



PATHFINDER
OPINION RESEARCH

Survey of adults 18+ in Bexar County, Texas with an oversample of households with children.

AUGUST 2024



- Timing: June 17-27, 2024
- Main sample of n=500 adults 18+ in Bexar County, Texas
- Oversample of adults with children, resulting in n=300 of these respondents when combining the main sample and oversample
- Margin of error: +/- 4.4 percentage points for the main sample.
+/- 5.7 percentage points for the sample of households with children
- Main sample data were weighted by gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and presence of children based on U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) and by Commissioner Precincts based on current voter file counts.
- Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Key Findings

- Gun violence is considered a major problem in Bexar County that is getting worse. Many respondents cite gun and safety issues as the main issue facing the county. Parents, in particular, report worrying more about a shooting at their child's school than losing their job or income.
- Nearly half (48%) of Bexar County adults report owning a gun, indicating nearly 800,000 gun owners in the county. Most say they own multiple guns, leading to a conservative estimate of over 1.5 million total guns in the county. The vast majority cite 'protection' as their primary reason for ownership.

Key Findings

- Most people in homes with guns report engaging in safe gun behaviors. However, a measurable percentage also report engaging in behaviors that add risk, including having a loaded and easily accessible gun in their home or car at least some of the time. Few inform visitors with children about the presence of guns in their homes.
- There is a gap between several gun safety behaviors that owners say are important and what they personally practice. For example, while 97% of gun owners believe taking a gun safety class is important, only 69% have actually taken one.

Key Findings

- There is a widespread desire for collaboration among all sides of the gun debate to find common ground on reducing gun deaths. Most also agree that improved access to gun training and safe gun storage can reduce gun deaths without infringing on Second Amendment Rights.
- The biggest disagreements between gun owners and non-owners regarding gun owner responsibilities are the importance of using trigger locks, keeping guns unloaded and locked when not in use, informing visitors with children about guns in the house, and taking gun safety classes.

Key Findings

- Most gun owners say they would be more likely to use a trigger lock or other safe gun storage option if it were free. And although most gun owners have taken a formal gun training or hunter safety class, a significant percentage have not. Most school aged children living in homes with guns have not received any formal gun safety training.
- Gun owners with children are less likely than gun owners without children to say it's important to have conversations with visitors about the presence of guns.

Concerns About Gun Violence in Bexar County

Crime, safety, and gun related issues are top of mind for many Bexar County residents based on responses to an open-ended question asked prior to any other gun-related questions in the survey.

In your opinion, what is the main issue facing Bexar County that you would like to see addressed by local elected officials?

30% of responses relate to crime, safety, or guns

“Control gun violence”

“Safety”

“Gun violence”

“Neighborhood crime”

“Too much violence”

“Too many shootings...”

“Handling of weapons”

“High crime rate”

“...Better gun laws and age restrictions. Our youth are dying.” – Hispanic, male, gun owner with kids.

“Shootings. More police. More help with health issues. More police in all schools. More lighting in subdivisions...” – Hispanic, male, gun owner with kids.

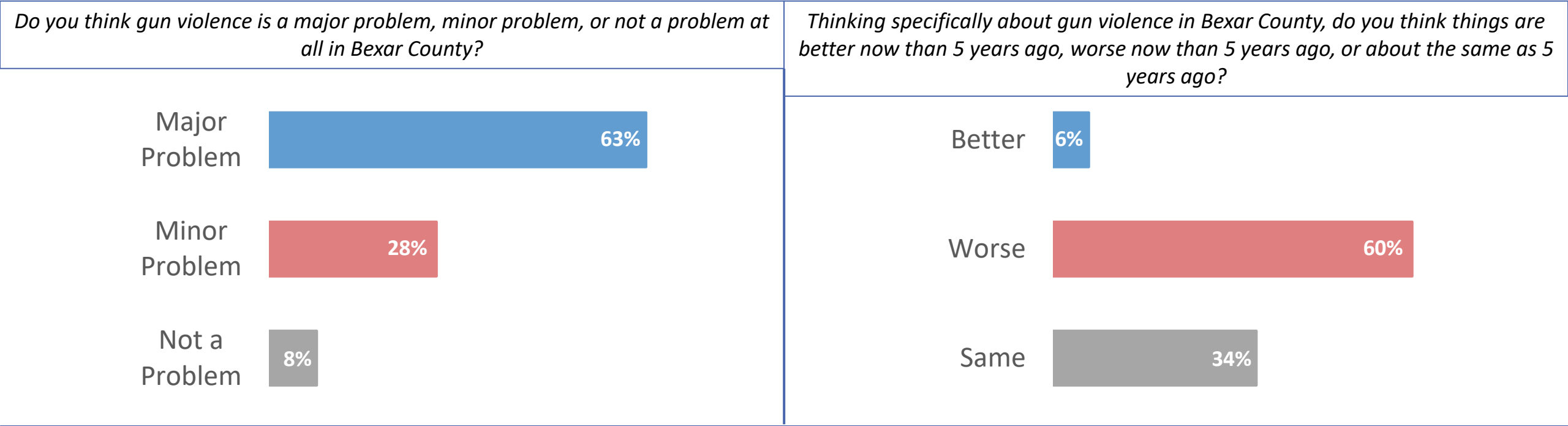
“Theft, gangs, violent crime” – White, female, gun owner, with no kids

“...Too scary walking downtown with angry, drugged up homeless yelling at you...” – Black, male, non-gun owner, with kids.

“Homelessness. Gang violence. Vandalism. Cars are being broken into in my neighborhood daily...I don’t come out unless I have to.” – Hispanic, male, non-gun owner, with no kids.

“Car thefts and gun thefts by teenagers.” – Hispanic, male, non-gun owner with no kids

Most Bexar residents feel gun violence is a major problem in the county and that it is worse now than 5 years ago. However, they do feel the safety level as it relates to gun violence is comparable to other similar counties.



As it relates to gun violence, **20%** say Bexar County is more safe than similar counties, **23%** say it's less safe than similar counties, and **57%** say it's about the same as other counties

Adults with children worry more a shooting at their child’s school than losing their job or income. Besides inflation, they worry more about gun violence involving themselves or members of their family than anything else tested.

How much do you personally worry about: **(INSERT ITEM)**? Do you worry a lot about this, worry a little about this, or do you not worry at all about this?

