

American Humane Association

The nation's voice for the protection of children & animals

Understanding the link between abusing an animal and abusing a human

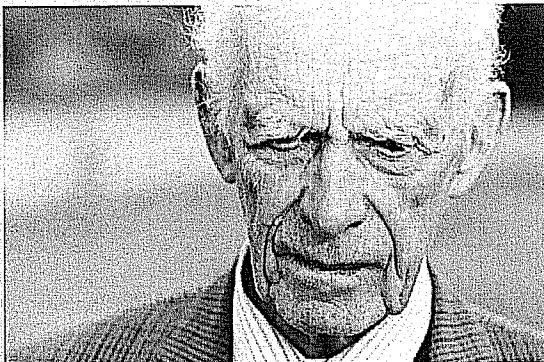
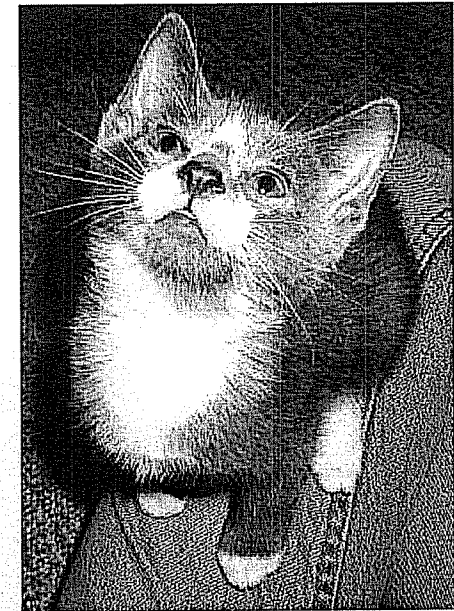
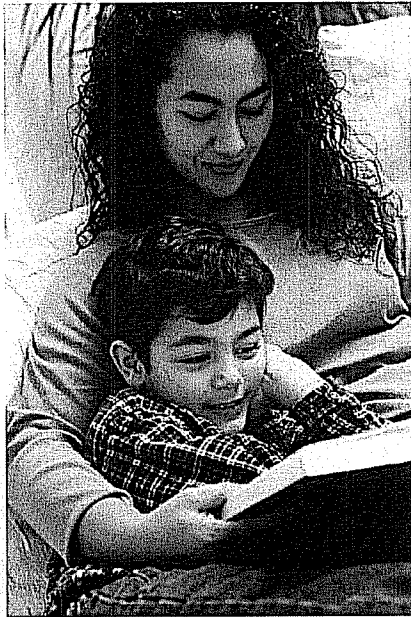


Foundation of American Humane Association

American Humane Association

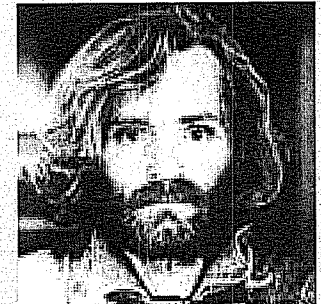
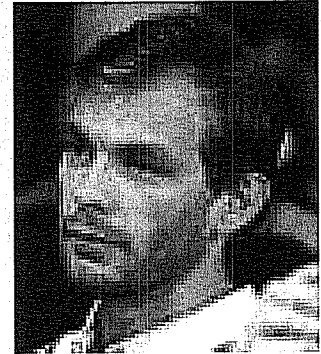
The nation's voice for the protection of children & animals

Animal Cruelty, Child Abuse and Domestic and Elder Violence



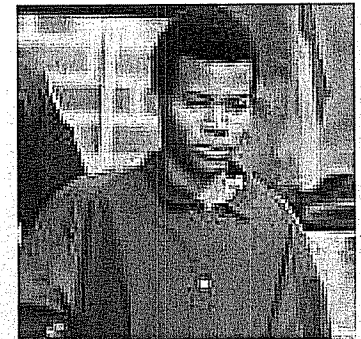
Infamous Criminals

- Jeffrey Dahmer
 - Started killing young boys at age 18;
 - Started abusing animals at age 10;
 - Killed neighbor's pets and impaled the heads on sticks.
- Albert DeSalvo ("The Boston Strangler") trapped cats and dogs in boxes and shot arrows into the boxes.
- Charles Manson
 - Tortured animals as satanic sacrifices

