

Gun Violence and Behavioral Health: Just the Facts



Mental Illness and Violent Crimes against Others

- The vast majority of people with serious mental illnesses are not dangerous to society. Only about **4% of all violent crimes against others** are committed by people with a diagnosis of serious mental illness. (2)
- The most predictive violence risk factors for people with and without a mental health diagnosis are substance abuse, low socioeconomic status, and a history of trauma. (3)
- Men and women with serious mental illness are **11 times more likely to be the victim of a violent crime** than the general population. (4)

Mental Health Reporting and Firearms Background Checks

- Colorado is one of **38 states** that reports mental health records to a state and/or federal background check system. (5)
- The FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check (NICS) data show that from 1999-2010 reporting on mental illness accounted for less than **3%** of firearms purchase denials.
- **66%** of background check denials were due to felony conviction, indictment, or fugitive from justice status. (6)

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If you or someone you know is struggling with a mental or emotional problem, getting into trouble with drugs or alcohol, having family or relationship problems, or problems at work or school, call **Metro Crisis Line at 888-885-1222**. Free, confidential help and guidance is only a phone call away.

¹ "Firearm Deaths in Colorado, 2004-2011." Colorado Department of Health and Environment—Injury, Suicide, & Violence Prevention Branch; January 2013.

² Seena Fazel; Martin Grann. "The Population Impact of Severe Mental Illness on Violent Crime." *American Journal of Psychiatry* (2006) 163: 1397-1403.

³ Volavka J, et al. "Violent Behavior in Mental Illness: The Role of Substance Abuse," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Aug. 4, 2010): Vol. 304, No. 5, pp. 563-64.

⁴ Linda A. Teplin, Gary M. McClelland, Karen M. Abram, Dana A. Weiner. "Crime Victimization in Adults With Severe Mental Illness: Comparison With the National Crime Victimization Survey" *Archives of General Psychiatry* (August, 2005): 62 (8): 911-921.

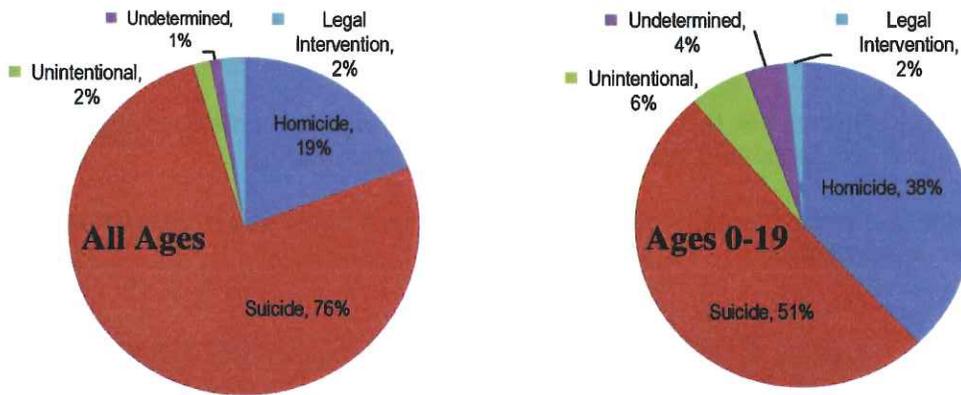
⁵ "Possession of a Firearm by the Mentally Ill." National Council of State Legislatures—Civil and Criminal Justice Division; January 2013.

⁶ Ronald Frandsen, Dave Naglich, Gene Lauver, Allina Lee. "Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2010—Statistical Tables" United States Department of Justice—Bureau of Justice Statistics; February 2013, NCJ 238226.

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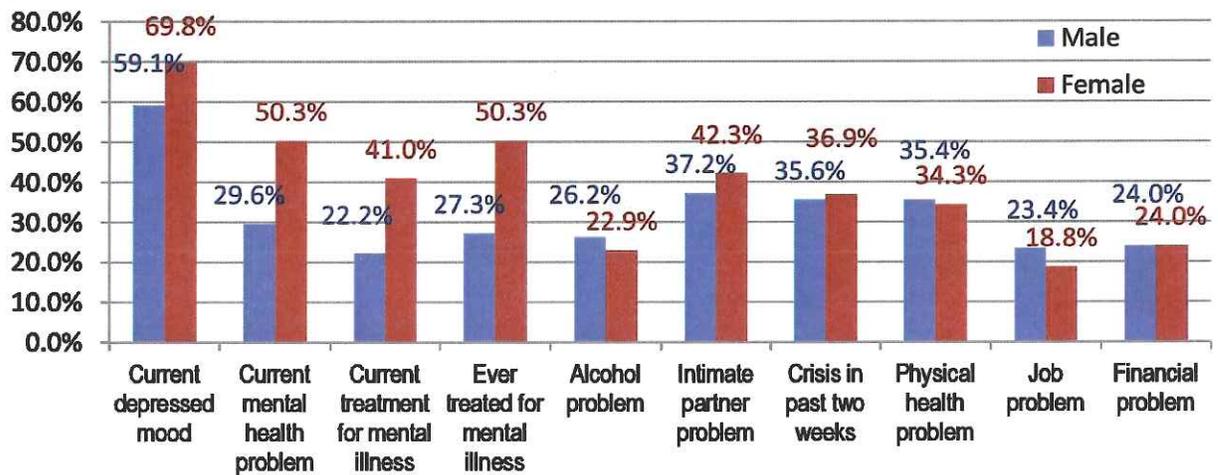


Firearm Deaths in Colorado by Intent, 2004-2011:



- From 2004-2011, **4,362 people** died in Colorado as a result of firearms use.
- **76%** of all firearms wound deaths in Colorado (**3,315 people**) were suicides.
- **87%** of suicides by firearm were committed by males; **88%** were White, Non-Hispanic.
- **50%** of ALL suicide deaths in Colorado during this time were committed using a firearm.

Circumstances of Suicide Firearm Deaths by Gender in Colorado, 2004-2011:



- Depression was the top mental health indicator for suicide.
- Females were more likely to have reported mental health problems than males.
- Male suicides were more likely to be associated with problems with alcohol or jobs. (1)