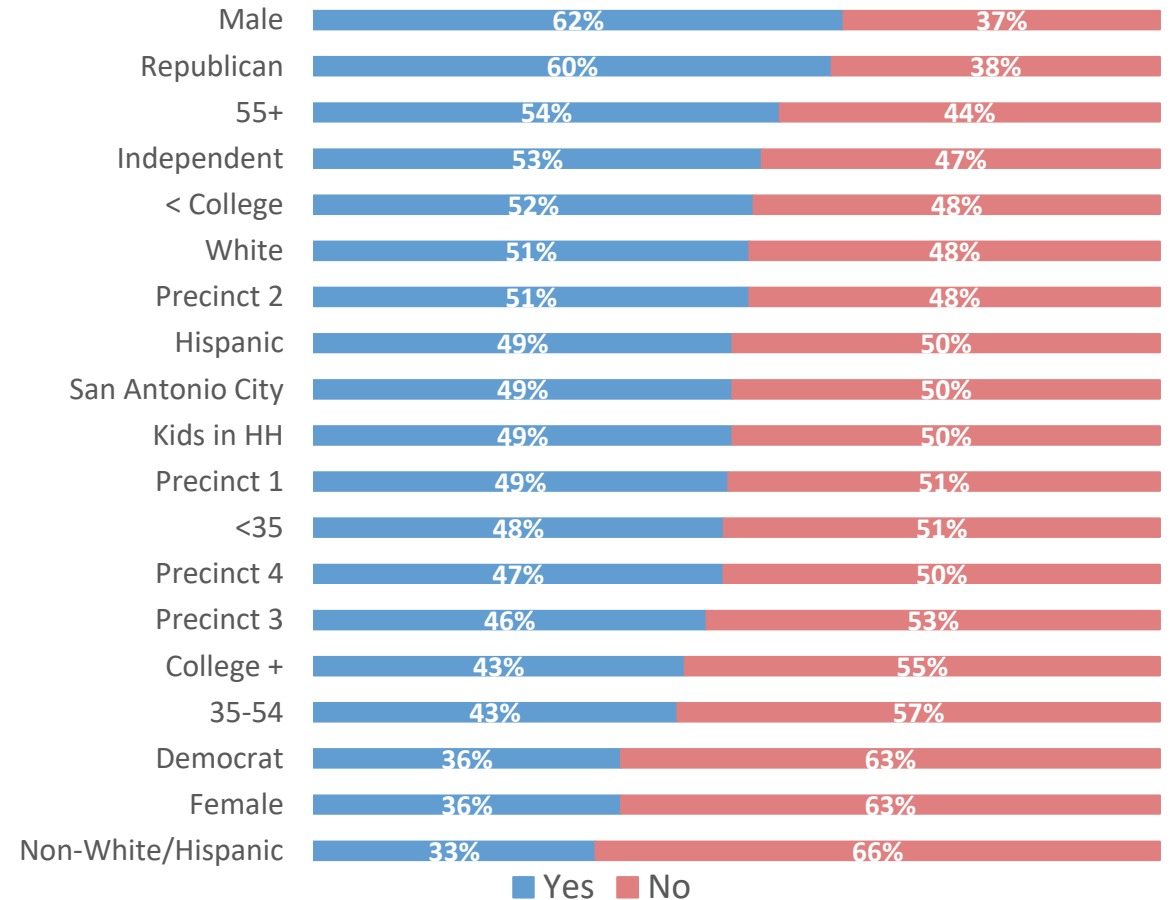
	Kids in HH	All Adults 18+
The rising costs of basic needs	85%	78%
A shooting occurring at your child’s school	50%	--
You or a member of your family being a victim of gun violence	41%	36%
Your child being involved in an accidental shooting	39%	--
Losing your job or income	39%	34%
Your home being broken into	38%	34%
Someone close to you committing suicide	22%	16%
You or a member of your family being a victim of domestic violence	14%	19%

Bexar County Gun Owner Statistics

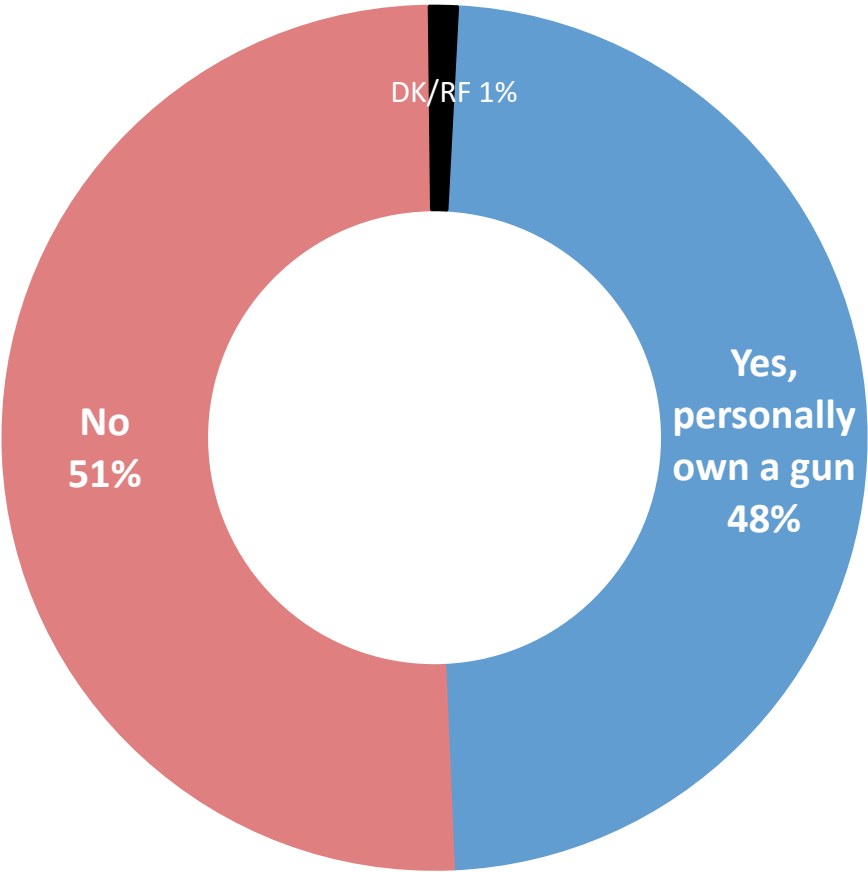
48% of Bexar County adults personally own at least one gun.

56% of Bexar County adults either personally own a gun or live in a household with a gun owner.

“Do you personally own any guns (not including air guns such as paintball, pellet, or BB guns)?”



Over half of gun owners possess multiple firearms, and three-quarters cite “protection” as the primary reason for owning a gun.



