Personal Firearm Safety in the Home
Training Program
Instructor’s Manual

An educational program to promote firearm safety in the home
Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress
Uniformed Services University
Defense Suicide Prevention Office
Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
Personal Firearm Safety Training
Instructor’s Manual

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Uniformed Services University in collaboration with
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and Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

Contributors:
Principal Investigators: CDR James C. West, MD, USN & Daniel J. Balog, MD
Research Assistants: Evelyn Cordero, BS & Jessica Kansky, BA
April M. Harris, MBA, MSHCA
Nancy T. Vineburgh, MA
Stephen J. Cozza, MD
Robert K. Gifford, PhD
Robert J. Ursano, MD

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I. Background and Need
The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is a DoD-wide effort to promote the well-being of Reserve Component (RC) members, their families and communities, by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. Through YRRP events, service members and loved ones connect with local resources before, during, and after deployments. Reintegration during post-deployment is a critical time for members of the RC, as they often live far from military installations and members of their units. Commanders and leaders play a critical role in assuring that service members and their families attend YRRP events where they can access information on health care, education/training opportunities, financial, and legal benefits.

II. Project Objectives
The Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) of the Uniformed Services University will partner with the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) and the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) to develop a series of multimodal educational materials and procedure. This targeted effort strategically support DoD Suicide Prevention mission by implementing a personal firearm safety program that includes educational, transactional and assessment components. This targeted effort promotes informed use of gun locks in order to advance the prevention of suicide mission in National Guard Service members as well as “Be Safe, Be Well, Be Strong: The Reserve Component Family” for pre, during and post operational deployments. Defense Suicide Prevention Office in cooperation with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed a plan to distribute Project Child Safe ® gun locks at YRRP events. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program has agreed to take the first steps in distributing the gun locks and solicits input from the CSTS/USU regarding how the CSTS can assist in the development of a training program/curriculum to accompany this distribution effort and enhance utilization and safety. Strategically support DoD Suicide Prevention mission by implementing a personal firearm safety program, which includes educational, transactional and assessment components.
SCRIPT:

Hello, my name is (First-Last Name) and I will be your facilitator today. I am an (role) and working with Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program to present a Personal Firearm Safety program designed to highlight the importance of gun safety in your homes and how every member of your household can participate in creating a safe environment.

One of the goals of today’s presentation is to have an interactive dialogue, so to get started, by a show of hands:

How many of you have children currently living in your home?
How many are between the ages of 1–9? 10–18?

Here are a few other questions for you to think about, no responses needed.

Do you have a personal firearm stored in your home?
Where is it stored and who knows about it?
Thank you for serving our Nation.
Our purpose is to:

- Discuss military family safety
- Promote family safety by reducing risks
- Address risks relating to personally owned firearms
- Create a military family safety plan and pledge

SCRIPT:

Thank you for participating in this discussion on gun safety, and especially for your service in our Armed Forces. Listed here are a number of statements of purpose for you to consider throughout this presentation.

Our purpose is to
- Raise awareness of family safety.
- Learn and discuss how to prevent accidents in the home.
- Learn and discuss how to minimize risk and promote family and gun safety. And to,
- Pledge responsibility for protecting your family’s safety.

Audience Participation:
Before we get started, please take a few moments to fill the survey we have distributed.
SCRIPT:

Today we will discuss how we can improve safety plans using public health methods.

In particular, we would like to think about safety planning in relation to our family which might include those living with a spouse, a partner, a roommate, a friend, or those of us who live alone. We will talk about some common scenarios and how military stressors can impact the safety of service members and families.

We will talk specifically about firearm storage practices, in your home and the homes you frequent, that will protect you and your loved ones.

Finally, we will help you create your own unique, firearm safety plan for your home. The goal is for each of you and your family members to understand YOUR situation, assess YOUR risks and define YOUR plan.

But first let’s consider some history that will help better understand the idea of public health and safety.
SCRIPT:

This graph shows a decrease in the number of motor-vehicle-related deaths from 1925–1995. Even though the number of annual vehicle miles traveled increased, the rate of deaths on the highway went down.

