



# Dementia and Firearm Safety



Laura Prater, PhD, MPH, MHA

Acting Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
University of Washington



HARBORVIEW  
INJURY PREVENTION  
& RESEARCH CENTER

# Question for the Viewers



*How would you rate your understanding of firearm injury risks in the older adult population?*

- A. High level
- B. Moderate level
- C. Low level
- D. Other (please type in chat)

## Firearm Injury and Older Adults

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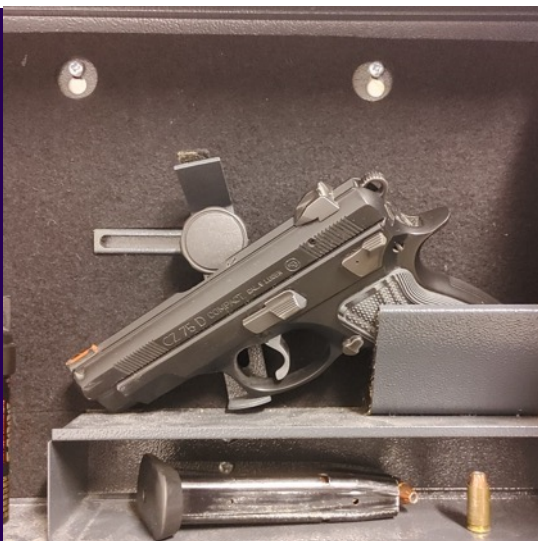
## Dementia and Suicide Risks

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## Clinical, Individual, and Family Solutions

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## Tools and Policy Solutions

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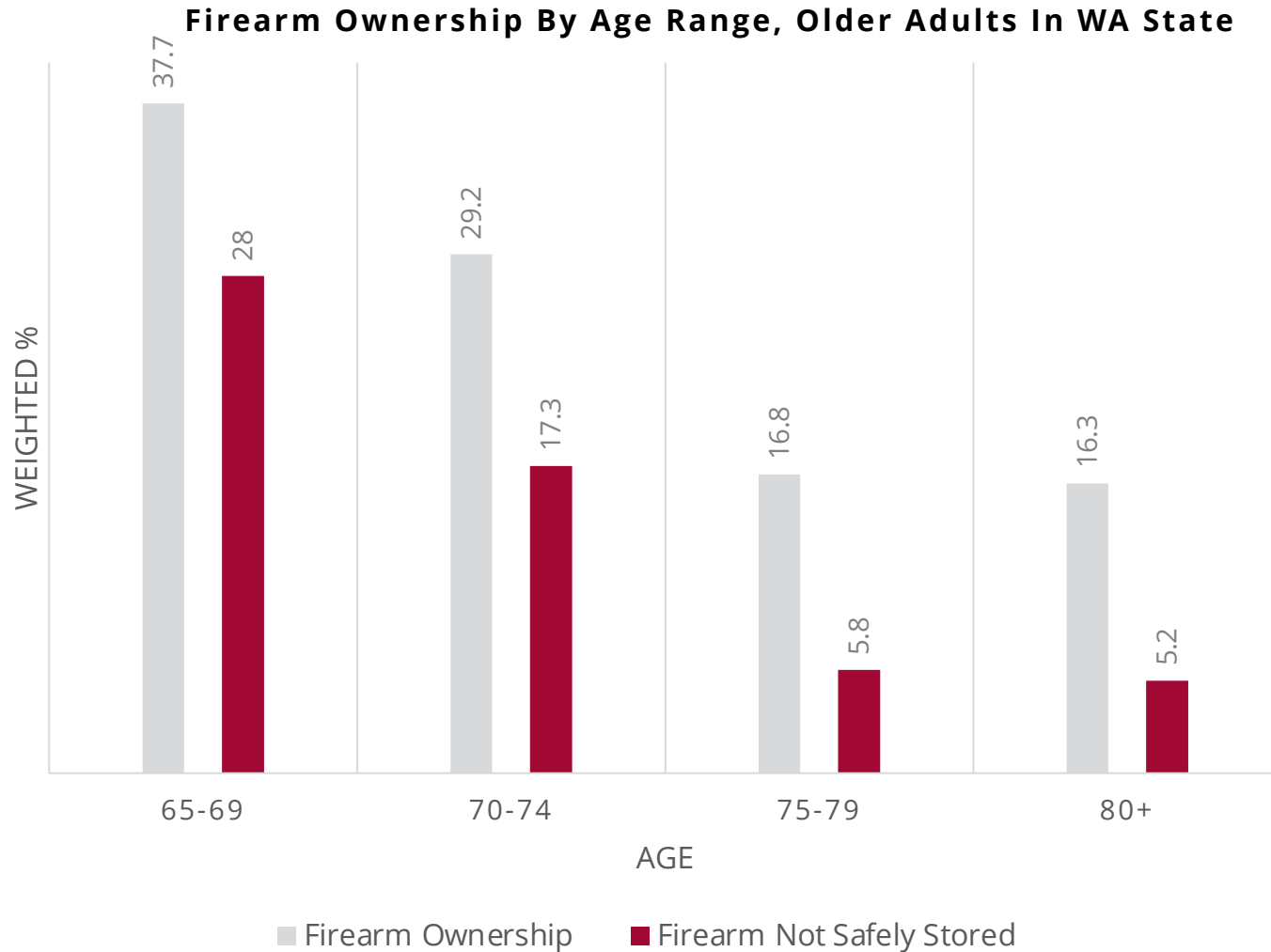