Only 38% of gun owners only own one gun

39% own 3 or more guns

90% own a handgun or pistol

43% own a rifle

38% own a shotgun

74% own a gun primarily for protection

12% own a gun primarily for hunting

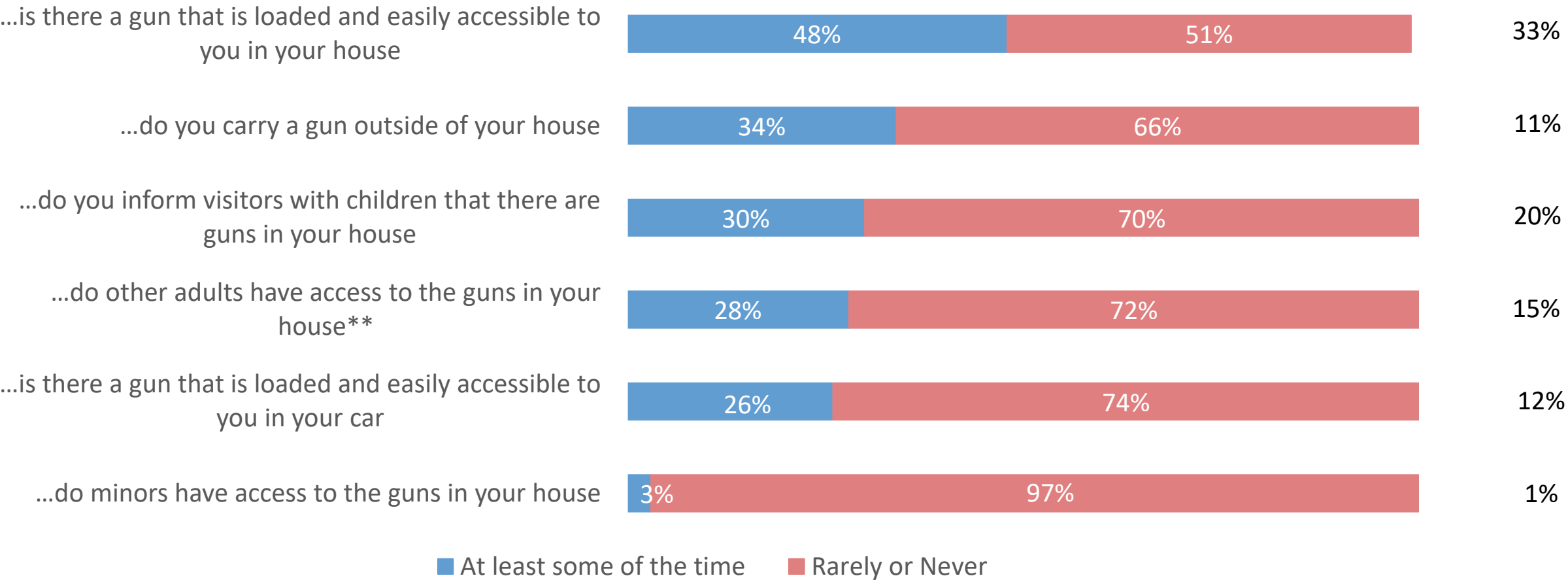
Based on this data, we can estimate there are **768,000** gun owners and, very conservatively, over **1.5 million** guns in Bexar County

Bexar County Gun Owner Behaviors

One-third of adults living in a house with guns report ‘always’ having one loaded and easily accessible in their house. Most rarely/never inform visitors with children that there are guns in their house.

“How often **(INSERT ITEM)** – always, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never?”*

% Always

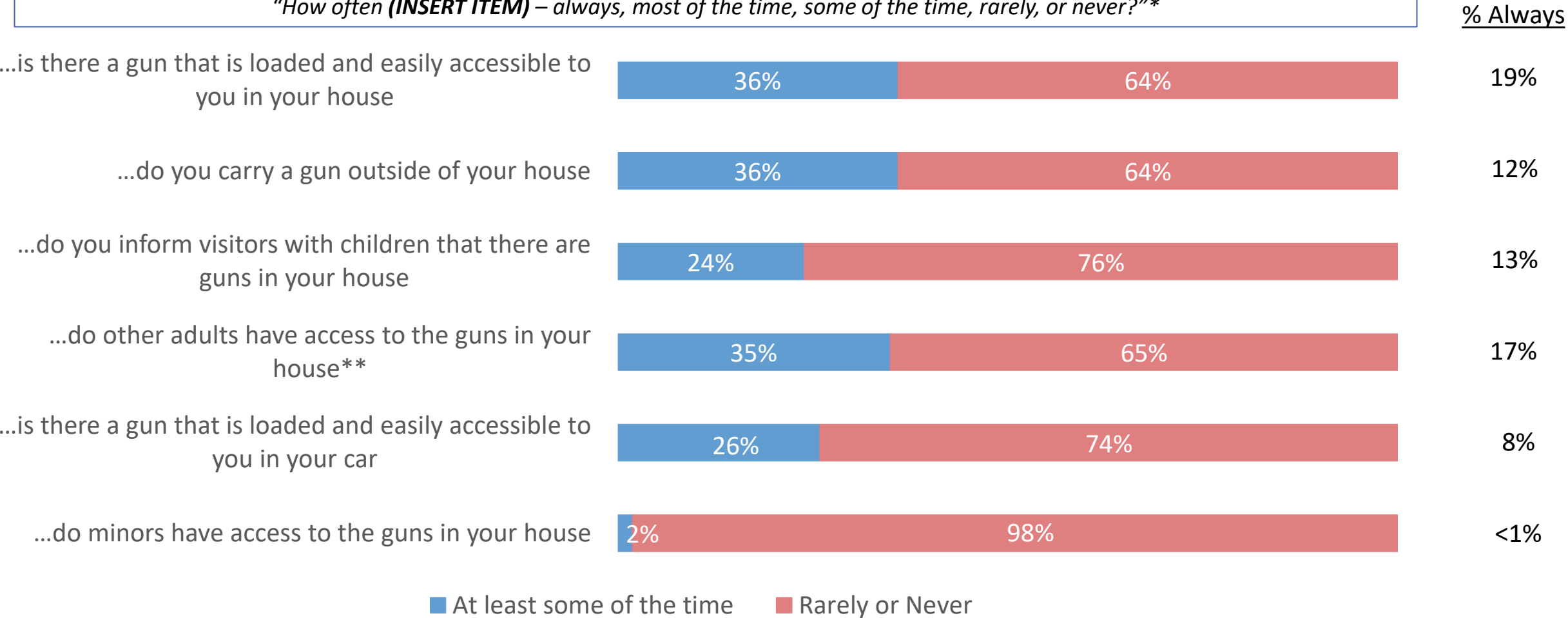


*Asked of all gun-owning households (Respondents who personally own guns or who live with a gun-owner)

**Asked only of gun owners

Compared to all adults living in a house with a gun, those with kids are less likely to have a loaded gun easily accessible in their house, but also less likely to inform visitors with children about the presence of guns.

“How often **(INSERT ITEM)** – always, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never?”*