What did manufacturers, drivers and society do to bring about such an amazing change?
SCRIPT:

One specific public health intervention that saves lives is the seat belt. Here we see data on how the added practice of using seat belts helped save lives.

*Are there other things you can think of that made it safer for us out on the road since 1925?*
SCRIPT:

Exactly! All of the things you mentioned are some type of public health intervention.

Read bullet point number two (can be paraphrased).

Notice that there are three types of interventions: product, person and practice. Any one of these makes a difference, but taken together they cut the rate of motor vehicle fatalities dramatically.

Each of these safety interventions came about through deliberate public health safety planning.
SCRIPT:

Public health safety planning involves deliberate steps in which we identify hazards that present a potential danger, assess the level of risk for each hazard, and based on that risk make changes to products, people, or practices to reduce those risks.
SCRIPT:

When we consider Public Health safety planning and how to create a safe environment, the basic structure is the same regardless of the situation.

We will use this model as our theme throughout our discussion.

Notice that this is a continuous loop.

Now let’s consider ways that public health safety planning can make a difference in our own homes.
SCRIPT:

Consider the family with a child beginning to walk. Suddenly there are new hazards inside the home to consider. Electrical outlets are just one potential hazard, can you think of others?

*How great is the risk to the child from the hazard of exposed outlets?*

Considering this risk, it probably makes sense to cover outlets that the child might reach.

*Can you think of other actions that would help reduce the risk to the child from exposed electrical outlets?*
SCRIPT:

Here are some common safety practices many families employ.

*Are there other common safety practices you observe in your family?*
SCRIPT:

Military families face unique challenges, and when they are preparing for military deployment, there are common stressors that MAY increase risk and even become a safety issue if not properly anticipated and checked.

*Ask the audience*, “Are there other unique stressors as a result of deployment?” (Pause for one or two responses). Thank you for your feedback (if anyone has responded). You should add any of your specific stressors to your individual safety plan included in your packet.

**Purpose: Audience Participation**

To get service member and family to begin thinking about the overall safety of their household and how deployment stress can impact them.
SCRIPT:

Let’s think about a story to help illustrate how public health safety planning can help us with the stresses of deployment.

(Read slide)
SCRIPT:

Using our public health safety planning model as a guide, we first need to identify hazards. Getting ready to deploy is a stressful situation for military families. Are there specific hazards unique to David? (allow audience to respond)

Then we assess the risk of the situation. Is this a dangerous situation for David and his family? (allow audience to respond)

Based on this risk what action should David and his family take? Is there anything we should do for David?
SCRIPT:

Continuing our story…. 

(read slide)
SCRIPT:

Going back to our public health safety planning model, there are new hazards of David drinking and having anger outbursts.  
*Are there any other hazards we should consider?*  
(allow audience to respond)

We need to reassess risk.  
*Is this a dangerous situation for David and his family?*  
(allow audience to respond)

*Based on this risk what action should David and his family take?*  
*What should we do?*  
(allow audience to respond)
SCRIPT:

Now let’s continue the story further….

(read slide)
SCRIPT:

Clearly there are new hazards to consider. David has hit his child and may be suicidal. *Are there any other hazards we haven’t considered?* (allow audience to respond)

Reassessing risk this is CLEARLY a dangerous situation for David and his family.

*Based on this risk what action should David and his family take?*
*What should we do?* (allow audience to respond)
SCRIPT:

What if David had a gun....

(Let the slide sit with the audience)

Now lets look at some more examples why personal firearm safety is important.
SCRIPT:

Read the information to the audience.
SCRIPT:

Tell me your thoughts about this.

What do you think could have been done to prevent it?

This tragedy is a “Teachable Moment.”
SCRIPT:

Now let’s learn from this “Teachable Moment” using our public health safety planning model. You can see some obvious hazards listed.  
*Does everyone agree with the hazards in this situation?*

*Based on those hazards how would you assess risk? Is Josh safe?*  
(allow audience to respond)

*What actions should we or Josh take to reduce the risk?*  
(allow audience to respond)
Did you know...?