# Firearm Injury and Older Adults

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# Firearms Among Older Adults



In the US,  
**40-60% of adults**  
with AD/ADRD may  
own a firearm or  
have one in  
the home.



# Firearms in America: Reasons for Ownership

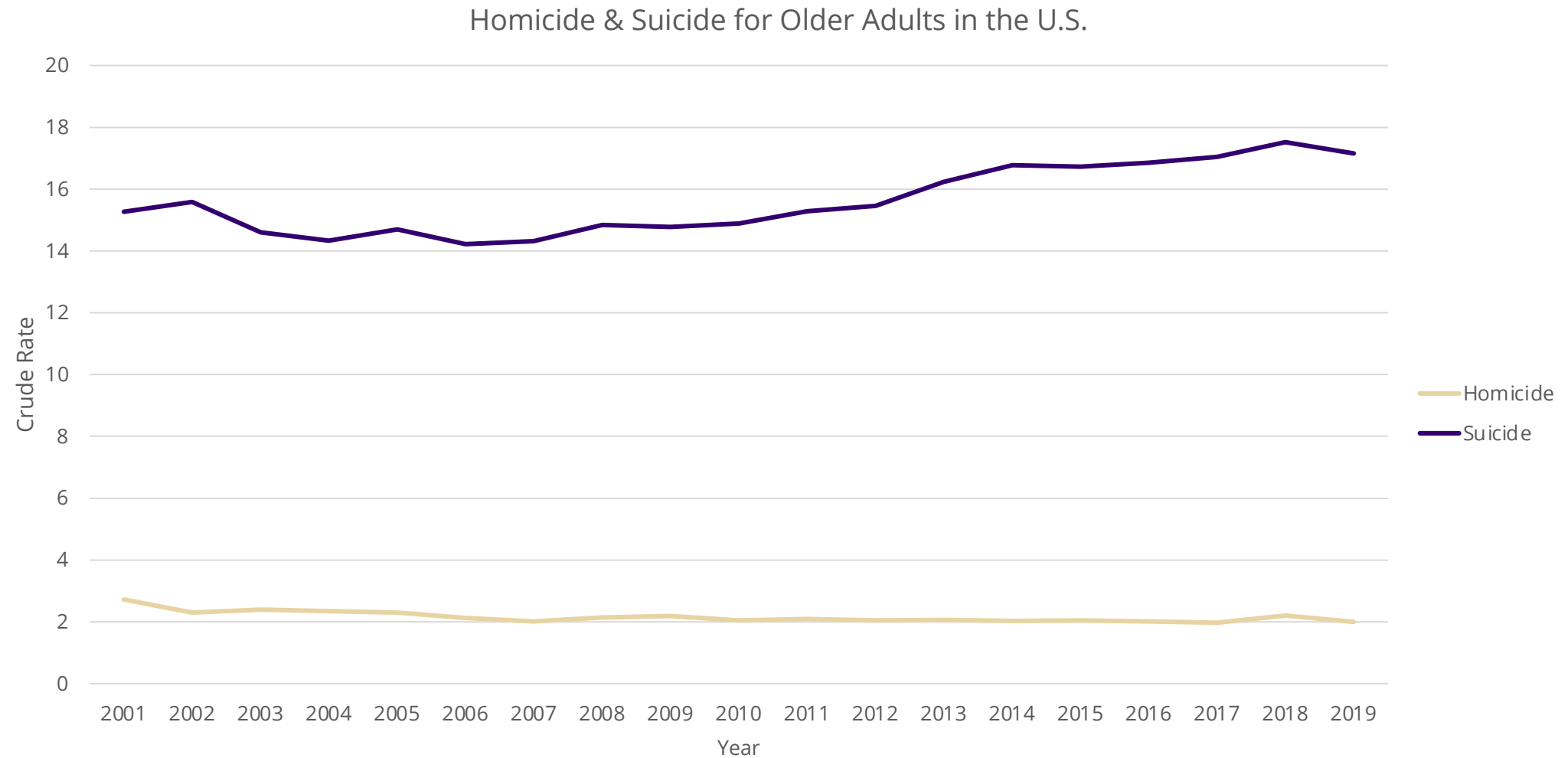


**Protection**  
Handguns



**Sports Shooting**  
Long Guns

# Violence and Older Adults



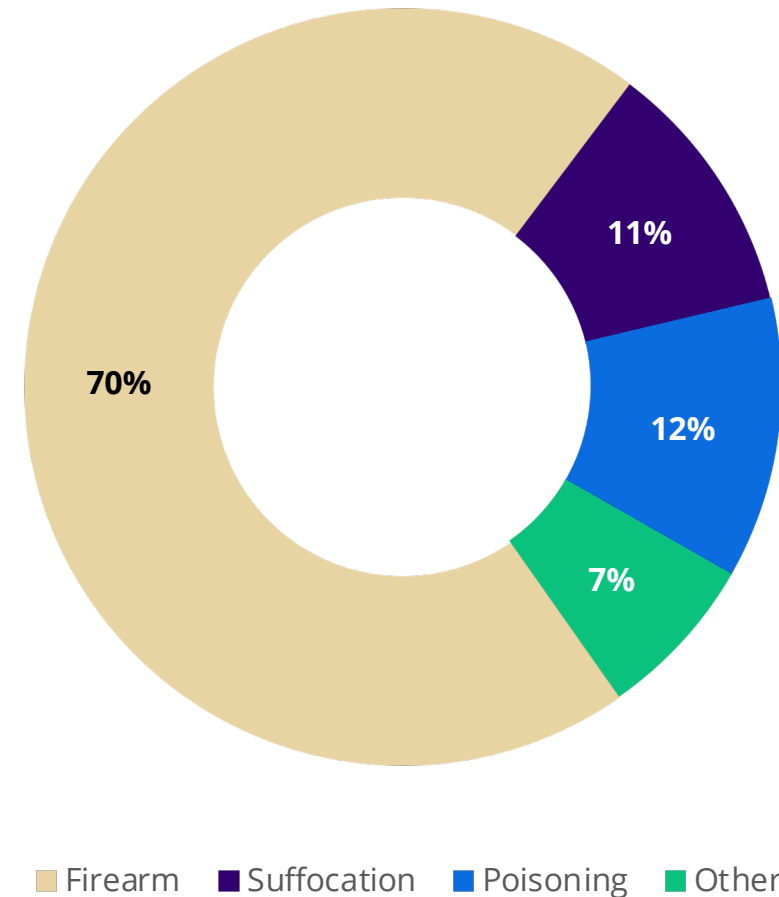
**Source:** Rosen T, Makaroun LK, Cornwell Y, Betz M. (2019)

# Suicide and Older Adults

## Key Facts:

- Suicides are a leading cause of death for older Americans.
- Firearms are the most common method for suicide among older adults.
- Firearms are lethal 80–90% of the time when used as a method for suicide.