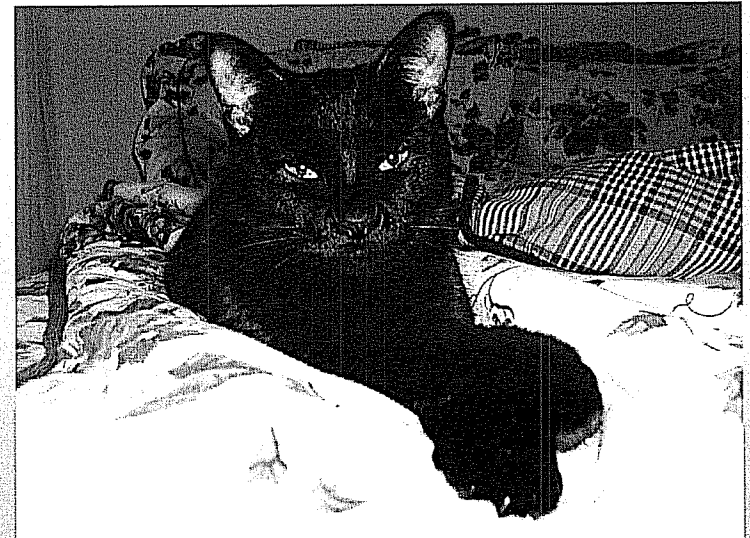


Infamous Criminals

- 5 out of 11 perpetrators from 9 school shootings (1996-1999) had abused animals
- Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (“The Columbine killers”) mutilated cats.
- Lee Malvo, DC area sniper, had a history of shooting cats with a slingshot

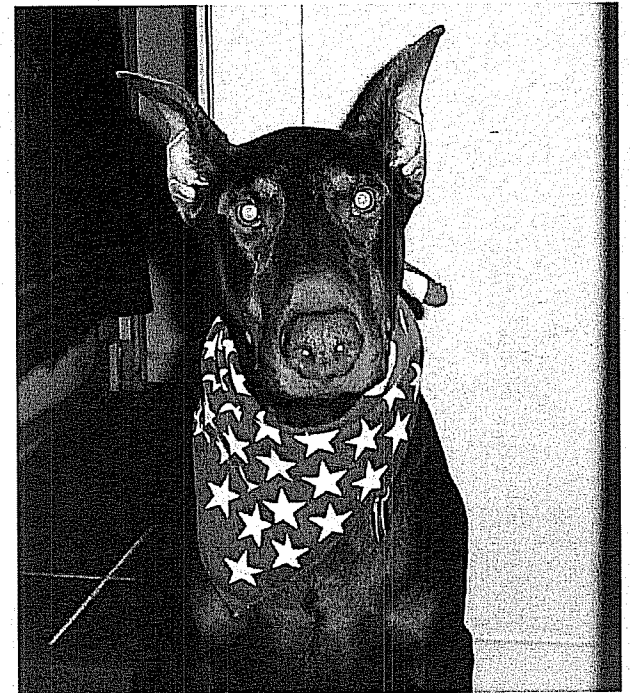


Understanding the importance of pets and how they become targets



Pets are part of the family

- 70% of homes with children under age 6 have at least one pet
- 78% of homes with children over age 6 have at least one pet
- 72% of homes have women as the primary caretaker of pet

