐ You put your immediate urges regarding the storage of your firearm(s) ahead of your long-term goals.

YOU FORGET THE CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH UNSAFE FIREARM STORAGE

☐ You know how to improve safe storage, but don't remain mindful of how your current firearm storage could result in negative consequences for you and those around you.

OTHER PEOPLE ARE GETTING IN YOUR WAY

☐ You have the skills; however, others get in the way of securing firearms in the home.

☐ Other people practice unsafe firearm storage and are more powerful than you.

YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS ARE GETTING IN THE WAY

☐ Beliefs that you will be able to foresee a crisis ahead of time and secure your firearm(s) before the crisis occurs results in you not practicing safe firearm storage now.

☐ Beliefs that less safe firearm storage practices are necessary for purposes of self-defense result in you not taking steps to improve safety from self-harm or harm to loved ones.

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 1

Beginning the Conversation about Firearm Lethal Means Safety

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5)

DBT is a program dedicated to helping you build your life worth living. Beginning to move towards your life worth living involves taking concrete steps to stay alive and avoid hurting yourself and/or others. Because of this, it is important to have a conversation about firearms and firearm storage practices, even if you don't own or have access to a firearm right now.

If you currently **DO** own or have access to a firearm, please answer the following and discuss your answers with your therapist:

1. What is your experience with firearms? _____

2. What kind of firearm(s) do you own and how many firearms do you have access to? _____

3. How do you currently store your firearms? (Where are they stored? Are they locked? Loaded? Where do you store the ammunition?) _____

4. Who else has access to your firearms? _____

5. What strategies would you be willing to consider to increase your safety and the safety of those around you? _____

6. What emotions, thoughts, urges and sensations come up for you when thinking about alternative storage solutions for your firearms? _____

If you currently **DO NOT** own or have access to a firearm, please answer the following and discuss your answers with your therapist:

1. What is your experience with firearms? _____

2. If you currently don't own a firearm, are you planning on purchasing one? Do you foresee yourself having access to a firearm in the future? Do you live in a household where someone else owns a firearm? _____

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 2

Challenging Myths in the Way of Practicing Firearm Safety

For each myth, write down a challenge that makes sense to you.

1. Firearm access is not related to suicide.

Challenge: _____

2. I need a firearm for self-defense.

Challenge: _____

3. Having a firearm in my home makes me and others in the home safer.

Challenge: _____

4. Others in my home aren't at risk if I do a good job of hiding my firearm where they won't find it.

Challenge: _____

5. I will have enough time to secure my firearm(s) if I ever find myself in a crisis or start to see that my safety is at risk.

Challenge: _____

6. Other myth: _____

Challenge: _____

Note. Challenging Myths in the Way of Practicing Firearm Safety. Adapted from DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition (p. 198), by M.M. Linehan., 2015, New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 3

Check the Facts About Firearms and Self-Defense

Many people keep a firearm for purposes of self-defense with the belief that having a firearm will increase their overall level of safety. For example in one study, gun owners reported feeling safer when they carried a gun (Miller, Azrael, & Hemenway, 2000; Shepperd et al., 2018).

1. Why does this belief make sense? Where did you learn that having a firearm makes you safer?
2. What are your thoughts and assumptions regarding having a firearm and its ability to increase your overall safety? Consider mindfully reviewing your answers for *DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 1: Beginning a Conversation about Firearm Safety*.
3. Are you assuming threat? If so, is this assumption based on fact or feeling?
4. If this threat were to arise, what other ways could you keep yourself and loved ones safe?
5. Do your beliefs regarding firearms and self-defense fit the facts?
6. What are the probabilities of a suicide attempt versus risk of home invasion or out-of-home attack in the near term?
7. What are you willing to do to keep yourself safe from suicide?
8. If you live with family, friends, or loved ones, what are you willing to do to keep them safe from firearm-related injury, suicide attempt, or death?

