

Animal Abuse and Family Violence: Partners in Crime

A Self-Guided Training Presentation for Law Enforcement Officers



PART 3: Management of Animal Abuse Cases



Animal Abuse & Family Violence Prevention Project
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The Latham Foundation

For the Promotion of Humane Education

Animal Abuse Case Mgmt.: Investigating Cruelty & Neglect



Follow same basic procedures:

- Securing the scene
- Search & seizure
- Preservation of evidence
- Interviewing
- Detail findings
- Write report
- File charges

Bring in outside support

- SPCA or humane society
- Animal Control Officer
- Animal shelter
- Veterinarian





Animal CSI: Bringing In Veterinary Support

The victim's veterinarian:

- **Document prior histories**

Independent veterinarian:

Immediate first aid

Forensics

- **Conduct necropsy**
- **Expert witness**
 - **Document animals' condition**
 - **How conditions could have been prevented**
 - **Determine cause of death, sequence of injuries, pre/post-mortem timing**
 - **Expert opinion whether caused by humans**
 - **Identify and preserve physical evidence (bullets, knives, ligatures, etc.)**



**Resource: Melinda Merck, DVM
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Animal CSI: Bringing In the Animal Shelter



Impounds
Short- or long-term housing
Particular challenges:



- Large numbers
- Pit bulls
- Horses and livestock
- Exotic animals
- Wildlife



**18% - 48% of
battered women
fear for their
animals' welfare**

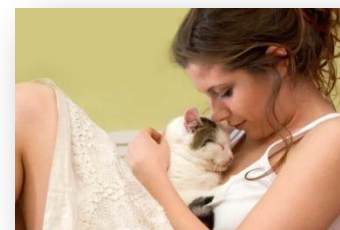
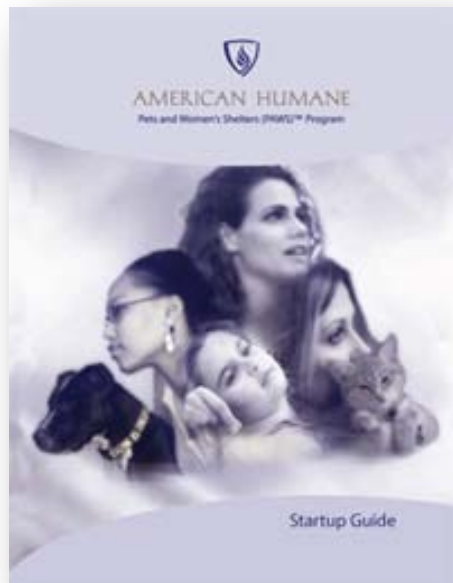


Animal CSI: Bringing In the Animal Shelter



Options for animals:

- Surrender for adoption
- Declare abandoned
- Impound on premises
- Euthanasia
- “Safe Haven” referrals
- On-site “PAWS” housing





Animal CSI: Probable Cause

... a well-grounded belief based on identifiable, specific and objective facts that would cause a person of reasonable caution at the time to believe that a person is violating, is about to violate, or has violated the law.





Animal CSI: Risk Assessment

Assessment of Dangerousness in Perpetrators of Animal Cruelty

- **Victim vulnerability (size, age, harmlessness)**
- **Number of victims**
- **Severity of injury**
- **Use of fire**
- **Repetitive injuries (multiple wounds) on individual victims**
- **Multiple forms of injuries (e.g., stabbing and burning)**
- **Victim was bound or physically incapacitated**
- **Duration of abuse**
- **Act was committed with high risk of detection...**





Animal CSI: Risk Assessment

Assessment of Dangerousness in Perpetrators of Animal Cruelty

- **Other illegal acts were committed**
- **Individual was the instigator with multiple perpetrators**
- **Animal cruelty was used to threaten, intimidate or coerce a human victim**
- **Animal mutilation or postmortem dismemberment**
- **Animal was sexually assaulted; mutilated genitals; sexual arousal**
- **Perpetrator documented the act of abuse**

-- Created by Dr. Randall Lockwood

Most dangerous: persistent, severe, without remorse or restraint



Animal CSI: Risk Assessment

Impact of Killing, Harming, or Threatening Animals on Battered Women

- 1. Perpetuates the landscape of terror**
- 2. Demonstrates the abuser's power**
- 3. You're next!**
- 4. Removes a source of comfort**
- 5. Prevents her from leaving**
- 6. Reinforces the idea that there's no safe place for her to go**

71% of pet-owning women entering a shelter reported their husband or boyfriend killed, harmed or threatened an animal

Animal-abusing batterers are more dangerous, and employ more forms of domestic violence





Animal CSI: Interviewing and Investigating

Animals at a Domestic Violence Scene

- **Follow S.O.P.**
- **Be on alert for abused or aggressive animals**

- **Location of human & animal victims**
- **First aid for humans (and animals)**
- **Document victim/witness statements (including animal care)**
- **Describe human and animal injuries**
- **Separate victim and suspect**
- **Animal care may help describe relationship
with each other, with animals**