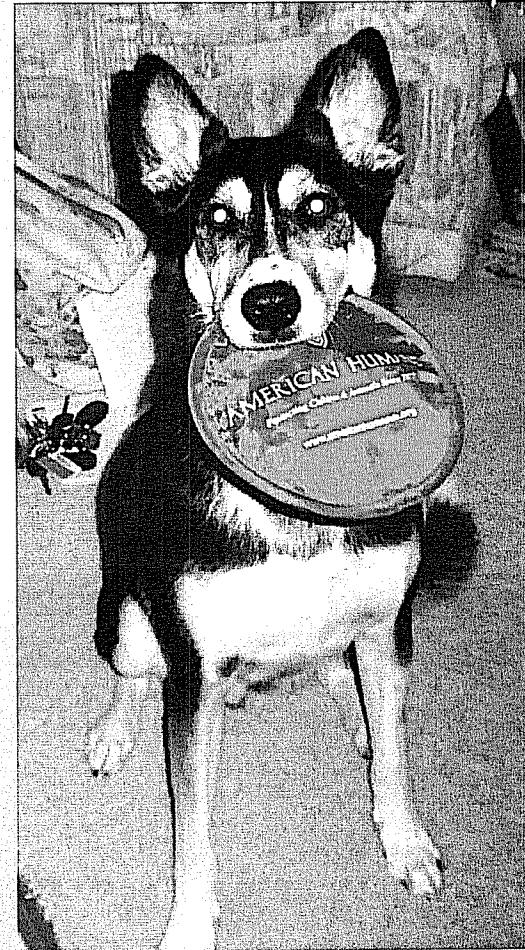


Source: American Veterinary Medical Association

Pets are part of the family

- When asked who in their family they felt close to 3,014 adults responded:
 - Dog – 94%
 - Mother – 87%
 - Cat – 84%
 - Father – 74%

-- Pew Research Center, 2005



Harsh Reality

- Survey of 1,677 intentional animal cruelty cases (HSUS, 2001)
 - 89% male and 11% female offenders co-existed with domestic violence
 - 67% male and 33% female offenders co-existed with child abuse
 - 50% male and female offenders co-existed with elder abuse