Note. Check the Facts About Firearms and Self-Defense. Adapted from *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition* (p. 285-286), by M.M. Linehan., 2015, New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4

Pros and Cons for Improving Firearm Safe Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 4)

As you begin to examine the pros and cons for improving firearm safe storage, it is important to first remind yourself of the life worth living you are working to build. This can entail reminding yourself of your values, and/or the values of people that you care about or that care about you. After you identify these values, you can work towards making firearm storage choices that uphold these values.

Part I: Values

What do you value? What are some things that are important to you when you envision your life worth living? For example:

<i>I value</i>	<i>family</i>	How is changing my firearm storage associated with this value?	<i>Securing my firearm may mean my children are less at risk for seriously hurting themselves or someone else.</i>
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<i>I value</i>		How is changing my firearm storage associated with this value?	
<i>I value</i>		How is changing my firearm storage associated with this value?	
<i>I value</i>		How is changing my firearm storage associated with this value?	

Part II: Pros and Cons

Fill out Part II of this worksheet when you are:

- Feeling ambivalent or unsure about whether you should reduce the accessibility of your firearms.
- Trying to decide whether to take steps to secure your firearms.
- Feeling threatened or being pulled into emotion mind.

As you work on Part II, be mindful of the values you described above. Identifying the pros and cons of improving the safe storage of your firearm(s) involves:

- Making a list of the pros and cons for changing your firearm storage
- Making a list of the pros and cons for *not* changing your firearm storage

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4

Pros and Cons for Improving Firearm Safe Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 4)

Rate Willingness to Improve Firearm Safe Storage (0= None; 100= Very High) Before: ____ After: ____

When you are filling out your pros and cons, think about these questions:

- What are your safety concerns related to suicide?
- What are the potential consequences of *not* improving safe storage of your firearm(s)?
- What are the potential consequences of temporarily reducing access to your firearm(s)?
 - If there are negative potential consequences of reducing access, do those outweigh the negative potential consequences of *not* increasing safe storage?
- Is enhancing safe storage of your firearm(s) in your best interest (i.e., effective), or not in your best interest (i.e., ineffective?)
- Who else might this decision impact, and how so?
- Is increasing the safe storage of your firearm(s) likely to *increase* or *decrease* your overall physical safety?
- If you own your firearm(s) for protection, are there other (non-firearm) methods that can be used to enhance your safety and the safety of your home/loved ones?

Pros	Maintain current access to firearms	Increase safe storage of firearms
Cons	Maintain current access to firearms	Increase safe storage of firearms

✓Check the facts

- Ask yourself, “Am I correct in my assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the pros and cons?”
- Ask yourself, “Are my values aligned with the pros or cons of changing my firearm storage?”
- Ask yourself, “Are my values aligned with the pros or cons of *not* changing my firearm storage?”

Note. Pros and Cons for Improving Firearm Safe Storage. Adapted from *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition* (p. 167; 271), by M.M. Linehan., 2015, New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

Release Date: 5/20/20

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4

Pros and Cons for Improving Firearm Safe Storage

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handout 4)

Part III: Checking in with Wise Mind

What did you decide to do?

Does this decision correspond with your **emotion mind**, **reasonable mind**, or **wise mind**?

If you are answering from wise mind, how do you know this decision aligns with wise mind values?

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5

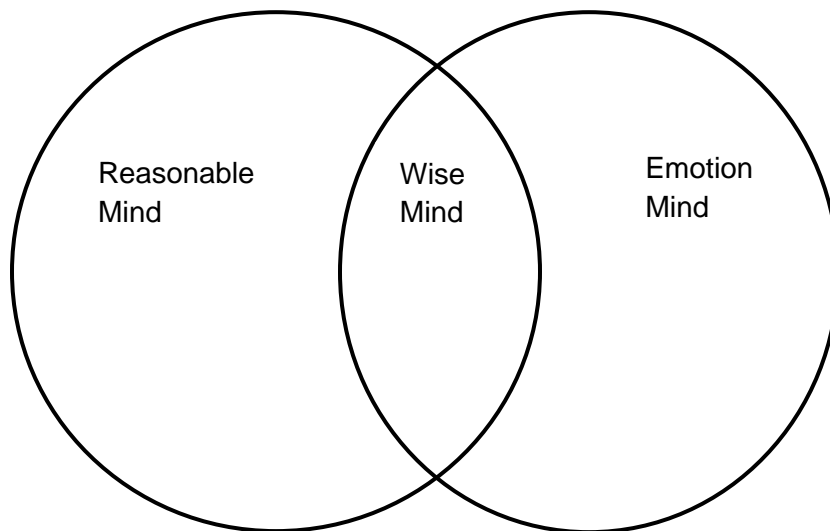
Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handouts 1, 2, 3, & 4; DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 1 & 4)