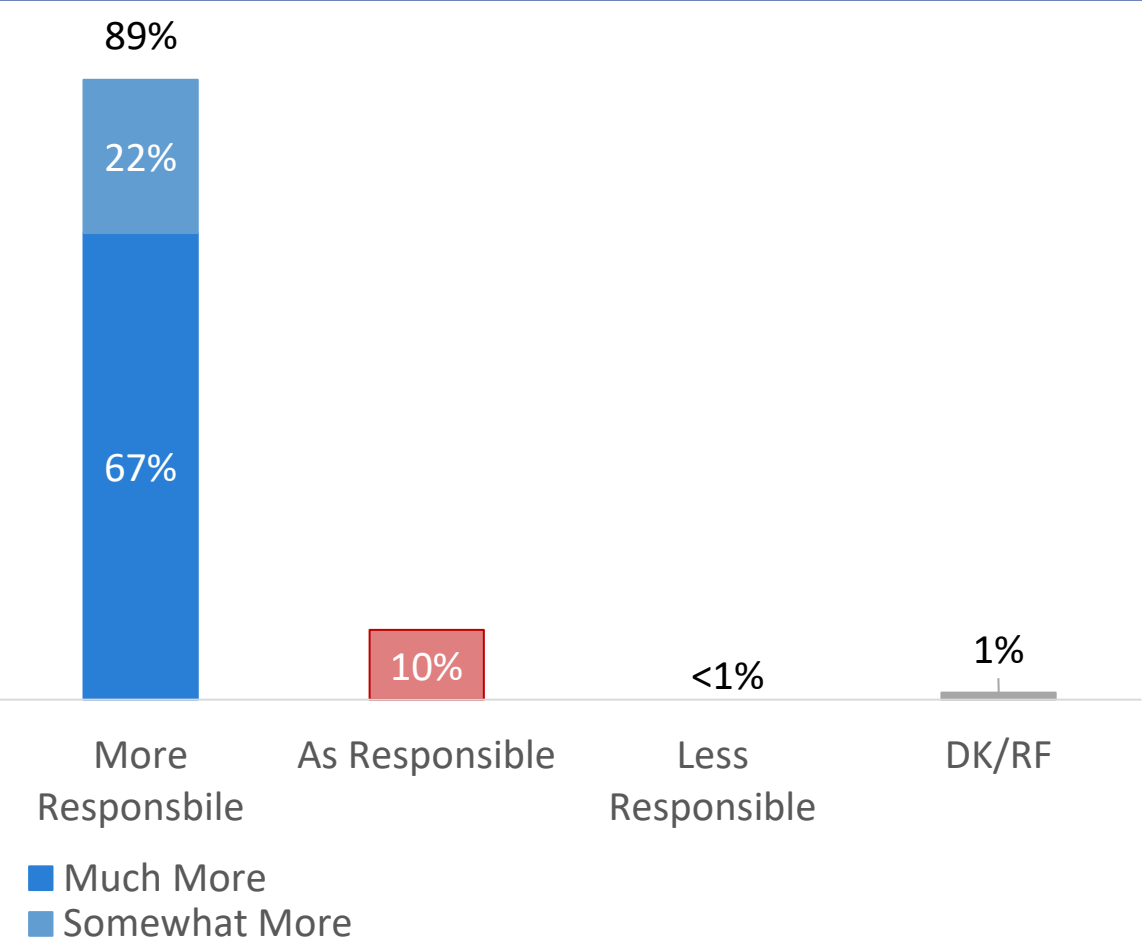


*Asked of all gun-owning households (Respondents who personally own guns or who live with a gun-owner)

**Asked only of gun owners

Nearly all surveyed gun owners view themselves as more responsible than average, despite many self-reported actions that could be considered risky.

How would you rate your own level of responsibility as a gun owner compared to the average gun owner?



Among Gun Owners Who Say They are Much More Responsible than Average:

41% carry a gun outside of the house at least some of the time

53% keep a loaded, easily accessible gun in their house at least some of the time

27% keep a loaded, easily accessible gun in their car at least some of the time

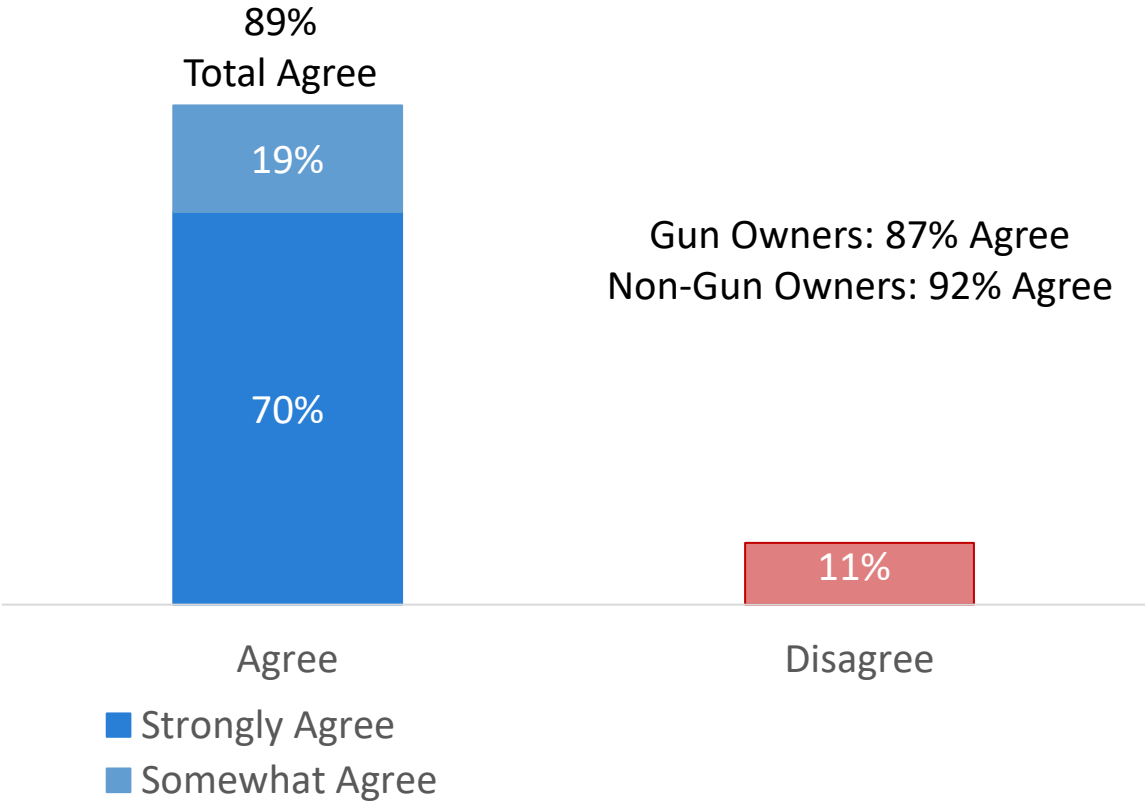
69% rarely or never inform visitors with children that there are guns in their house

27% have never taken a gun safety or hunter safety class

Opinions on Gun Violence Causes and Solutions

Nearly all Bexar County residents, regardless of political affiliation, want to find common ground on gun-related issues to reduce gun deaths. This opinion is shared by both gun owners and non-gun owners.

*Despite the divisive nature of gun politics, **advocates on all sides of the issue need to work to find common ground to reduce gun deaths** from violence, accidental shootings, domestic abuse, and suicides.*

