

Introduction

- Ready access to firearms is a risk factor for traumatic injury and death among adults and children in the U.S.
- Married people are approximately **66% more likely** to have guns in their homes and **more than 50%** of US households store a gun unlocked and/or loaded.¹
- This project synthesized research related to 1) dyadic decision-making processes and 2) couple decision making that promotes **secure (i.e., unloaded, locked) firearm storage**.
- Based on this literature review, we propose interventions to increase secure firearm storage practices and decrease traumatic outcomes.

Impact of Relational Types on Firearm Storage Decisions

Three relationship types have been shown to be differentially associated with secure firearm storage practices:²

1. **Collaborative relationships**
 - Partner's agency in firearm decisions is confident
 - Presence of children in the home has a positive impact on discussion of storage decisions
 - Partner's willingness to change firearm storage is high
2. **Devalued relationships**
 - Partner's agency in decision making is overruled
 - Presence of children in the home does not impact storage decisions
 - Willingness to change firearm storage is low
3. **Deferential relationships**
 - Partner's agency in decision making is passive
 - Presence of children in the home increased motivation to discuss storage decisions
 - Willingness to change firearm storage is hypothesized to be high, partner is trusted to do so

Relational Contributions to Firearm Storage Practices

Relationship Satisfaction

- Involvement of both partners in storage decisions is more likely in romantic partnerships with **greater relationship satisfaction**.³
- Women who **report high levels of trust** in a dyad are more likely to include their partner in lethal means safety counseling.²

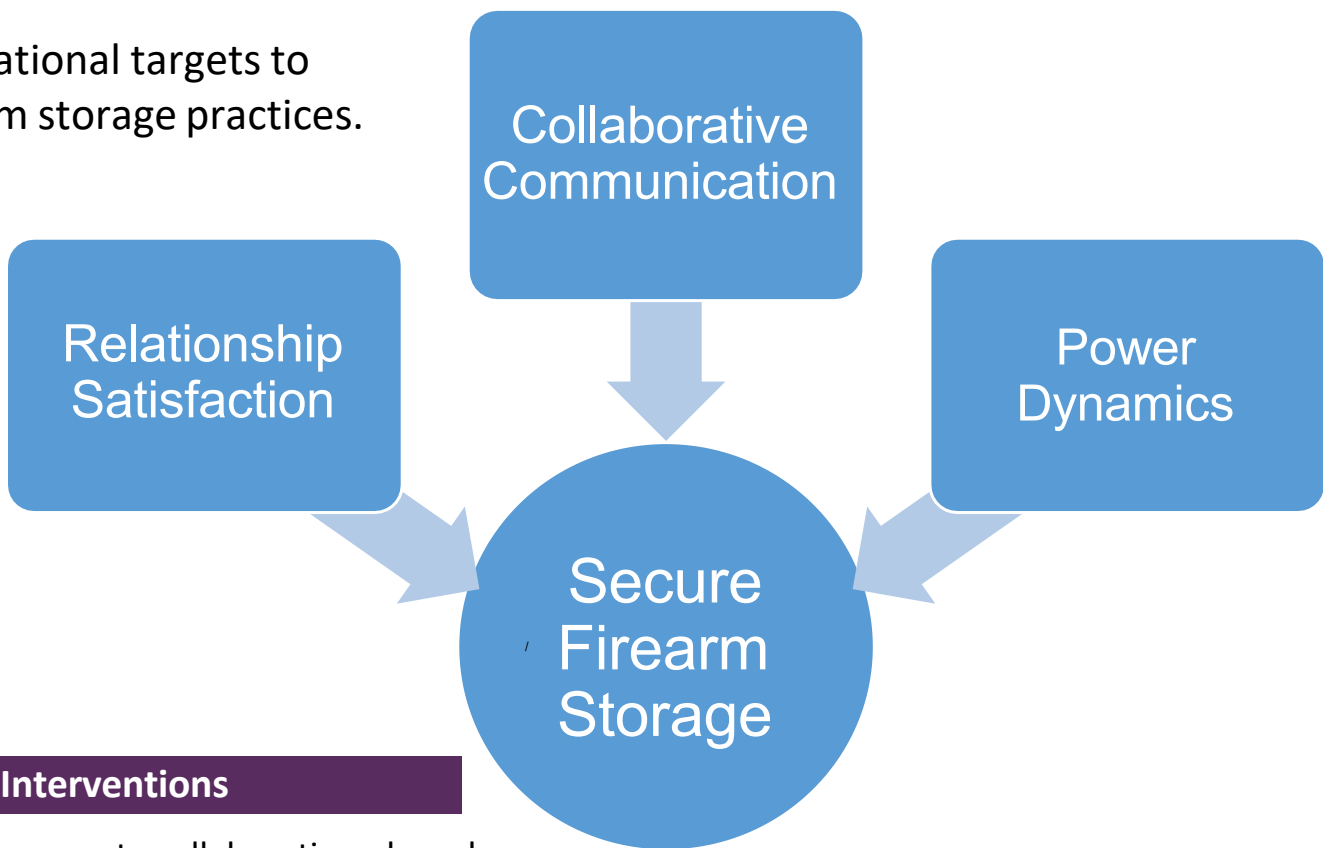
Collaborative Communication

- Nearly **one-third of firearm-owning families** report that family discussions influence how they store firearms at home.
- When both parents are involved in decision making, firearms were **1.65 times** more likely to be stored locked and unloaded.
- Discussions cultivate values of **child safety** and **increase accountability** regarding the consistent implementation of planned storage practices.³

Power Dynamics

- Decision making has been used as an **index of power** and equity in a relationship.⁴
- The partner with the **most decision-making power** is:
 - The partner with the **most resources**
 - The partner with the final say or **who can make decisions without consultation**
- More equal levels of power lead to more equal decision-making and higher relationship satisfaction.⁴

Figure 1: Potential relational targets to increase secure firearm storage practices.



Proposed Interventions

- Interventions designed to promote collaborative, shared decision-making among firearm-owning adults are likely to lead to storage practices that reduce firearm-related injuries and deaths.³
- Adapt shared decision making to family-led discussions about firearm storage outside of the clinical setting.⁵
 - Focus on communication processes, power asymmetries, and relationship dynamics.
- Relationship science suggests that interventions that emphasize structured communication support and shared values and goals may be promising approaches to secure firearm storage decisions within couples.³
- Validation of experiences, psychoeducation, and safety planning if interpersonal violence occurs in the home.²

References

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