This worksheet is to help you create a plan to safely store your firearm(s). First we'll identify how the three states of mind can influence firearm storage behaviors.

Part I: Wise Mind

Before moving on to develop your firearm storage plan, take a moment to observe and describe what your **reasonable mind**, **emotion mind**, and **wise mind** say when considering taking steps to improve your firearm storage behaviors.



Part II: Life Worth Living and Wise Mind

Tips:

✓ If you have difficulty completing the following section, mindfully review *DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 4: Pros and Cons for Increasing Firearm Safety*, then return to this section.

✓ If you observe willfulness, try replacing willfulness with willingness:

1. **OBSERVE** the willfulness. Label it. Experience it.
2. **RADICALLY ACCEPT IT.**
3. **TURN YOUR MIND** toward acceptance and willingness.
4. Try **HALF-SMILING** and a **WILLING POSTURE.**
5. When the willfulness is immovable, **ASK, "WHAT'S THE THREAT?"**

Note. Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan. Adapted from *DBT Skills Training Handouts and Worksheets, Second Edition* (p. 50; 346), by M.M. Linehan., 2015, New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan.

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5

Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handouts 1, 2, 3, & 4; DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 1 & 4)

After accessing your wise mind, recall your life worth living and draw upon your values in order to move towards a wise mind firearm storage plan. What does your life worth living look like? What goals are important to you? Which people are important to you?

Goals	Value(s) associated with this goal
Example: <i>Finishing school</i>	<i>Education, career</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	

People who are important to me	Value(s) associated with this relationship
1.	
2.	
3.	

Next, consider how leaving your firearm(s) unsecured can compromise your goals.

Goals	Ways in which an unsecured firearm can prevent me from reaching this goal
Example: <i>I want to be able to go back to school to complete my degree.</i>	<i>When my gun is loaded and in my nightstand, I could grab it in an impulsive moment and hurt myself or someone else. If this were to happen, I may not be able to finish my degree.</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	

How can an unsecured firearm impact the people that are important in my life?

People that are important to me	Ways in which unsecured firearms can negatively impact the people that are important to me
1.	
2.	
3.	

DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 5

Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan

(DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handouts 1, 2, 3, & 4; DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Worksheet 1 & 4)

Part III: Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan

Refer to *DBT Firearm Lethal Means Safety Counseling Handouts 1 & 2* to help you complete the following sections.

What steps are you willing to take in order to immediately increase your safety and/or the safety of those around you? What support people can you **DEAR MAN** to help with your wise mind storage plan? What cues can you use to serve as a reminder of your values and the people that are important to you noted in Part I and how can these cues be implemented in your wise mind storage plan (e.g., taping a picture of a beloved pet on your gun safe)?

Using your **wise mind**, identify a firearm storage plan that you are willing to commit to. Then choose the date by which you are committing to enact this plan.

Wise Mind Firearm Storage Plan	Date by when I commit to have enacted this plan
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Coping Ahead

What emotions, thoughts, urges, or behaviors may get in the way of following through with your wise mind firearm storage plan? Consider reviewing *Handout 4: Factors in the Way of Improving Safe Firearm Storage* to note any potential barriers.

The emotions, thoughts, urges, and behaviors noted above are opportunities to practice DBT skills. What specific DBT skills can you use to follow through with your wise mind firearm storage plan?

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