1. Approximately 30,000 people die from firearms each year
   - 2/3rd of those deaths are suicides

2. Access to firearms increases risk for death by suicide AND homicide

3. Half of all military suicides were by non-issue firearms (5x more than military weapons)

SCRIPT:

Having a firearm in your house and experiencing stress can possibly influence suicide and violence in your home. (Read) Did you know…

Let’s look at some more real world stories and think about additional risks.
Script:

Read the information to the audience.

Firearm Safety in Your Home

From recent news reports

• 12 August 2013: “...a child reportedly shot himself in the foot with a BB gun. Police...determined it was an accident, according to reports.”

• 12 August 2013: “…police were called to...Hospital after a child who had been shot with a pellet gun checked into the emergency room. Reports...determined that the child’s siblings caused the injuries accidentally while playing.”

Delaware News, ThisWeek Community News

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SCRIPT:

Tell me your thoughts about these stories.

What do you think could have been done to prevent them?

These are also “Teachable Moments.”
SCRIPT:

Using our public health safety planning model, 
*What do you think of the hazards we have listed up here? Are there any others?*

Now let’s assess the risk? 
*What do you think?
(allow audience to respond)*

*Given that assessment, what actions can you take to reduce the risk?*
(allow audience to respond)

Finally, two more stories…. 
SCRIPT:

Read the information to the audience.
SCRIPT:

Tell me your thoughts about these stories.  
*What is different from the previous stories?*

The “Teachable Moment” here is that children are at risk outside their home if they encounter unsecured loaded firearms. 
*What can we do about this for our own children and those who come to visit us?*

*Have you had “gun conversations” with relatives and friends where your children play?*
SCRIPT:

Having a firearm in your house and experiencing stress can possibly influence suicide and violence in your home.

(Read) Did you know…
SCRIPT:

We have created a gun safety quiz.

*By a show of hands, how many believe this question is true? ...How many think it is false?*
SCRIPT:

Would any one like to share why they answered true?
SCRIPT:

*By a show of hands, how many believe this question is true? ...How many think it is false?*
Firearm Safety in Your Home

Quiz:
— Untrained individuals should not have access to guns and ammunition.

True or False?

SCRIPT:

Again, would any one like to say why they answered true?
**Script:**

*How many think the correct response is A?*

*How many think B? C? D?*

*It looks like the majority believes response X is correct, let’s see.*
**SCRIPT:**

The correct answer is 75 percent.  
*Are any of you surprised by this number?*

For those who have children at home or visiting, it is probably best to ASSUME they know where the guns are and act accordingly. Your children should also know what to do and say should they be at a friend’s house and find a gun.

This statistic should inspire all of us whose children visit other homes to have good gun communication with our friends and family to ensure guns in other homes are not accessible to visiting children.
Firearm Safety in Your Home

Quiz:
— 21% percent of gun owners in a recent study reported storing their gun loaded. What percentage of their spouses reported the same thing?

a. 2%
b. 7%
c. 21%
d. 30%

SCRIPT:

How many would select A?

...How many would select B? ...C? ...D?

It looks like “X” is the favored choice, let’s see.
SCRIPT:

Only a third of spouses knew that their partner stored a loaded gun.  
*Are any of you surprised by this number?*

This slide certainly suggests that a conversation with your partner or spouse is necessary. You should probably assume that your spouse is unaware of your gun storage habits.

This is another example of the need for good gun communication.
Script:

By a show of hands, how many believe firearms and ammunition should be stored in a locked cabinet to minimize risk of unintended access?
SCRIPT:

Those of us who are gun owners need to have an appropriate safety plan that absolutely prevents unintended access to children and untrained household members or visitors. Sometimes even trained persons might be less safe for various reasons and should have their access prevented.

According to JAMA (Journal of American Medical Association), the 4 practices of keeping a gun locked, unloaded, storing ammunition locked, and in a separate location, are each associated with a protective effect.
SCRIPT:

Now we are going to transition to the most important part of our talk.

Earlier we discussed how public health safety planning improved safety in a variety areas; now let’s think about how we can improve personal firearm safety in our homes.
SCRIPT:

Before we talk about this sometimes controversial area, I would like for you to consider some additional information.

(Allow audience time to read slide)
SCRIPT:

Health and Family Safety Planning go together!

Whether your “family” includes a spouse, partner, children, or roommates you should still apply these practices.