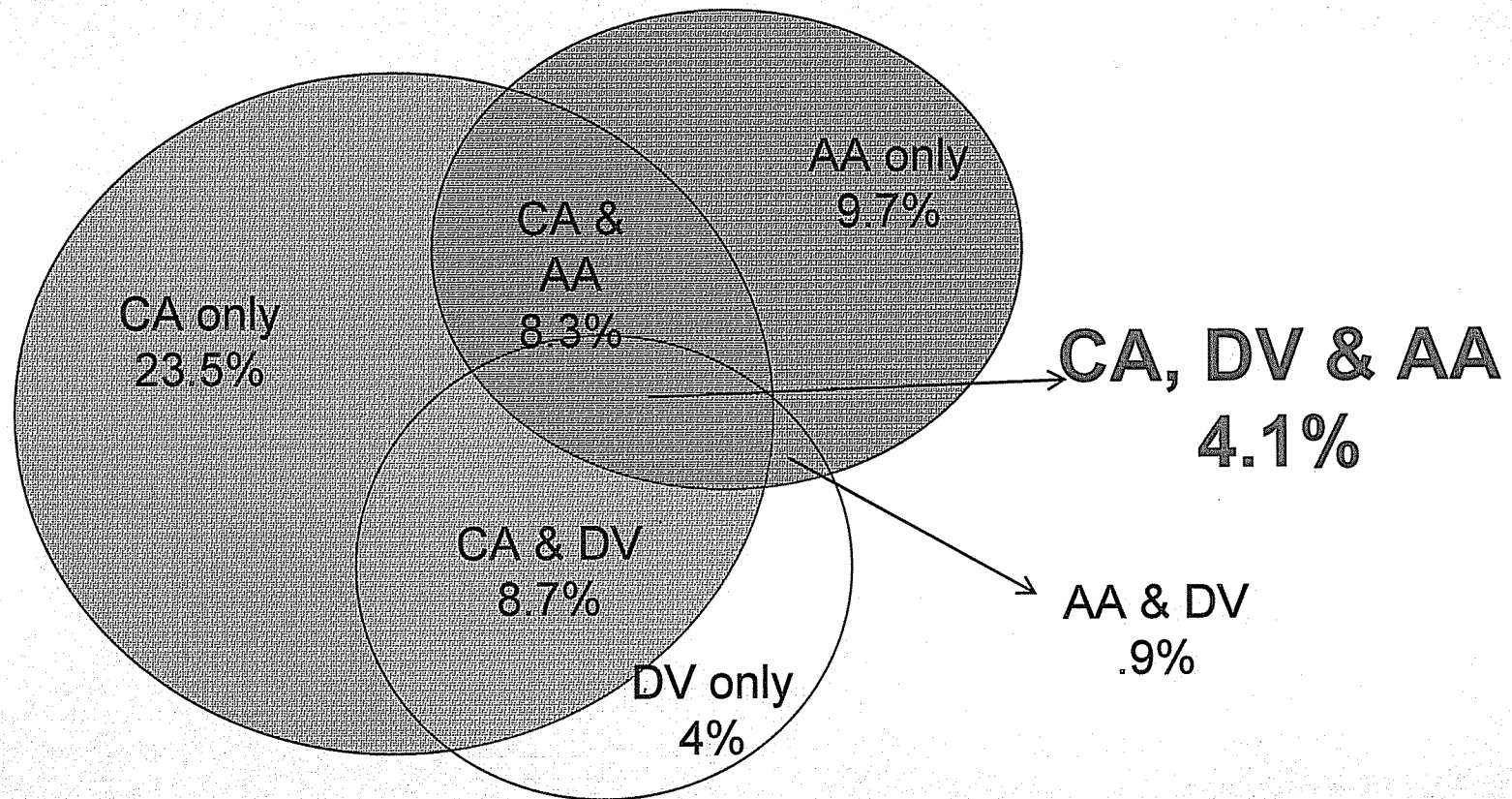
Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study – The first study focusing on the linkage between animals, children and domestic violence

(DeGue & DeLillo, Is Animal Cruelty a “Red Flag” for Family Violence? Investigating Co-Occurring Violence Toward Children, Partners and Pets, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 24(6), p. 1036-1056)

- Study of 860 college students (majority was female and caucasian)
- The study was done to address cross-reporting and determine a true linkage

Harsh Reality



37.2% exposed to one form of violence;
17.8% exposed to two forms of violence

Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study (cont.) – General Findings
 - Nearly half (49.4%) of the sample experienced one form of family violence during childhood
 - Over 27% experienced severe physical abuse
 - Over 15% experienced sexual abuse
 - Victims of family violence were significantly more likely to experience animal cruelty
 - A strong link was found between witnessing/perpetrating animal abuse and child physical abuse, emotional abuse, and severe domestic violence

Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study (cont.)
 - 40% who experienced family or animal violence were also exposed to one other type of abuse.
 - Individuals who witnessed animal cruelty were 8 times more likely to be perpetrators
 - Witness animal cruelty was the biggest predictor of later violence by the witness
 - Animal abuse may prove a more reliable marker for other forms of family violence, than vice versa
 - 60% of individuals witnessed/perpetrated animal abuse and experienced family violence
 - 30% of family violence victims had experience animal abuse

Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study (cont.)
 - When witnessing animal cruelty interacts with child maltreatment or exposure to domestic violence, the risk of animal cruelty increases.
 - When domestic violence was limited to the most severe cases, exposed individuals were more likely to have witnessed animal abuse
 - The study believed that animal cruelty committed by sexual assault victims was a coping mechanism (redirected aggression)
 - Animal abuse perpetration was also associated with higher rates of child neglect.

Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study (cont.)
 - Points to an underlying family dynamic where vulnerable or dependent members are devalued

“Witnessing and perpetrating animal cruelty were predictive of family violence, with each increasing the odds of child abuse or domestic violence exposure by 1/5 to 2 times.”

Harsh Reality

- 2009 Study (cont).

“Overall, the results suggest that there is a significant overlap between these various forms of abuse within the home and that, in particular, the identification of animal cruelty in a home may serve as a reliable red flag for the presence of child maltreatment or severe domestic violence.”

Harsh Reality

- Survey comparing shelter –vs- nonabused

women (Ascione, Weber, Thompson, Heath, Maruyama & Hayashi (2007), Battered Pets and Domestic Violence: Animal Abuse Reported by Women Experiencing Intimate Violence and by Nonabused Women. *Violence Against Women* 13(4), 354-73.)

- 101 shelter women interviewed at 5 different Utah shelters (including their children); 39 shelter children interviewed
- 120 non-shelter women and 59 non-shelter children were interviewed

Harsh Reality

- 2007 Study (cont.)
 - Shelter women were nearly 11 times more likely to report their partner had hurt/killed their pet
 - 54% of shelter women
 - 86.4% of the women were close to the pet and 85.7% felt terrible after the harm/death
 - 5% of non-shelter women
 - Shelter women were more than 4 times higher to report their pet was threatened
 - 52.5% of shelter women
 - 12.5 of non-shelter women

Harsh Reality

- 2007 Study (cont.)
 - Children observing animal abuse
 - 61.54% for shelter children according to mother
 - 66.7% of shelter children according to the child
 - Almost 60% of children were very upset
 - 2.9% for non-shelter children
 - Children harming or killing pets
 - 37.5% of shelter children
 - 11.8% of non-shelter children

Harsh Reality

- 2007 Study (cont.)
 - 22.8% of shelter women delayed leaving home due to concerns of the pet
 - If pets were actually threatened and harmed, 34.3% of women delayed leaving

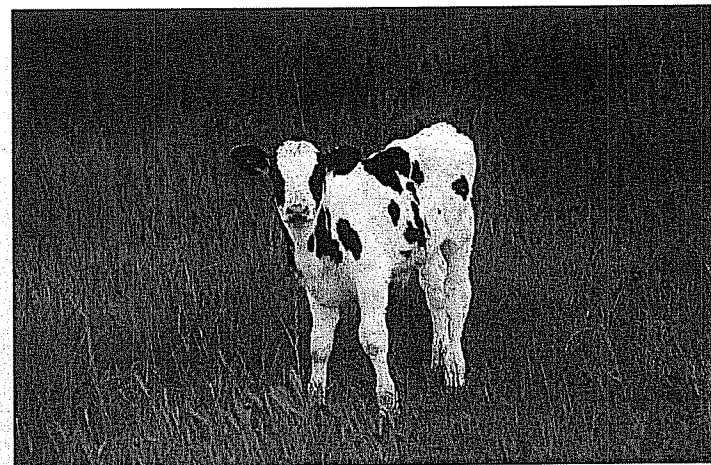
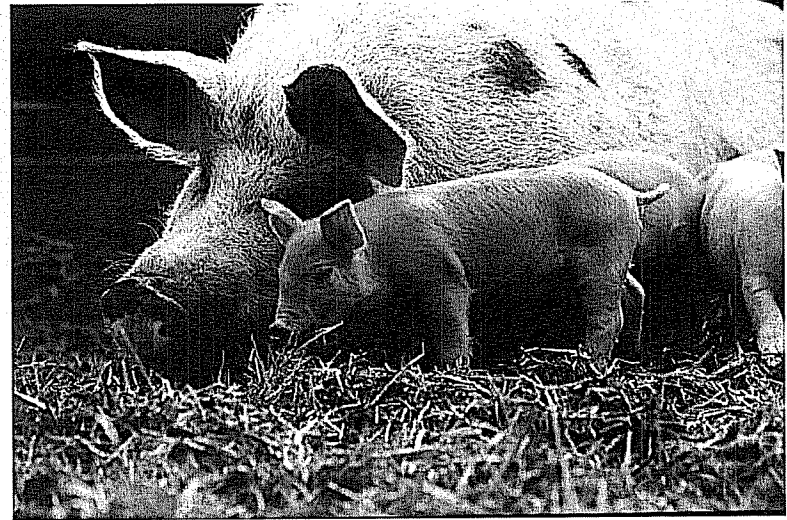
Harsh Reality