Methods Of Suicide Among Older Adults



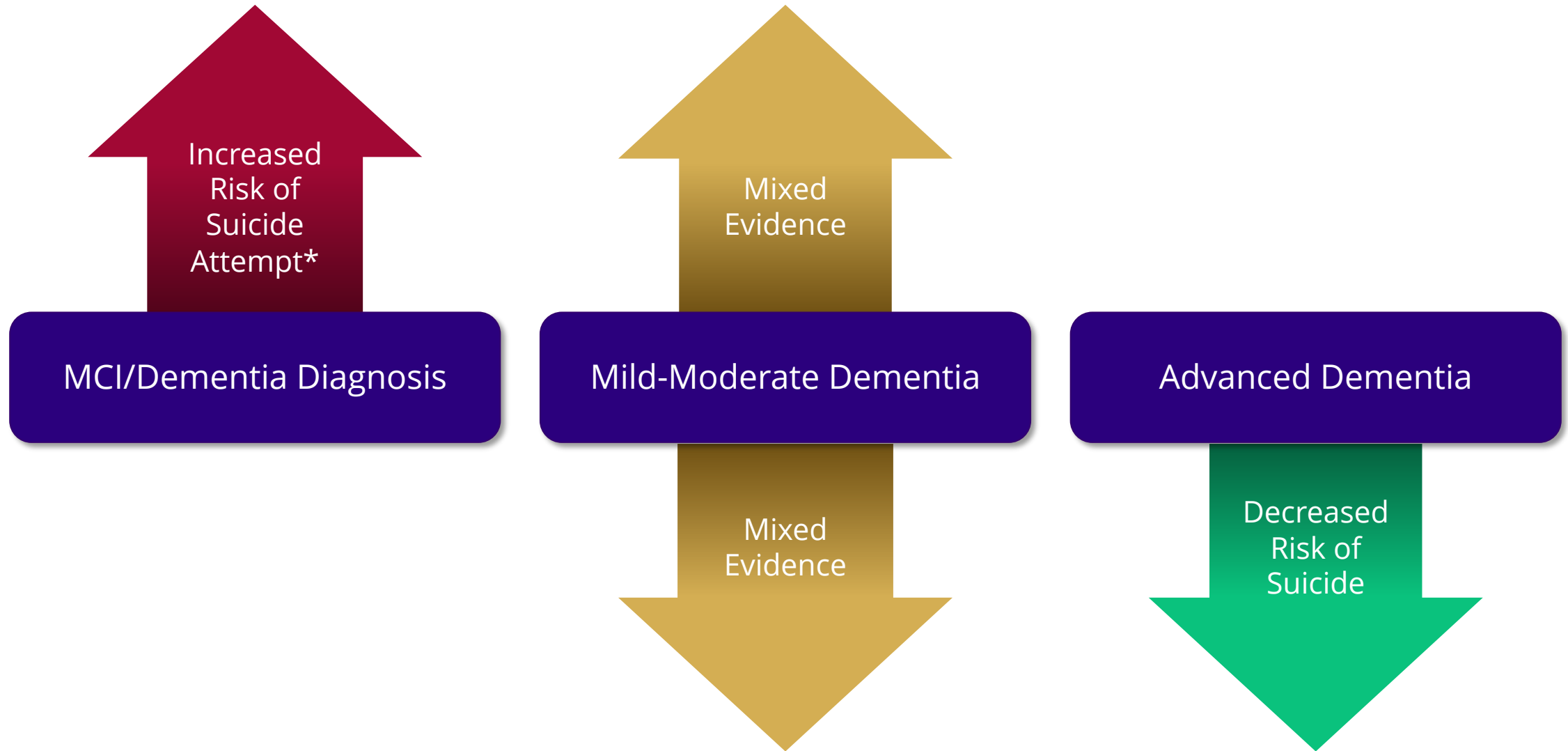


# Dementia and Suicide