A safety plan should cover general family safety risks, disaster planning and firearm safety as well. Here we will break down personal firearm safety planning into three basic components — product, person and practice.
SCRIPT:

When we consider the Product component of the actual firearm, few would disagree with the first two statements.

Please remember that applying a properly fitted trigger/cable lock to a properly stored (unloaded) weapon adds an extra level of safety.

A cable lock DOES NOT REPLACE the need to store guns and ammo in separate and locked gun cases to ensure unauthorized users do not gain access.
SCRIPT:

When we consider the Person component, we must include the owner of the firearm and anyone who might gain unintended access to it.

All weapon users should have appropriate weapon safety training. Any children in the household should have appropriate safety education about what to do should they ever find a weapon.

Finally, there may be circumstances when even trained users should not have access to their personal firearms. If mental or physical illness compromise ability to make good decisions, or if personal conflict or drugs or alcohol might be clouding judgment, it is better to have the weapon and ammunition secured and inaccessible. This is what we mean by an alternate storage plan. It is the responsibility of the gun owner to establish this in advance.
When we consider Practice, clear evidence shows that the first two actions increase safety.

Equally important is GUN COMMUNICATION with anyone in the family or household who might gain access to the firearm. As we have already seen, children know about firearms in the home even at an early age. They need to understand the family rules pertaining to firearms.

Communication with your spouse or partner is equally important, and they should know the location and condition of personal firearms in the home. They should be involved in developing alternate storage plans as well.
SCRIPT:

While there are elements common to all Firearm Safety Plans, your plan should be unique to your situation.

Regularly update your plan, especially when your circumstances change.

When working on your safety plan, use today’s talk as practice for identifying hazards in your home, assessing risk, and taking action when needed.

Don’t forget to use your safety plan when thinking about the product, the person, and the practice.

Let’s grow from these “Teachable Moments,” and help avoid further firearm related accidents.

Please keep today’s handout as a guide when you put your family firearm safety plan into action.

Finally, If you're truly committed to enhancing personal firearm safety in your home please sign on to your own pledge at the bottom of your planning document. This is for you to keep as a reminder.
Finally, here are a number of resources for you and your family if you ever find yourself in a situation with an increased safety risk.

What I would like us all to do is pull out our cell phones (presenter should do the same, holding it up for all to see what you are doing) …For future use if needed, type in (8-0-0) 2-7-3 dash 8-2-5-5, this is the Military Crisis Line. Now it is in your phone and available to you if you ever need to speak to someone confidentially.

Thank you again for your attention and good luck with your planning!

If you would like a complementary cable to help you get started on your own Firearm Safety Plan, then please remain after the session.

(We also would like to encourage you all to take a few minutes to participate in our anonymous post discussion survey that will be e-mailed to you, as a link, in 30–45 days.)
Personal Firearms Safety Training Instructor’s Manual

Thank you.

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Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress
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Pre-Training Survey

Please CIRCLE the most appropriate answer:

1. Are you single, married or living w/ roommate?  
   Single | Married | Roommate

2. Do children (less than 18 years old) live in your house | apartment?  
   Yes | No | N/A

3. Do children (less than 18 years old) ever visit your house | apartment?  
   Yes | No | N/A

4. Do you, a spouse or a roommate store personal firearm(s) at home?  
   Yes | No | N/A

5. Do you visit someone who keeps guns in their home?  
   Yes | No | N/A

If you answered NO to BOTH questions #4 and #5, then STOP HERE.

If you answered YES to question #4, then please answer these questions:

A. Are firearm(s) stored in a locked gun cabinet?  
   Yes | No | N/A

B. Are firearms stored unloaded?  
   Yes | No | N/A

C. Is ammo stored in a locked cabinet?  
   Yes | No | N/A

D. Is ammo stored in a locked cabinet separate from firearm(s)?  
   Yes | No | N/A

E. Have you discussed firearm safety w/ those at home?  
   Yes | No | N/A

If you answered NO to question #5, then please STOP HERE.