- National survey of 48 domestic violence shelters (Ascione, Frank R., Ph.D., Weber, Claudia V., M.S., and Wood, David S.: "The Abuse of Animals and Domestic Violence: A National Survey of Shelters for Women Who are Battered.: *Society & Animals*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1997)
 - 85.4% of shelter directors encountered cases where women disclosed animal abuse
 - 63% of shelter directors encountered cases where children disclosed animal abuse
 - Only 13 of the 48 shelters asked about pets

Harsh Reality

Up to 48% of battered women have delayed leaving an abusive home, or have returned to their batterer, out of fear for the welfare of their pets or livestock.

-- Ascione, 2007



Harsh Reality

“Batterers who also abuse their pets are both more controlling and use more dangerous forms of violence [sexual violence, marital rape, emotional violence and stalking] than batterers who do not.”

-- Simmons & Lehmann (2007)

Journal of Interpersonal Violence, Vol. 22, No. 9,
p. 1211-1222 (2007)

Harsh Reality

- Conservative estimate is that 1 in 3 elder adults have a pet. (Mason, Peak, Krannich, and Sanderson, 2002)
- 2000 Study
Barbara Boat & Juliette Knight (2000). Experiences and Needs of Adult Protective Services Case Managers When Assisting Clients Who have Companion Animals. JOURNAL OF ELDER ABUSE 7 NEGLECT, 12(3/4), 145-155.
 - This study focused on whether Adult Protective Service workers are asking clients about their pets and are developing a plan for the care of pets.

Harsh Reality

- 2000 Study (cont.)
 - 6 APS case managers were interviewed from a Midwestern state that assists approximately 1500 clients per year (ranging from ages 30-85)
 - Many elderly clients have pet as companions.
 - Elderly clients have less mobility, rely on pets for companionship, and often suffer depression if a pet dies or if they have to enter a care facility without their pet.
 - They often cannot give appropriate vet care due to financial restraints or inability to travel. Neglect of animals is often found.

Harsh Reality

- 2000 Study (cont.)

“Pets can be threatened with harm or actually hurt or killed as a means to coerce a client to submit to the wishes of another.

We know that abuse of the elderly is emerging as a significant factor in the increasing incidence of violence in the family.”

Harsh Reality

- Abusers may exploit or target pets to:
 - Coerce compliance with present and future abuse
 - Threaten silence regarding abuse
 - Maintain terror and fright
 - Eliminate source of support/comfort
 - Force the family to return home
 - Reinforces there is no safe place
 - Gain more power and control
 - “If I can kill the dog, I can kill you!”

Psychological Impact on Children

“It is now understood that childhood cruelty to animals is an important predictor of later antisocial and aggressive acts and that children showing these behaviors, without intervention, are at risk for enduring disorders in conduct and mental health.”

(Becker & French, 2004; American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

Psychological Disorder

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)
- Conduct Disorder: “a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated”
 - Aggression toward people or animals is one symptom (added in 1987)
 - Animal cruelty is one of the earliest and most severe symptoms (Am. Psy. Assoc. 2000)
 - Mean age onset is 6-1/2 years

Psychological Impact on Children

- Should CPS help children when domestic violence is witnessed by the children?
- Should CPS help children when animal abuse is witnessed by the children?