Risks

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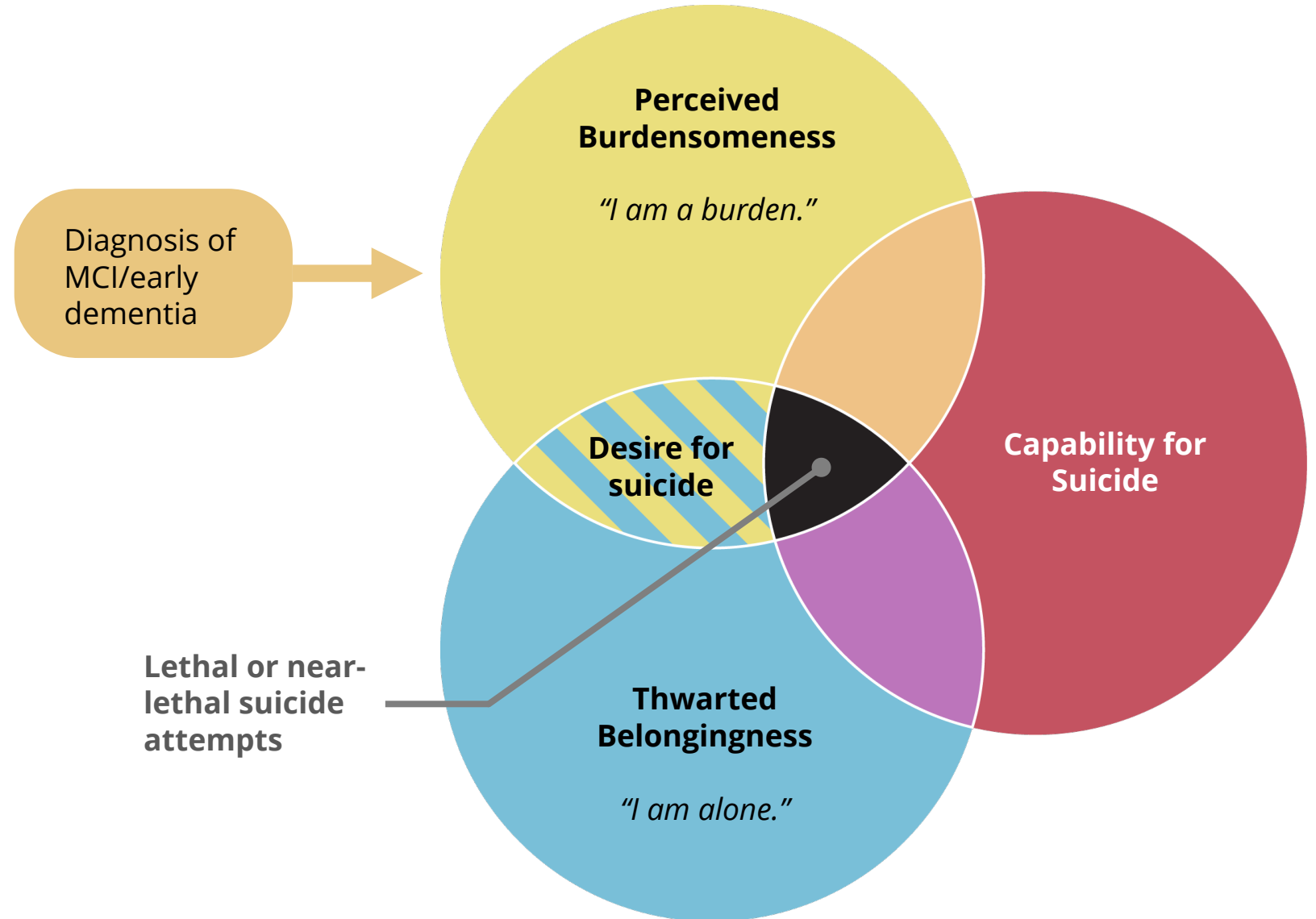


