

**Study: Mental health assessments often fail to identify suicide ideation among gun owners**

*Researchers say expanded inquiries tailored to individual situations can save lives*

**\*Note: Embargoed until Wednesday May 11, 2022 at 11 a.m. eastern**

*The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center*

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**NEWS PACKAGE**

<b>SUGGESTED TEASE</b>	AS THE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH DISSIPATES, MORE PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT THEIR STRUGGLES AND EVEN THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE. NOW, A NEW STUDY AIMS TO ENSURE MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS ARE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO PREVENT A TRAGEDY. DETAILS, COMING UP.
<b>ANCHOR LEAD</b>	WHILE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE BECOMING MORE COMMON, A NEW STUDY PUBLISHED IN JAMA NETWORK OPEN FINDS CURRENT QUESTIONS BEING USED TO IDENTIFY THOSE AT RISK OFTEN FALL SHORT, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE WITH ACCESS TO FIREARMS. BARB CONSIGLIO HAS MORE ON WHY TAILORING THE CONVERSATION AND EXPANDING QUESTIONING ON MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS IS KEY TO SAVING LIVES.
<b>(PACKAGE START) -----</b> <b>CG: Courtesy: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center</b> <b>:00 - :03</b> Shots of Donna and her tattoo	(Nats - Sound) :02  EVERY TIME SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HER ARM, DONNA HECK IS COMFORTED BY HER DAUGHTER'S WORDS. :04
<b>CG: Jeff and Donna Heck</b> <b>Lost daughter to suicide</b>  Shots of the Hecks looking at photos of their daughter	<i>"Dani's handwriting, 'I love you mommy,' with her name under it in her handwriting signature."</i> <i>"Her signature. Yep."</i> :04  DONNA AND JEFF LOST DANI TO SUICIDE IN 2019, AS SHE WAS MAKING PLANS TO START AN ORGANIZATION TO HELP OTHERS SUFFERING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS. NOW, HER PARENTS ARE CARRYING OUT HER

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<p><b>CG: Jeff and Donna Heck (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of Jeff looking through the 33 Forever website</p> <p>Shots of Craig Bryan working in office</p>	<p>DREAMS THROUGH THE 33 FOREVER NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IN DANI'S HONOR. :11</p> <p><i>"She had a dark moment that she couldn't get through, unfortunately, and that's why we lost her, but she believed that you could."</i> :06</p> <p>TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO HELP OTHERS GET THROUGH THOSE DARK MOMENTS, THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IS SUPPORTING RESEARCH AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER AND COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, INCLUDING A NEW STUDY THAT EXPLORED CURRENT SUICIDE SCREENING QUESTIONS AND HOW THEY MAY FALL SHORT IN IDENTIFYING THOSE AT RISK.</p> <p>THE STUDY FOUND THAT GUN OWNERS, IN PARTICULAR, WERE LESS LIKELY TO REPORT SUICIDAL IDEATION, EVEN THOUGH THE DATA IS CLEAR THAT FIREARMS ARE THE MOST COMMON METHOD OF SUICIDE. :23</p>
<p><b>CG: Craig Bryan Ohio State College of Medicine</b></p> <p>Shots of Bryan collaborating with team on video meeting</p>	<p><i>"Not everyone experiences suicidal ideation in the same way. So, maybe our traditional ways of asking about suicidal thoughts are incomplete."</i> :09</p> <p>EXPERTS RECOMMEND AMENDING MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS TO INCLUDE A WIDER RANGE OF QUESTIONS TAILORED TO THE INDIVIDUAL, EXPANDING BEYOND WHETHER SOMEONE HAS THOUGHT ABOUT SUICIDE TO WHETHER THEY HAVE CONSIDERED A METHOD OF SUICIDE, WHICH GUN OWNERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE AN ANSWER TO. :11</p>
<p><b>Bryan (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of locking a gun in a safe</p>	<p><i>"Just a simple shift in a question, adding one more different perspective or a different angle to ask about suicidal thoughts could potentially help us to identify people who are in a vulnerable state."</i> :12</p> <p>IF YOU FEEL YOU OR A LOVED ONE IS AT RISK, EXPERTS SAY SIMPLE PREVENTIVE MEASURES LIKE KEEPING GUNS IN A SAFE OR ASKING A FRIEND TO HOLD ONTO YOUR FIREARMS CAN BE LIFESAVING. :09</p>
<p><b>Bryan (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shots of the Hecks looking at photos</p>	<p><i>"Suicidal crises tend to come on suddenly, but don't last very long. So, if we limit access to a lethal method during that short window of time, that could potentially prevent a suicide."</i> :12</p> <p>AND AS THE RESEARCH CONTINUES, THE HECKS KNOW THAT DANI IS GUIDING THEIR MISSION. :05</p>