If you answered YES to question #5, then please answer these questions:

A. In homes you visit, are firearm(s) stored in a locked gun cabinet?  
   Yes | No | Don’t Know

B. In homes you visit, are firearms stored unloaded?  
   Yes | No | Don’t Know

C. In homes you visit, is ammo stored in a locked cabinet?  
   Yes | No | Don’t Know

D. In homes you visit, is ammo stored in a locked cabinet separate from firearm(s)?  
   Yes | No | Don’t Know

E. Have you discussed firearm safety w/ others whose homes you visit?  
   Yes | No

Thank you for completing this ANONYMOUS survey and for supporting firearm safety in the home!

N/A = Not applicable
Firearm Safety at Home

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Firearm Safety Pledge

Safety Risks & Military Families

1. Military families experience unique deployment related stressors that may increase safety risk:
   - Heightened anxiety for the service member and the family
   - Longer/unpredictable work hours
   - Family/child care issues during time of separation
   - New financial challenges
   - Separation from family support
   - Decreased community connections
   - Single spouse maintaining household

2. Recognizing situations that may increase risk in your home is an essential component of pre-deployment preparation

3. Are there additional deployment related factors that may increase risk in your home during this upcoming deployment?

---------------------------------------------

Resources

Command Resources:
   Medical/Chaplain/Family Services Center

DoD
   Military Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255, Press “1”
   Vets-4-Warriors: 24/7 peer support (855-838-8255); vets4warriors.com
   Defense Suicide Prevention Office: http://suicideoutreach.org/
   Military One Source: http://www.militaryonesource.mil/
   After Deployment: http://www.afterdeployment.org
   Guard & Reserve: http://www.dcoe.mil/Families/Guard_and_Reserved.aspx
   Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program: http://www.yellowribbon.mil/

Personal Firearm Safety Planning

1. Do you have children living in your home?  **Yes or No**

2. Do you ever have children visiting your home?  **Yes or No**

3. Does your child visit other houses?  **Yes or No**

4. What actions have you taken to keep children safe with respect to firearms?

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5. How does your family safety plan change when a spouse is deployed?

---------------------------------------------
Gun Communication

1. What general concerns would you like to discuss with your spouse or other family members regarding personal firearms stored in your home and/or the homes of friends/family?

2. What specific concerns would you like to discuss, with your spouse or other family members, regarding personal firearm safety during period of upcoming deployment?

3. What specific concerns would you like to discuss regarding changing risk presented by children as they grow?
   - Toddler: ___________________________
   - Elementary school: ___________________
   - Junior high/high school: _______________

Personal Firearm Safety Plan for the Home (check when complete)

1. When you develop your personal firearm safety plan, you must consider the following as they may increase the level of risk in your home:
   - Presence of children in the home
   - Age of children in the home
   - Spouse familiarity with personal firearms
   - Deployment status of active service member
   - Medical and/or Mental Health status of family members in the home
   - Substance abuse problems in the home

2. Product — Firearm Safety Practices
   - Properly service your firearms
   - Dispose or disable firearms when they are no longer serviceable
   - Apply properly fitted trigger locks/cable to properly stored unloaded weapons

3. Person — Personal Firearm Safety Practices
   - Attend weapon’s safety courses as needed
   - If there are medical, mental health, or substance related factors that may increase the risk of maintaining firearm in home, then pursue alternate storage plan (i.e. command storage in base armory etc.)

   - Keep personal firearms in locked gun cabinet
   - Keep ammunition locked separately and inaccessible to unintended users
   - Practice good Gun Communication and discuss issues of firearm safety with your spouse, friends, and children when appropriate

Personal Firearm Safety Pledge

- I will practice good “Gun Communication” and discuss personal firearm safety plans with my spouse, children (when indicated) and family/friends (when indicated).
- I will implement a comprehensive Firearm Safety Plan in my home and review it regularly as risks change.
- I will find alternate storage locations for personal firearms in the event of problems such as severe medical illness, substance abuse or mental illness in order to minimize the risk of suicide or violence in my home.

Signature __________________________________ Date _______________
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Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences 4301 Jones Bridge Road Building B, Rm. 3068 Bethesda, MD 20814 www.cstsonline.org

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress Department of Psychiatry
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences 4301 Jones Bridge Road Building B, Rm. 3068 Bethesda, MD 20814 www.cstsonline.org