# Dementia and Suicide Risk



# Interpersonal Theory of Suicide

Assumptions on the  
Interpersonal  
Theory of Suicide:



# Violence Among Persons with Dementia

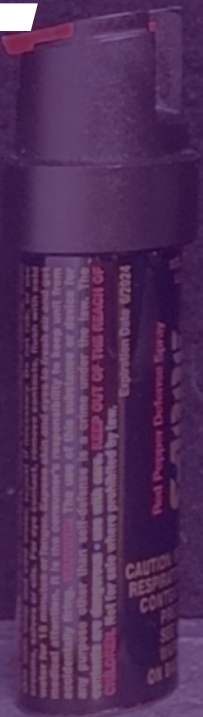


**20% of caregivers** report having experienced violence from a loved one with dementia.

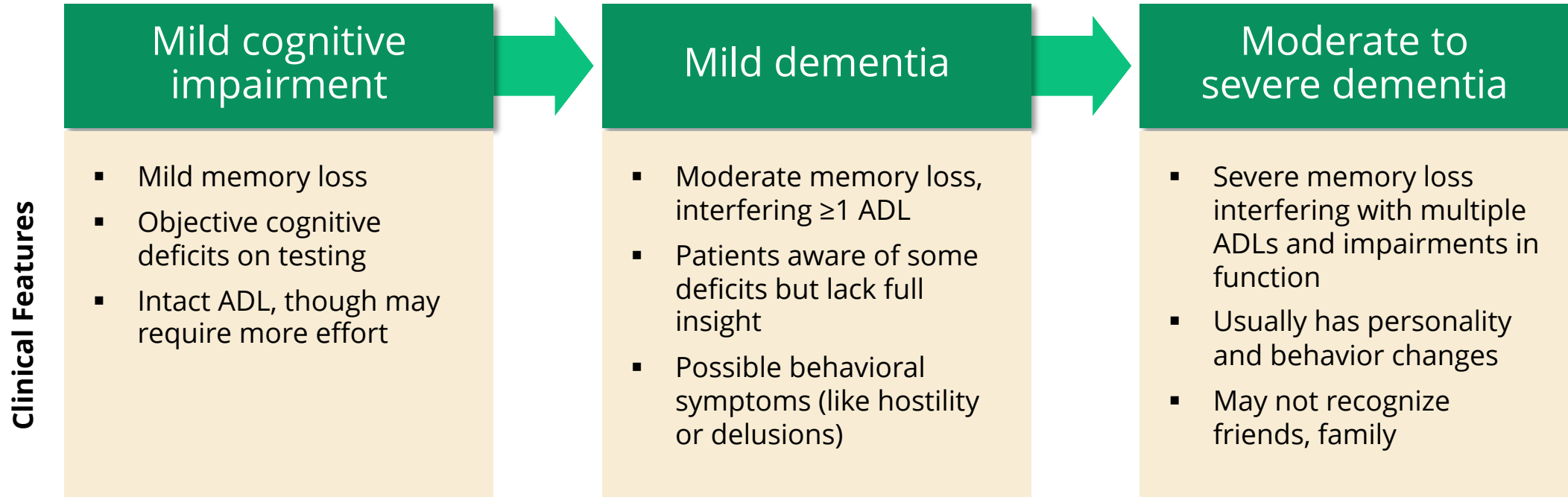


# Clinical, Individual, and Family Solutions

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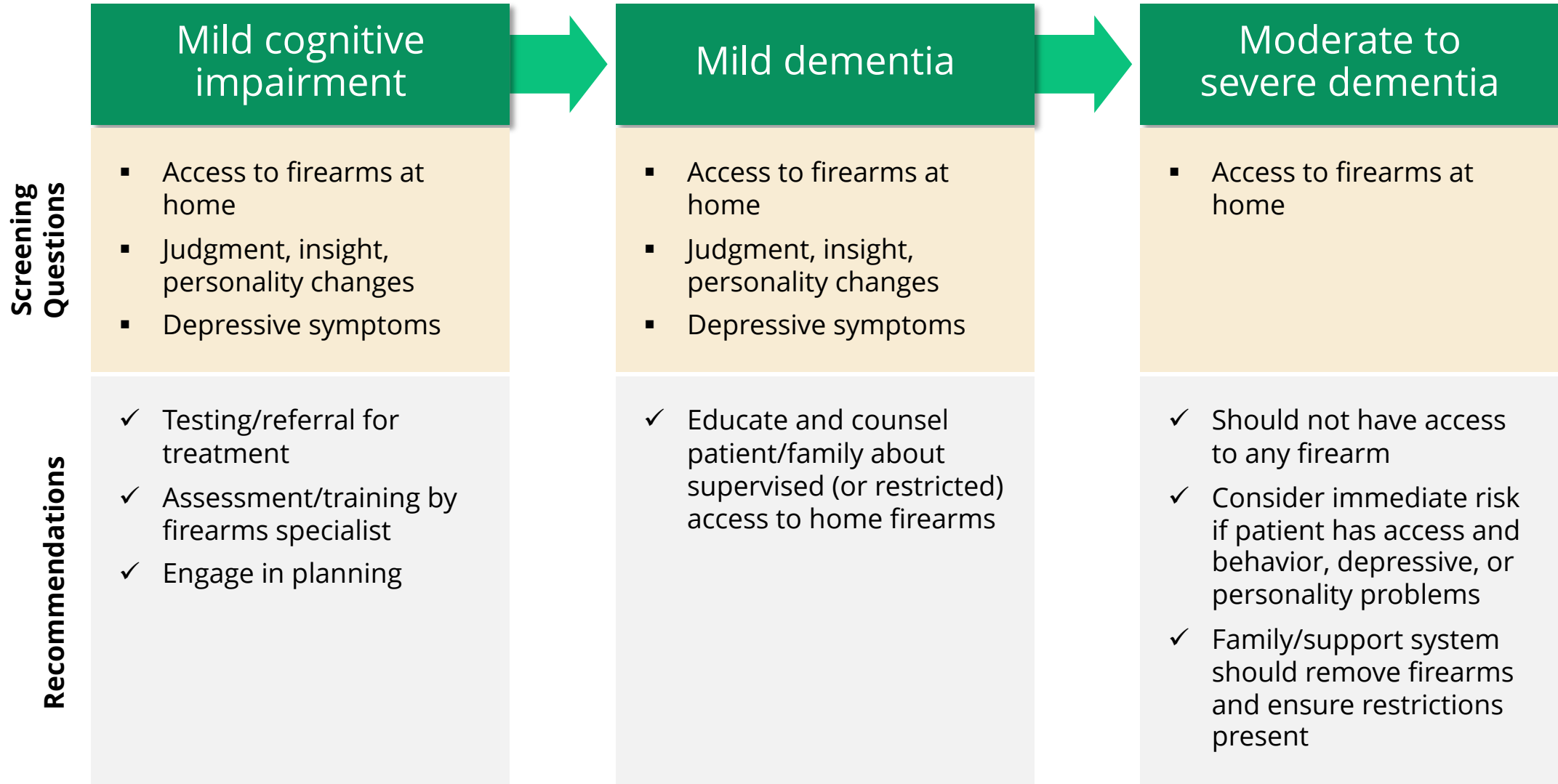


# Practical Solutions: Clinical Assessment



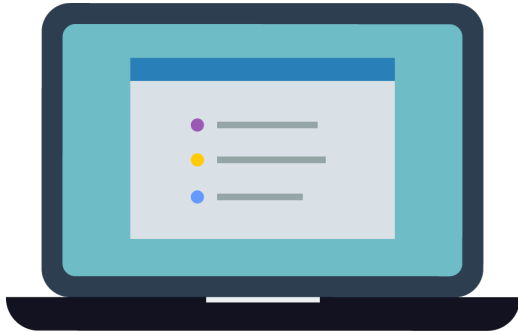


# Practical Solutions: Clinical Assessment



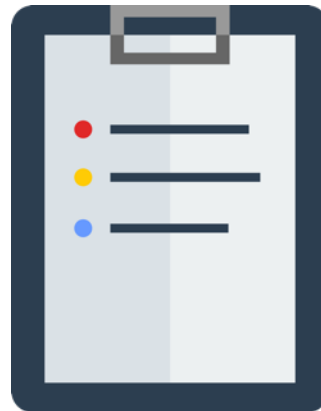
# Practical Solutions: Planning

## Use Online Planning Tools



**Example:** Safety in Dementia

## Create a Written Plan



## Practice Safe Storage at Home



**Examples:** Trigger locks, lock boxes, gun safes



# Question for the Viewers



*Does your state or jurisdiction have specific laws targeting gun violence among persons with dementia?*

- A. Yes (please share in chat)
- B. No
- C. I'm not sure
- D. Other (please type in chat)

# Tools and Policy Solutions

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## Background Checks

When firearm is purchased from a Federally Licensed Firearms Dealer



## The following persons are prohibited from owning:

- Felons
- Fugitives
- Persons with Addiction
- Underage
- Danger to self or others or “lack the mental capacity to contract or manage their own affairs”
- Involuntary hospitalizations
- Non-citizens unlawfully in the United States
- Has an active restraining order
- Has been convicted of domestic violence