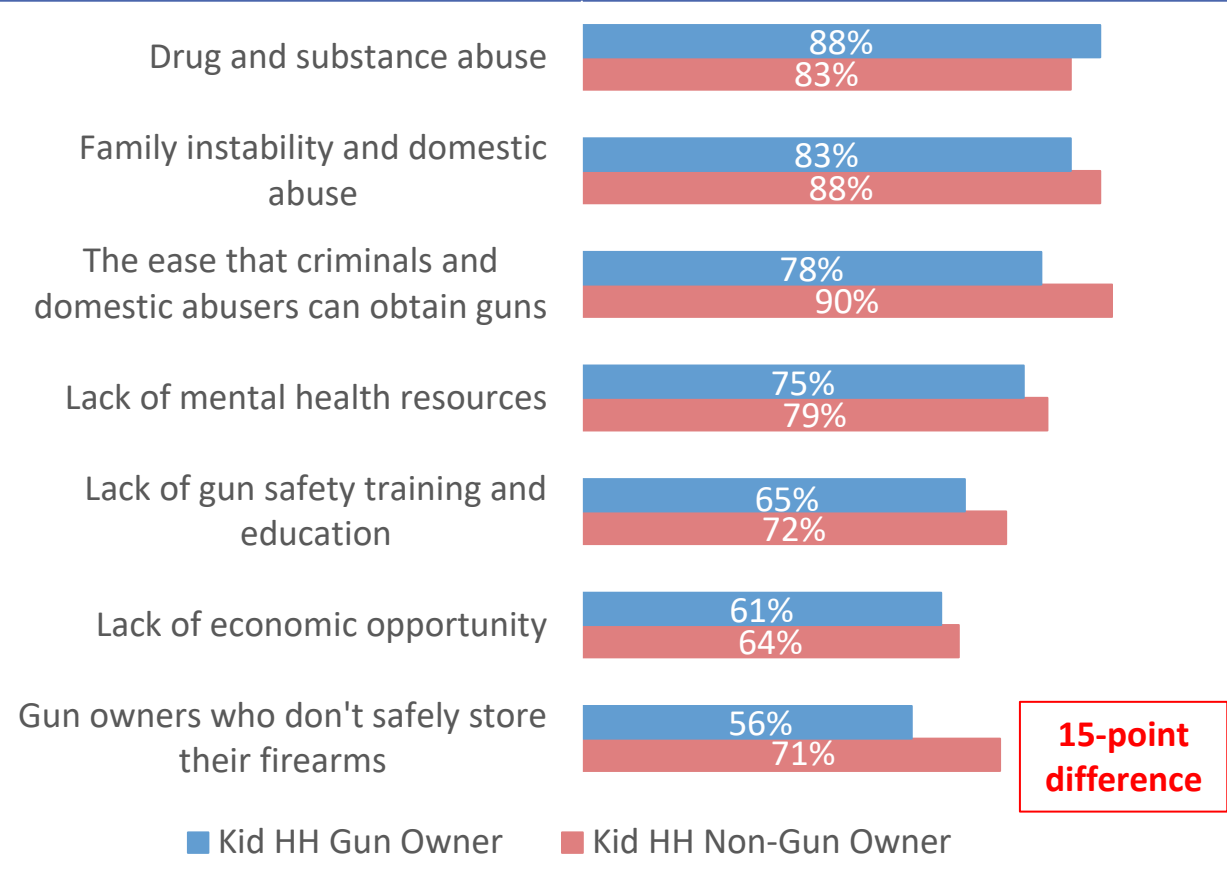
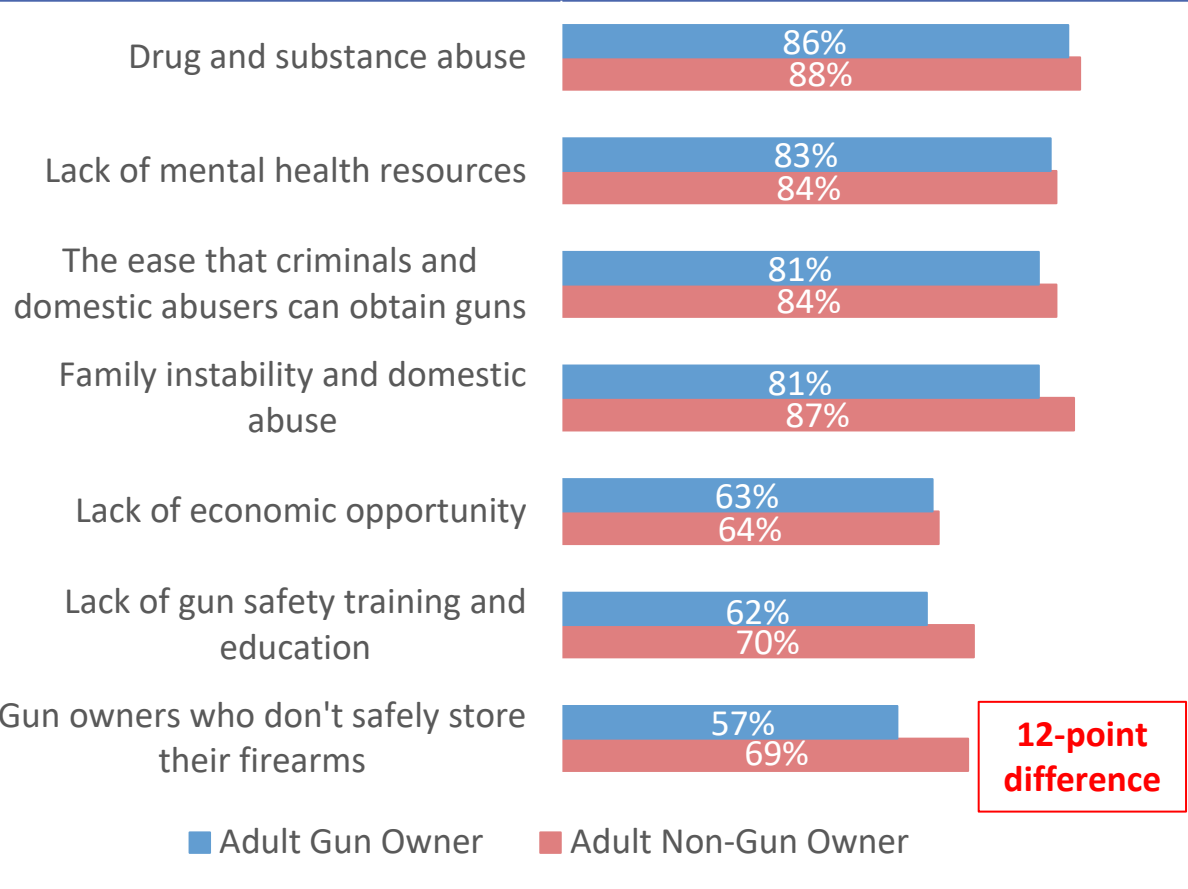


Opinions on this statement cross partisan lines:

- 97% of Democrats agree
- 82% of Republicans agree
- 85% of Independents agree

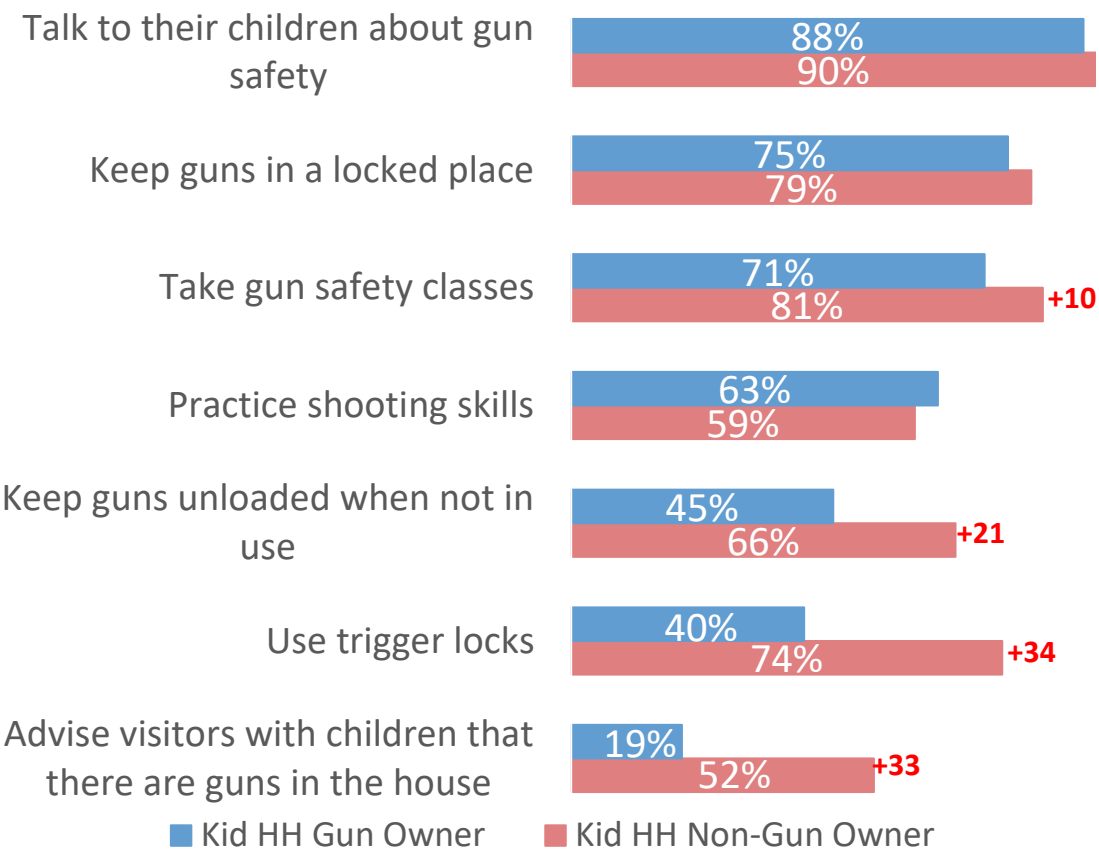
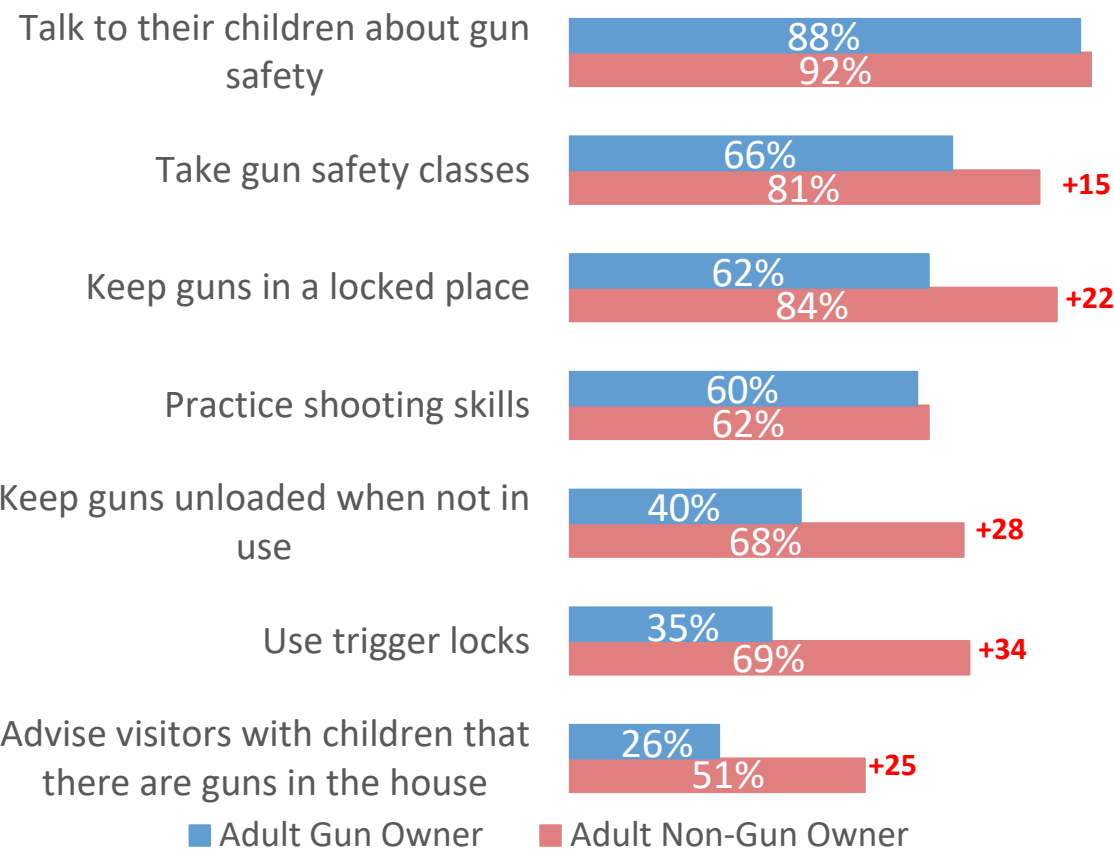
Gun owners and non-gun owners agree on many of the main contributors to gun deaths, such as drug abuse and lack of mental health resources. The largest disagreement is how much poor firearm storage safety contributes to gun deaths.

How much would you say each of the following contributes to gun deaths in Bexar County: **(INSERT ITEM)**? Does this contribute a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all?

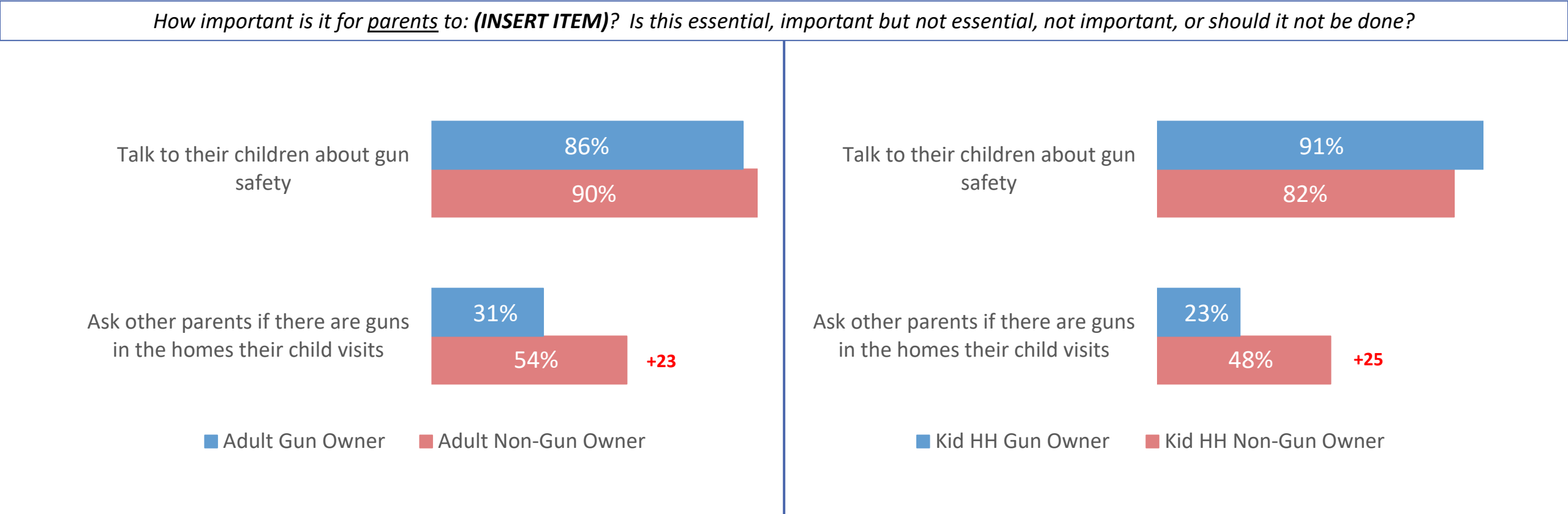


Gun owners and non-gun owners diverge on the importance of gun owners taking gun safety classes, keeping guns locked and unloaded, and advising visitors with children about the presence of guns in their house.