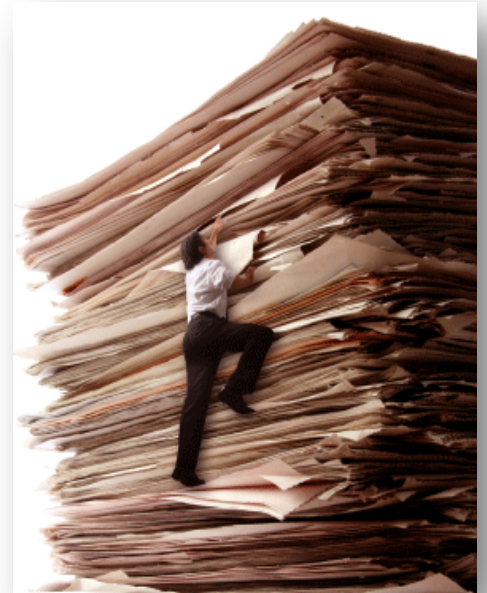


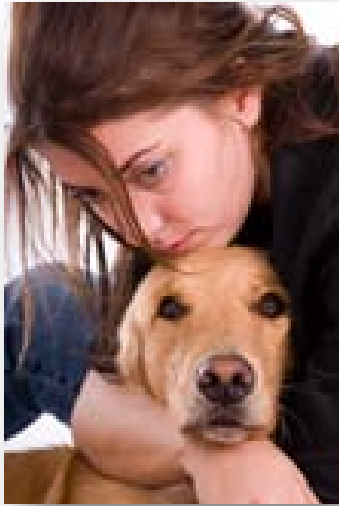
Animal CSI: Interviewing and Investigating

Animals at a Domestic Violence Scene

- Document history of different types of abuse
- Are there court or restraining orders?
- Any children or animals at risk?
- Did children witness the incident?
- Document info about living & dead animals, history and abuse
- Photograph animal conditions & injuries

*“If it isn’t in the report,
it DID NOT HAPPEN!!!”*





Animal CSI: Interviewing and Investigating

Animals at a Domestic Violence Scene

- People love to talk about their animals...
- Victims more willing to talk about animal incidents...
- *If he's hurting the animals,*
- *she WILL BE NEXT*



Animal Abuse Case Management: Challenges in Cruelty Cases

1. Legal Concerns

- Standing of animals
- History of laws
- Lower priority of cases
- Proving intent of perp
- Terminology of statutes
- Lack of witnesses
- Trivialization

“No battered woman ever ran back to an abuser to protect her toaster.”



Animal Abuse Case Management: Challenges in Cruelty Cases



2. Emotional Issues

- **Victim's emotional state**
- **Fear for self, children, animals**
- **Fear for suspect**
- **Immobilization and shock**
- **Hopelessness/Helplessness**
- **Self-blame**
- **Isolation**

Animal Abuse Case Management: Responding to the Challenges



- **Explain that they're safe and you're there to help**
- **Are there any animals needing help?**
- **Can someone look after her pets?**
- **Women's shelters may offer foster care**
- **Include pets in protection orders**
- **Has there been any cruelty?**
- **SPCA /Animal Control can corroborate**
- **Consider filing animal cruelty charges**

Animal Abuse Case Management: Responding to the Challenges

Open and maintain lines of communication with animal organizations:



- **Animal Control**
 - National Animal Control Association: www.nacenet.org
- **Humane Societies/SPCAs/specialty groups**
 - World Animal Net: www.worldanimal.net
- **Veterinarians**
 - Yellow Pages
 - State Veterinary Medical Associations



Animal Abuse Case Management: Responding to the Challenges

**Open and maintain lines of communication
with human and social services agencies:**



- **Domestic Violence**
 - **Women's shelters**
 - **State and national coalitions against domestic violence**
 - **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (www.ncadv.org)**

- **Child Abuse & Neglect**
 - **County Child Protective Services (CPS)**
 - **Child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov)**

- **Elder Abuse**
 - **County Adult Protective Services (APS)**
 - **National Center on Elder Abuse (www.ncea.aoa.gov)**



Animal Abuse Case Management: Responding to the Challenges

Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT)

- DVRT's help victims with:
 - Emotional support
 - Information on domestic violence
 - Community resources
 - Safety plans
- Decrease trauma experienced by victims and their children
- Increase victims' ability to make educated decisions about options
 - Awareness of community services
 - Assist victims with the legal process