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**CG: Jeff and Donna Heck  
(CG'd earlier)**

Shots of the Hecks looking at  
photos

**(PACKAGE END) -----**

**ANCHOR TAG**

*"I hope she'd be proud of us. I think she would be. I think she'd be proud of herself, that she really was the impetus for all this idea, because it was her idea first." :10*

AT THE OHIO STATE WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER,  
THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :02 / 1:58

EXPERTS SAY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHERE  
TO GO FOR HELP AND FIND RESOURCES.

IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE OR FEAR  
THAT SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE MAY BE  
CONSIDERING SUICIDE, CALL 800-273-TALK OR TEXT  
7-4-1-7-4-1.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

 **Share it! Suggested tweet:**

A new study by researchers at [@OSUWexMed](https://twitter.com/OSUWexMed) finds gun owners often don't report suicidal ideation when asked. Experts recommend expanding mental health assessments to consider individual perspectives and situations to better identify those at risk.

<https://bit.ly/3vQ9sfx>

 **Suggested post:**

While the conversation around mental health and suicide prevention is becoming more common, a new study by researchers at [The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center](https://www.osu.edu/wexner-medical-center/) finds the standard questions about suicidal ideation are often not enough to identify those at risk, especially among those who own firearms. Experts say combining safeguards, like locking guns in a safe, along with expanded assessments that consider different perspectives and situations can save lives.

<https://bit.ly/3vQ9sfx>

### EXTRA BITES

**CG: Craig Bryan  
Ohio State College of Medicine**

Bryan says creating barriers to firearms can prevent suicides:  
*"Things as simple as using gun safes, gun locks, trigger locks. Placing these barriers between someone and ready access to a loaded weapon oftentimes slows the process down long enough that a person moves out of that peak crisis." :17*

Bryan says questions should be expanded and be tailored to individuals:  
*"Part of the reason that we've not been better at preventing suicide is we always try to find, what's the one path that everybody follows? But there is no single path. There are multiple paths and we need to customize different strategies, interventions and prevention approaches for those different pathways." :17*

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**CG: Craig Bryan**  
Ohio State College of Medicine

Bryan says ask someone you trust to keep your firearms if you feel you're at risk:  
*"Consider reaching out to someone that you trust, a fellow gun owner, a friend, a family member or loved one and saying, 'Hey, maybe now's not the time to have ready access to firearms. Can you help me lock them up? Would you hold them or babysit them for a while?'" :16*

Bryan says he has focused on suicide prevention among veterans since he served in Iraq:  
*"I deployed to Iraq in 2009. That was definitely where I would say a lot of my thinking and ideas about suicide and PTSD really solidified. And in the decade and a half since, most of my work has focused on suicide amongst military personnel and veterans." :20*

Jeff says people can go on to live their lives if they can get through a dark moment:  
*"It's that idea about trying to provide people with resources to help and hope. And really an understanding that, you know, you can see tomorrow, you've just got to get through the moment. And if you can get through the moment, you can be here tomorrow and you can live a good life and you can overcome." :18*

**CG: Jeff and Donna Heck**  
Lost daughter to suicide

Donna says people often wonder what they could have done after losing someone to suicide:  
*"Losing a child is awful. Losing a loved one is awful, but there's such another layer when you lose someone to suicide because, what did you miss, what could you have done to help change the situation?" :13*

Jeff says asking more comprehensive questions can save lives:  
*"We do have some questions that I know are the standard ones that are being asked and I think they're important to ask, but if we can tweak those and get to the root of the problem and get people to actively respond again, it's going to save lives. And so finding the best way to do it, I think we've got to keep on working." :19*

## References

<sup>1</sup>Identification of Latent Subgroups of Suicidal Ideation and Suicidal Behavior Among Gunowners and Non-Gunowners, **JAMA Network Open**, May 11, 2022. Online:  
[http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.11510?utm\\_source=For\\_The\\_Media&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=ftm\\_links&utm\\_term=051122](http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.11510?utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_term=051122)

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