

ANIMAL-HUMAN VIOLENCE

THE LINK

Violence against animals is considered a potential indicator and predictor of concurrent or future child maltreatment, domestic violence, and elder abuse, also known as “The Link”. The schematic shows how four forms of family violence are often intertwined.



ANIMALS ARE EASY TARGETS

Animals, like children and the elderly, are more vulnerable and therefore seen as easy targets for abuse. As documented:

- Over 71% of battered women with pets affirmed that the batterers had threatened, hurt, or killed their companion animals.¹
- Studies have shown that up to 56% of battered woman have delayed their escape out of fear for their animals.²
- More than 35% of adult protective services workers report that their clients have talked about their pets having being threatened, injured, killed, or denied care by a caregiver.³
- In child-abusing households, the incidence of dog bites in violent homes was reportedly eleven times greater than that in the normal population.⁴

OTHER RELATED CRIMES

Animal cruelty can also be a predictor of other crimes. Animal abusers are:⁵

- 5 times more likely to commit violent crimes against people.
- 4 times more likely to commit property crimes.
- 3 times more likely to have drug or disorderly conduct offenses.

See back page for footnotes of above statistics. Learn more at Animal Folks website below.

The “Power and Control Wheel” of Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

The diagram below is from the National Link Coalition, adapted from Domestic Violence Intervention Network.

Emotional Abuse: Disappearing, giving away, or killing pets to take away the source of unconditional love. Forced participation in animal sexual abuse.

Economic Abuse: Refusing to allow the partner to spend money on pet food or pet care.

Intimidation: Harming or killing a pet: “Next time it’ll be you...” Targeting pets or targeting family or friends who aid the escape of the partner.

Using Children: Harming or killing children’s pets to intimidate them. Blaming the “disappearance” of the family pet on the partner to create a wedge between the partner and the children.

Denying and Blaming: Blaming the partner or the pet for the cruelty. Killing the pet and saying it didn’t matter because the pet was old.

Legal Abuse: Custody battles over pets. Filing theft charges if the partner leaves with a pet.

Threats: Threat to harm or kill a pet if the partner leaves or asserts any independence.

Isolation: Refusing to allow the partner to take a pet to the vet. Prohibiting the partner from allowing a dog to socialize with other dogs.



FOOTNOTES FROM FRONT PAGE:

- 1 Ascione et al. *Battered Women's Reports of Their Partners' and Their Children's Cruelty to Animals. Journal of Emotional Abuse. 1(1), 119-33 (2007).*
- 2 Betty Jo Barrett et al. *Animal Maltreatment as a Risk Marker of More Frequent and Severe Forms of Intimate Partner Violence, 26-1 Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 1 (2017).*
- 3 HSUS and State of Wis. Dept. of Health and Fam. Serv., Div. of Disability & Elderly Serv., Bureau of Aging & Long Term Resources, *Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals (2003)*
- 4 DeViney, E., Dickert, J., Lockwood, R. *The Care of Pets Within Child Abusing Families. International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems, 4 (1983).*
- 5 Arnold Arluke et al. *The Relationship of Animal Abuse to Violence and Other Forms of Antisocial Behavior, The Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 963 (1999).*