Concise Research Report | Published: 16 October 2020

## Extreme Risk Protection Orders and Persons with Dementia in the State of Washington

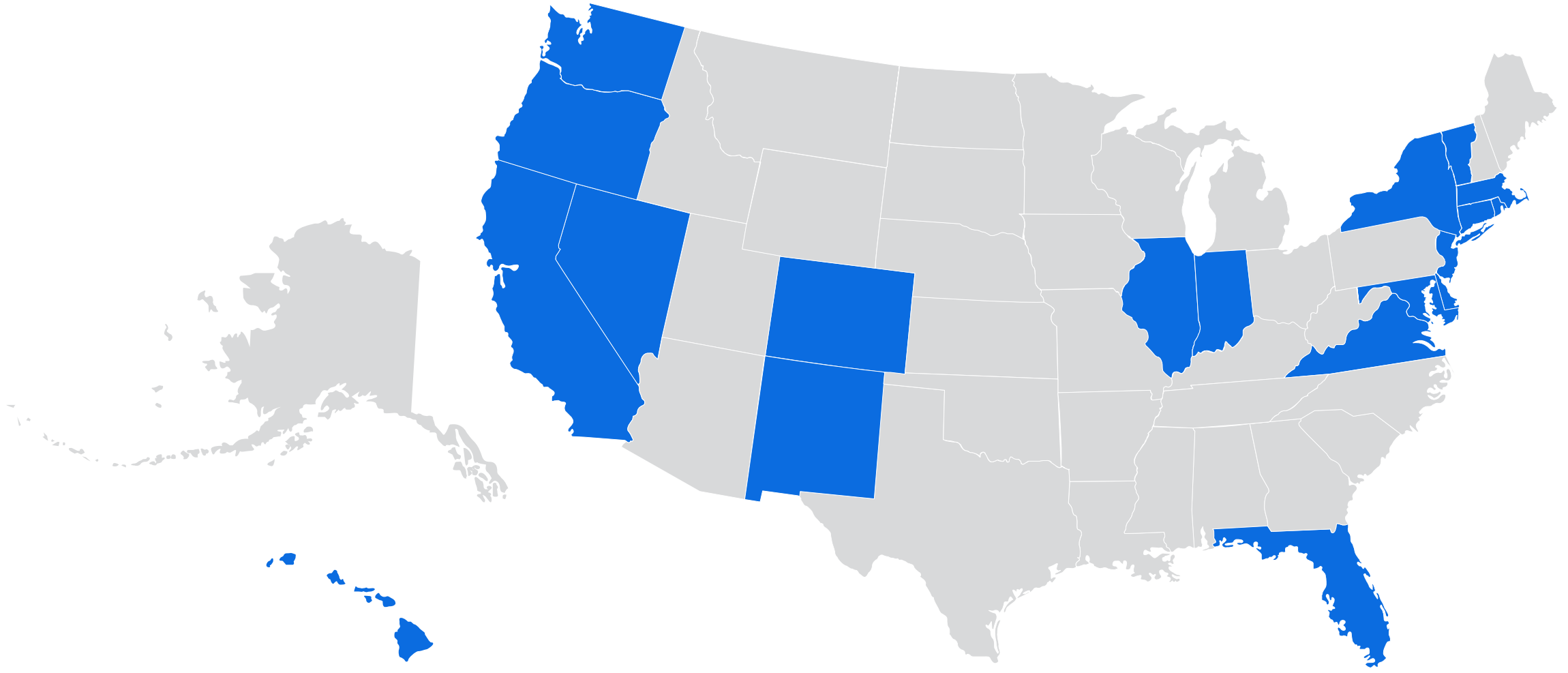
[Laura C. Prater PhD, MPH, MHA](#) , [Miriam J. Haviland PhD, MSPH](#), [Frederick P. Rivara MD, MPH](#), [M. Alex Bellenger MA, MPA](#), [Lauren Gibb MPH](#) & [Ali Rowhani-Rahbar MD, PhD, MPH](#)

[Journal of General Internal Medicine](#) (2020) | [Cite this article](#)

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) are a potential tool to reduce gun violence among persons with dementia.



# States with ERPO/GVRO Laws



Source: [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) (2020).

