MCBW Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

Information About Murder-Suicide

What do we know about murder-suicides?

· Most people think of suicide as a solitary act. However, in one of the largest studies conducted, more people died from murders associated with the suicide than the suicide itself. This emerging reality calls into question the common belief that suicide, especially firearms suicide, is a solitary act that affects only the shooter.
· Medical studies estimate there are between 1,000 to 1,500 murder-suicides each year in the United States. It is estimated that three quarters are intimate partner murder-suicides.
· The most prevalent type of murder-suicide is between intimate partners, with the man killing his wife or girlfriend.
· 90-95% of those who commit murder-suicide are male.
· 75% of all murder-suicides occur in the home.
· Intimate partner murder-suicides are most commonly precipitated when there is an attempt to leave or end the relationship.
Violence Policy Center, 2008 American Roulette; Murder-Suicide in the United States.

What is the connection between suicide and homicide?

· Domestic violence is present in the overwhelming majority of murder-suicides that occur in the United States.
· Every major murder-suicide study has shown that a firearm is the weapon most often used. The act of obtaining a firearm, or access to a firearm, should be taken seriously. In one study, 31 of the 40 murder-suicides involved a firearm.
Violence Policy Center, 2008 American Roulette; Murder-Suicide in the United States.
· In 2008, in Minnesota, there were 21 known femicides, of these 6 were intimate partner murder-suicides and an additional 4 murders with attempted suicides. 47% of the intimate partner femicides were followed by an attempted or actual suicide. *Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, 2008 Femicide Report.*