How important is it for gun owners to: **(INSERT ITEM)**? Is this essential, important but not essential, not important, or should it not be done?

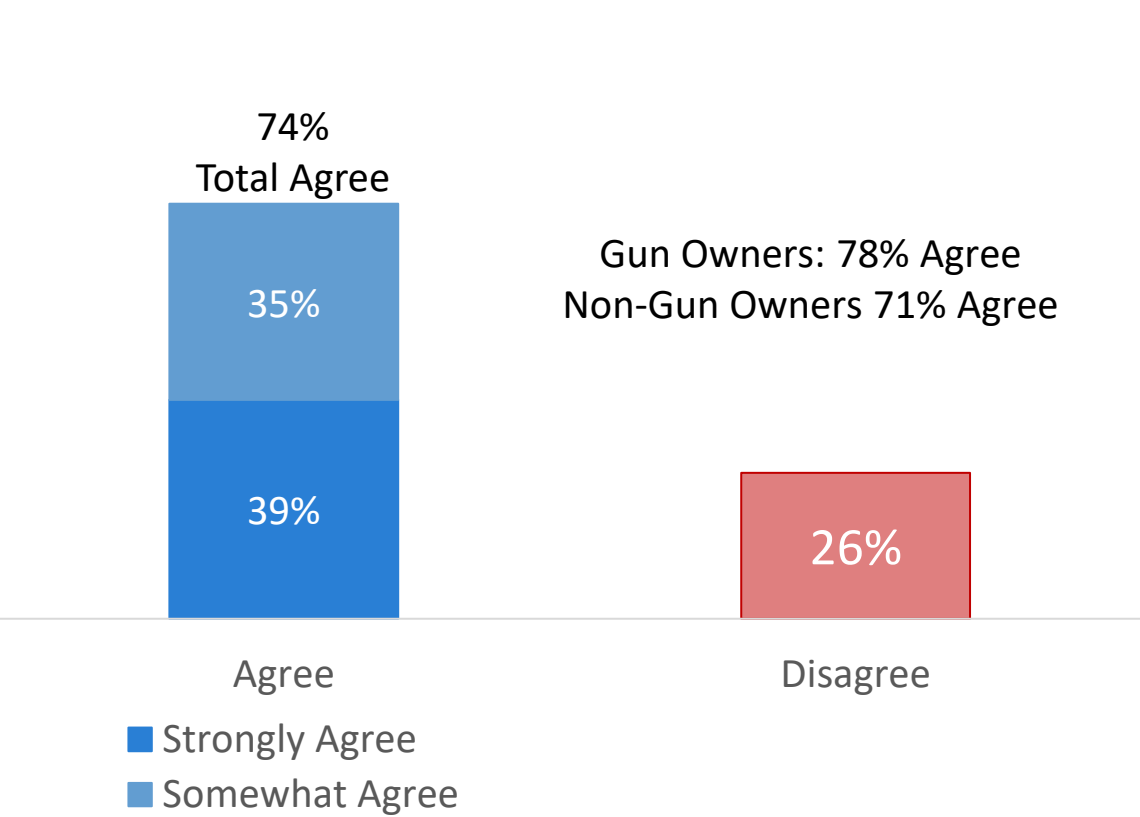


Likewise, gun owners and non-gun owners diverge on the importance of parents asking if there are guns in the homes their child visits.



Three-quarters of Bexar County adults believe that increasing access to gun training and safe storage can reduce violent gun deaths without violating the 2nd Amendment. This view is shared across party lines and by both gun owners and non-gun owners.

*Increasing affordable and convenient **access to gun safety training and safe gun storage hardware would reduce violent gun deaths, accidental shootings, domestic shootings, and suicides without infringing on anyone's Second Amendment rights.***



Opinions on this statement cross partisan lines:

- 77% of Democrats agree
- 75% of Republicans agree
- 68% of Independents agree

Most gun owners say they would be more likely to use a trigger lock or other locked storage for their guns if they were made available for free.

“Would you be more likely to use a trigger lock or locked storage to store guns in your house if they were made available to you free of charge”

**70% of adult gun owners say YES.
76% of gun owners with children say YES.**

Many gun owners have never taken a formal gun safety class, and most school-aged children of gun owners have not taken a class in gun safety.

“Have you ever taken a formal gun safety or hunter training class”

