

# Suicide Warning Signs

- Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped, in pain, or like a burden to others
- Changes in mood such as irritability, anger, depression, and anxiety
- Using substances to cope
- Chronic fatigue or changes in sleeping patterns
- A lack of interest in usual hobbies or withdrawing from activities
- Withdrawal or aggression after a painful event or situation
- Disturbing posts on social media or sudden shut down of accounts
- Concerning texts
- Drawings or writing about death or dying
- A dip in attendance or performance at school or work
- Getting rid of prized possessions
- Putting personal affairs in order

## Resources

These resources are available to South Dakota residents at no cost.

Learn more about means safety, order gun locks, and request trainings on means safety and suicide prevention

[SDSuicidePrevention.org/Help/Secure-Storage](https://SDSuicidePrevention.org/Help/Secure-Storage)



Request a medication lock box or DisposeRx packet and find a take-back location near you

[LetsBeClearSD.com/Prevention/Safe-Disposal](https://LetsBeClearSD.com/Prevention/Safe-Disposal)



# 988

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# Means Safety

## Reducing Risk of Suicide



# What is Means Safety?

In a suicide crisis, the length of time someone seriously contemplates suicide tends to be short-lived. If suicidal behaviors are detected early, access to “means” for someone’s suicide plan — such as firearms, medications, ligatures, and other substances and objects — can be restricted. “Means safety” is an effort to limit or eliminate risk to save a life during times of crisis.

## Gun Safety

When a person is at risk of suicide, consider removing firearms from the home. You can ask your local police department to temporarily store them for you. You can also store them in a locked gun safe and use gun safety locks. Keep ammunition stored separately and ensure other household members cannot access the keys.



## Ligatures

A ligature risk refers to any place, object or fixture in an environment where a person could attach material to harm themselves, particularly through methods such as hanging or strangulation.

Ligature risks aren’t always obvious and can be found in seemingly harmless everyday items. Common objects to keep in mind include:

- Items that can be used to form a cord such as rope, belts, towels, bedsheets, power cables, and shoelaces
- Doors and windows
- Plumbing and lighting fixtures
- Window coverings

## Medications

Medications left out in the open are easy targets for misuse and can quickly become dangerous. It’s important to safely store your medications in your home to prevent misuse or unintentional overdose.

When it comes to medications, what you don’t use is just as important as what you do. Expired, unused or unwanted medications pose a real risk if they’re not disposed of properly. Safely storing and disposing of your medications are important steps you can take to help maintain a safe environment in your home.

- **Use a Lock Box & Store Medications Out of Sight:** The best way to keep your prescription and over-the-counter medications safe is by using a lock box. It’s secure, easy to use and ensures that only you or someone you trust can access your medication.
- **Track Your Medications:** Keep an eye on how many pills or doses you have left. If something goes missing, you’ll know right away.
- **Educate Your Family:** Talk to your family about the dangers of misusing medications. Make sure everyone knows the importance of keeping medications secure and not sharing them with others.
- **Dispose of unused, expired, or unneeded medication** by dropping them off at a take-back location or using a DisposeRx packet for safe at home disposal.