Animal abuse was a factor for CPS Intervention

- **Schambon v Kentucky, 821 SW2d 804 (1991)**
 - Animal control called regarding animal hoarding and neglect
 - Four children removed because of unsanitary condition of home
 - Subsequent disclosure of sexual and physical abuse
 - Termination of parental rights

Animal Abuse was a Factor in Terminating Parental Rights

- In re SGT, 333 SE2d 445 (Ga. 1985)
 - Cruelty to dog; mental/physical abuse of kids
- In the Interest of PJM, 926 SW2d 223 (Mo. 1996)
 - Animal sacrifices; neglect/abuse of kids
- In the Interest of AP, 42 SW3d 248 (Tx. 2001)
 - Dad killed animals; dirty home case

Addressing the cycle of violence holistically

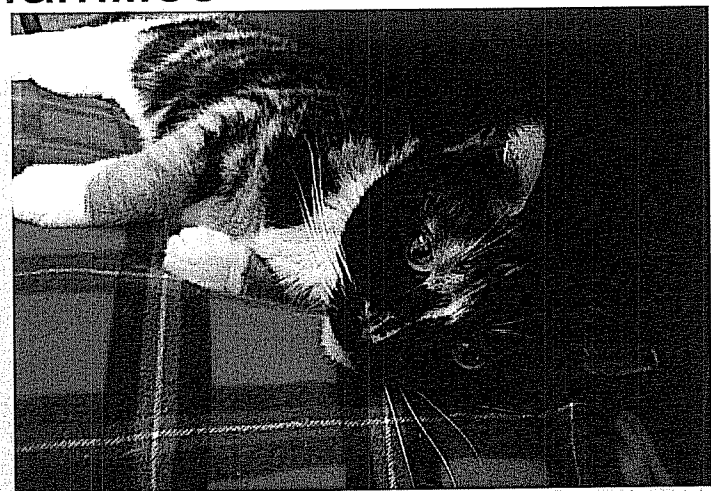
- Animal abuse is a sign of a dysfunctional family
- Look at the whole family when treating the cycle of violence
- Sensitize all professionals to look for animal and human abuse
- Get the information to the community and schools



Who reports cruelty?

- According to a study of 1,405 cases of animal cruelty, the overwhelming majority of reports came from:
 - 33.6% from neighbors
 - 14.9% from Police
 - 15% from pet owners or their families
 - 3.2% from animal control officers or shelters
 - .5% from Veterinarians

Source: www.pet-abuse.com



Cross Training/Reporting Multi-Disciplinary Teams

- Prosecutor
- Case Worker
- Law enforcement
- Health care provider
- Forensic interviewer
- Victim advocate
- Mental health professional
- Probation department
- School personnel
- Child Care Provider
- Animal Welfare
- Animal Control Officer
- Veterinarian

Child/Animal Abuse MDT's

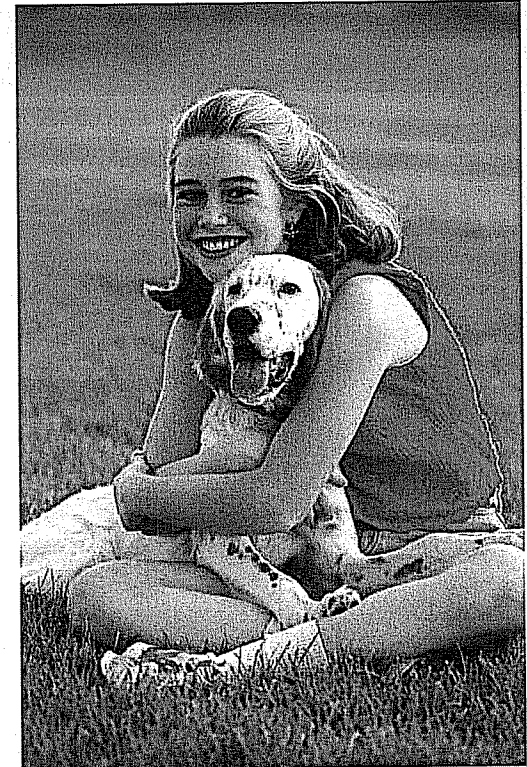
- Forming all over the country
 - Arizona, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont
- DVERT in Colorado Springs (Domestic Violence Enhanced Response Team)
- Maine Linkage Project
- Humane Coalition Against Violence