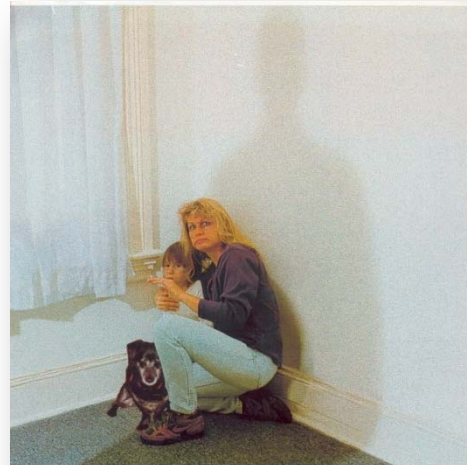
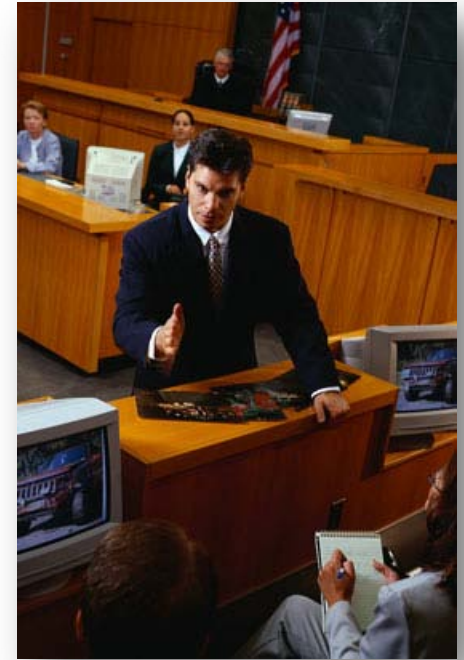


*Invite Animal Care & Control
agencies to join DVRT...*

Animal Abuse Case Management: Responding to the Challenges

Other opportunities for collaboration:

- Training for the Criminal Justice System
 - Prosecutors
 - Judges
 - Probation & Parole departments



LOVE SHOULD NOT MEAN FEAR

Domestic violence and spousal abuse are often preceded by threats and irrational behavior. Because domestic violence is a leading cause of homicide, both violence and the threat of abuse are prosecuted to protect the family.



The Baltimore Police Department now provides personnel dedicated exclusively to investigate domestic violence, assist with prosecutions, and send abusers to jail.

Call 911 — FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE
Call 311 — FOR INFORMATION

- Include pets in DV safety plans

- Create statewide database of cruelty cases



Conclusion:

Why Do People Abuse Animals?

- 1. Ignorance of animals' needs**
- 2. Inability to empathize with animals**
- 3. Have poor coping skills (release their frustration and anger when under stress)**
- 4. Perpetrators are socialized to abuse**
- 5. To demonstrate power & control**
- 6. Do not believe animals worthy of moral consideration)**
- 7. Cultural norms condone it**
- 8. To retaliate against animal**
- 9. To retaliate against a person**
- 10. Way to express one's aggressiveness**
- 11. To shock people for amusement**



Conclusion: Compelling Research

- **13% of intentional animal abuse cases involve domestic violence.** (HSUS, 2001)
- **18% - 48% of battered women don't escape to protect pets or livestock.**
(Ascione, 2007)
- **63% of aggressive inmates had deliberately hurt animals as a child.**
(Schiff, Louw & Ascione, 1999)
- **70% of animal abusers also have other criminal records.** (Arluke & Luke, 1997)
- **71% of women in shelters reported their batterer injured, killed or threatened pets for revenge or psychological control.** (Ascione, 1998)
- **88% of families investigated for physical child abuse also had abused or neglected pets.** (DeViney, Dickert & Lockwood, 1983)
- **97% of DV victims whose batterers also abused pets report emotional violence; 91% report physical violence.** (Simmons & Lehman, 2007)



Conclusion: What You Can Do

- 1. Take reports of animal cruelty seriously. Animal abuse is a crime in itself and often just the tip of the iceberg.**
- 2. Be familiar with anti-cruelty laws and recognize that animal investigations often uncover other serious crimes.**
- 3. Get to know animal protection personnel in your area and work with them.**



Conclusion: What You Can Do

4. Be aware of the role of pets in family disputes.
5. People often talk more easily about their pets than about people -- use that to your advantage.



Conclusion: Why Should Law Enforcement Care About Animal Cruelty?

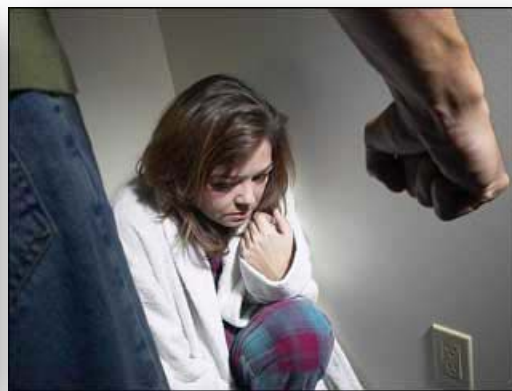
- Because you care
- Because it's a crime



- Because it's another way to get a lowlife **OFF THE STREET!**

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