# ERPO: Extreme Risk Protection Orders

## What is it?

- Civil court order
- Prevents firearm access to high-risk individuals
- Based on behaviors

## What does it do?

- No new firearms (background check would prevent)
- Relinquish existing firearms

## What behaviors are covered?

- Violence
- Threats of self harm
- Dangerous mental health crises
- Abuse of alcohol/drugs

## Who can file?

- Close family member
- Roommate
- Employer/ Employee
- Law Enforcement Officer

# Firearm Transfers

## Washington firearm safe storage map



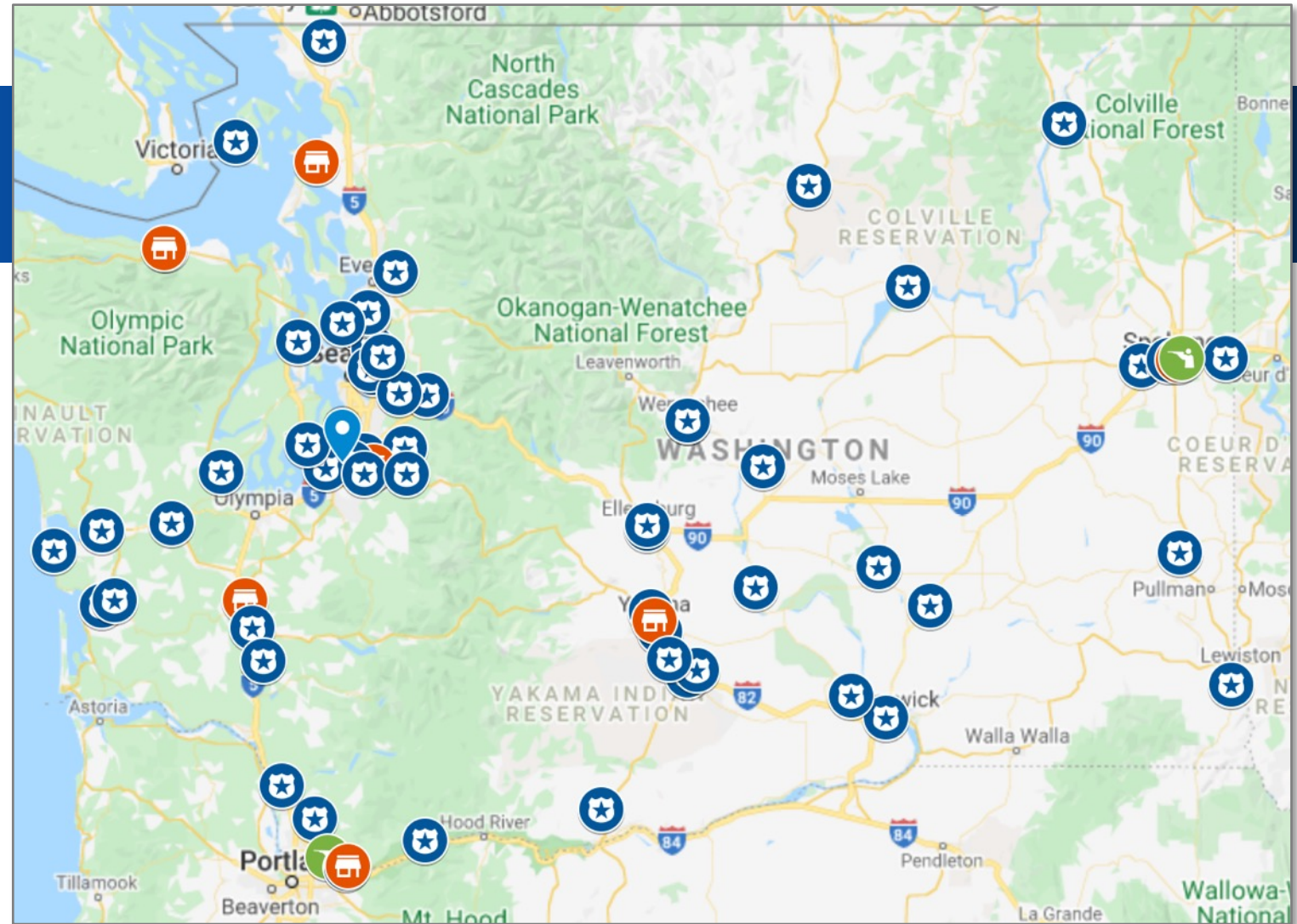
Police Stations



Firearm Retailers



Shooting Ranges



# Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Takeaway 1:** Suicide is the primary risk with firearms for older adults.
- ✓ **Takeaway 2:** Firearms are the most common mechanism for suicide and are used with increasing frequency as we age.
- ✓ **Takeaway 3:** Specific recommendations for firearm safety and planning are available for persons with cognitive impairment and dementia, and they vary by disease stage.
- ✓ **Takeaway 4:** Certain policy tools such as ERPOs may help protect people in situations where a person is demonstrating concerning behavior.



# A Chat with Laura Prater



Allene Mares



Laura Prater

# QUESTIONS?

To ask a question, please click the



icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.

# Resources

## **Forefront Suicide Prevention**

University of Washington

<https://intheforefront.org/>

## **Three Interventions Toolkit**

Harborview Injury Prevention & Research Center

<https://hiprc.org/3interventionstoolkit/>

## **Safety in Dementia**

Tools to help people make decisions about safety and dementia.

<https://safetyindementia.org/>

## **Giffords Law Center**

Gun Law and Policy Resources

<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/>