Mandatory reporters of animal abuse

- Arizona (veterinarians)
- California (veterinarians)
- Colorado (veterinarians)
- District of Columbia (CPS and LE)
- Illinois (veterinarians and DCFS)
- Louisiana (CPS, APS and LE)
- Maine (veterinarians – agg cruelty)
- Minnesota (veterinarians)
- Nebraska (CPS, APS, animal control/welfare, vets)
- Oklahoma (veterinarians)
- Oregon (veterinarians and technicians – agg cruelty)
- Tennessee (CPS & APS)
- West Virginia (vet, APS, humane ofc, CPS, LE)
- Wisconsin (veterinarians – fighting only)

Discretionary reporters of animal abuse

- Alaska (all people)
- California (any employee of child/ adult protective services)
- Georgia (veterinarians)
- Maine (veterinarians, medical, social workers)
- Maryland (veterinarians)
- Massachusetts (CPS)
- Nebraska (any government employee)
- New York (veterinarians)
- North Carolina (veterinarians)
- Oregon (public or private officials, vets for non-agg cruelty)
- Vermont (veterinarians)



Mandated child abuse reporting for animal welfare professionals

- California (animal control officers)
- Colorado (veterinarians, officers/agents of state bureau of animal protection, animal control)
- District of Columbia (humane animal welfare)
- Illinois (animal control and humane investigators)
- Maine (humane society workers)
 - Discretionary for animal control officers
- Ohio (county humane agents)
- Virginia (animal protection)
- West Virginia (humane officers)
- ALL PERSONS in Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah,

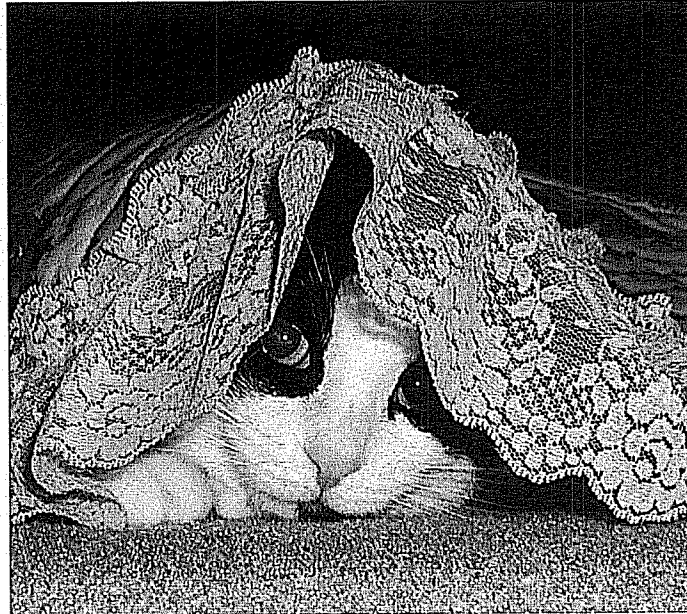
Pet Protective Orders

- 2006: Maine (custody order), New York & Vermont (custody order)
- 2007: California, Colorado, **Connecticut**, Illinois, Nevada, and Tennessee
- 2008: District of Columbia, Louisiana, Puerto Rico
- 2009: Hawaii, North Carolina, Washington
- 2010: Arizona, Minnesota, Oklahoma, West Virginia
- 2009-10 pending: MA, NJ, OH

Where
animals are at
risk, children
and adults are
at risk



Break the cycle of violence!



By preventing animal abuse, you may
prevent a child or adult from being
abused!

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