**28% of adult gun owners say NO.
24% of gun owners with children say NO.**

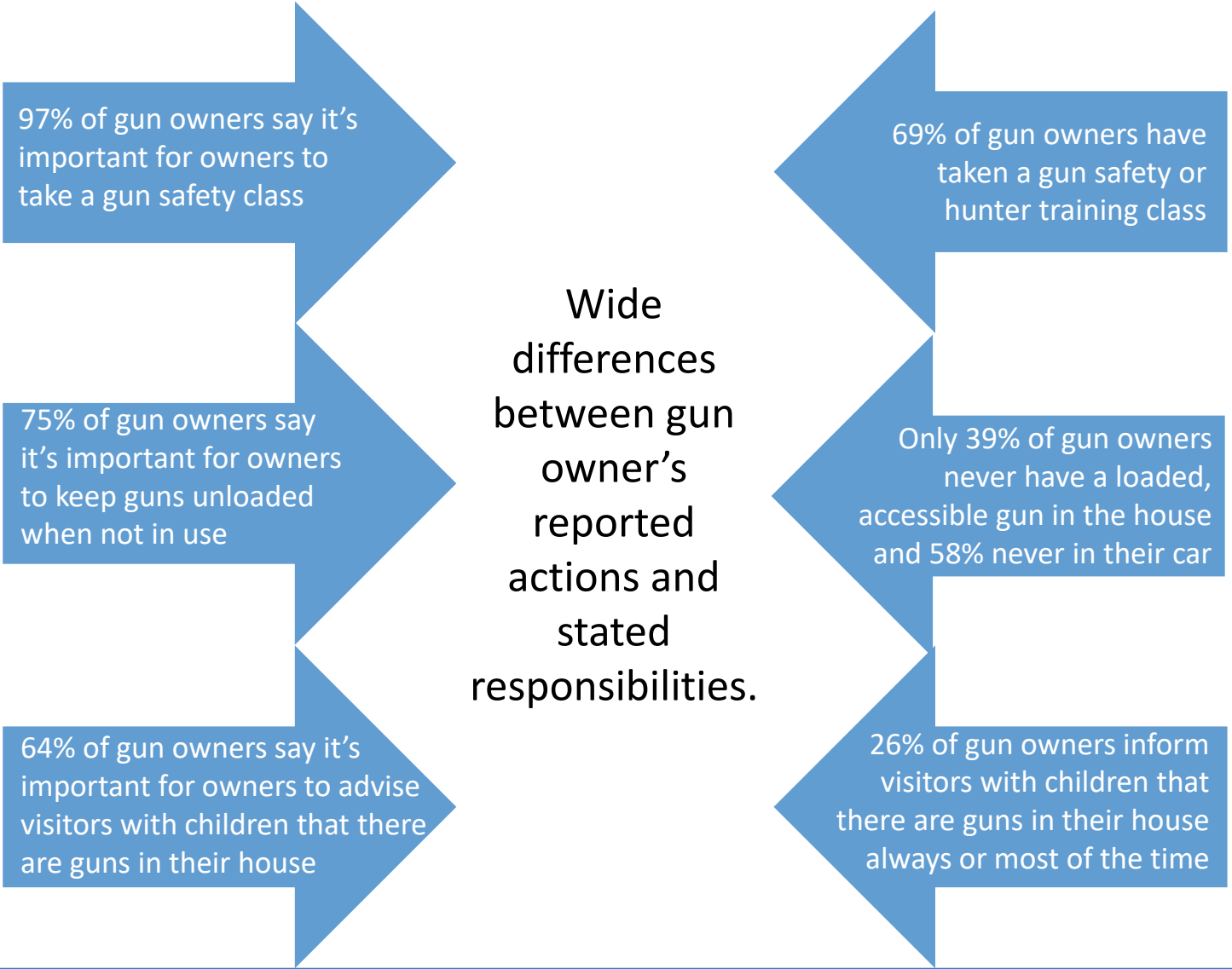
“Have the children in your household ever taken a formal gun safety or hunter training class?”

**65% of gun owners with children
elementary age or older say NO.**



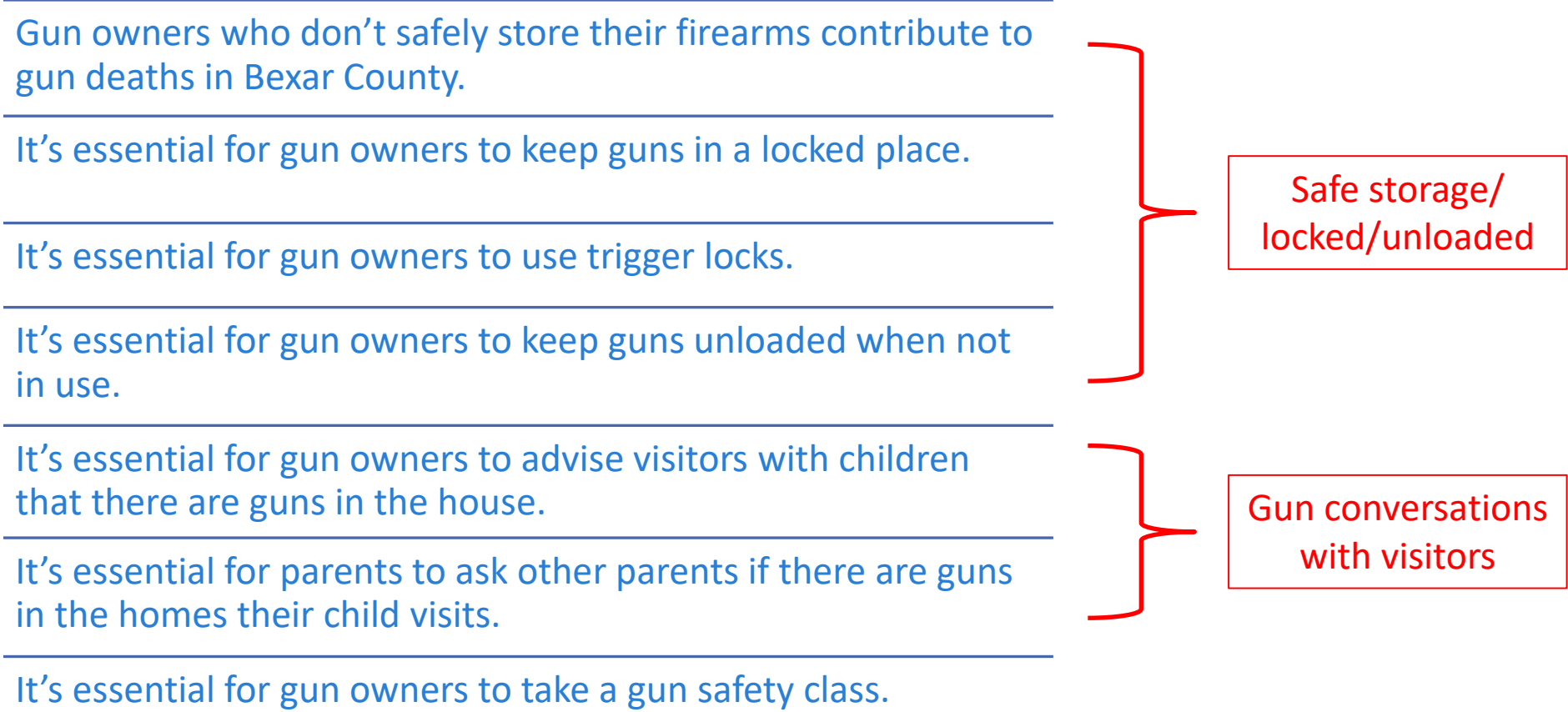
Recommendations

Focus gun owner education on areas where their reported actions fall short of their own stated responsibilities: taking gun safety classes, keeping guns unloaded when not in use, and advising visitors with children that there are guns in the house.



Focusing on these areas also helps close the largest gaps between gun owners and non-gun owners on opinions about the contributors to gun violence and the responsibilities of gun owners and parents.

Major Areas of Divergence Between Gun Owners and Non-Gun Owners.



Emphasize the importance of discussing the presence of guns when children visit, especially to gun owners with children. They are less likely to have these conversations and less likely to believe they are important compared to gun owners without children

Counterintuitively, gun owners without children are more likely than gun owners with children to say conversations with visitors about the presence or guns as important.

- **67%** of gun owners without children say it is important for gun owners to advise visitors with children that there are guns in the house, compared to **51%** of gun owners with children.
- **74%** of gun owners without children say it is important for parents to ask other parents if there are guns in the homes their child visits, compared to **62%** of gun owners with children.
- Most people living in homes with guns, regardless of whether they have children, do not inform visitors about the presence of guns. But those with children are slightly less likely to do so.

Encourage conversations between parents and children about gun safety and make gun safety training accessible for children.

Despite significant differences on other measures between gun owners and non-owners, and between adults with and without children, nearly everyone is aligned on the responsibility that gun-owners and parents have in talking to their children about gun safety.

Most school aged children (65%) of gun owners have not participated in a gun safety class.

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