

# The 3A's Framework for Firearm Injury Prevention Counseling



## Approach

a patient using these guidelines when discussing firearm injury prevention:



### Be Informed

Know why people own firearms and the basics of firearms, safe storage, and local policies.



### Be Respectful

Respect a patient's decision to own firearms. Recognize that ownership may be a key part of a patient's identity.



### Focus on Harm Reduction

Propose steps, even small steps, to help reduce risk. Reducing some risk is better than not reducing any.



### Be Individualized

Find out what works best for each patient. There's no one-size-fits-all solution for reducing risk.



## Assess

these four elements:



### Risk Factors

for suicide or interpersonal violence:

- certain psychiatric disorders like bipolar disorder, depression, or schizophrenia
- alcohol or substance misuse
- history of suicide attempts
- history of violence
- intimate partner violence or domestic abuse
- dementia or other cognitive impairment
- recent relationship or job loss

When there are children in the home, clinicians should always ask about firearms.



### Ideation or Threats

Patients who have thoughts of harming themselves or others or have made threats to do so should be considered at elevated risk.



### Access to Guns

If ideation, threats, or other risk factors are present, it's important to ask about access to firearms.



### Willingness to Collaborate

The patient's ability and willingness to collaborate on a plan for safety will inform the clinician's choice of intervention.



## Act

using the most appropriate intervention based on type and level of risk:



### Safe Storage

Keeps firearms unloaded and locked up with locking devices to prevent access by unauthorized or at-risk individuals.



### Temporary Transfer

Voluntarily removes firearms from the home during a crisis. Various parties can hold on to firearms so they are out of the home entirely until the crisis passes.



### Mental Health Hold

Temporarily separates someone at risk of suicide or violence due to a mental illness from lethal means, and connects them to treatment for their symptoms.



### Civil Protective Order

Temporarily removes firearms from someone at imminent risk of harming themselves or others. Can be requested by various parties and does not require any criminal activity or mental health history, only a demonstrated risk of harm.

LOW  
RISK

HIGH  
RISK