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Working together to stop violence against people and animals

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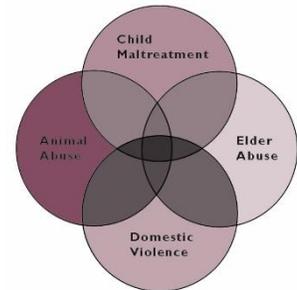
ON THE LINK BETWEEN ANIMAL ABUSE AND HUMAN VIOLENCE



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[Phil Arkow](#), Coordinator and Editor

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ANIMAL ABUSE AND... DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

New Zealand Study Identifies Motivations

Underlying Domestic Violence Animal Abuse

A [new study](#) in New Zealand has built upon earlier research from that country and elsewhere detailing the experiences of domestic violence survivors and how their animals are abused by intimate partners as a way to demonstrate force and induce compliance. As in earlier studies, the animal abuse both delayed and in many cases precluded survivors' attempts to leave the abuser and led to significant suffering by both the animals and the primary victim.



Ang Jury, Natalie Thorburn, and Kate Burry

Three distinct motivations were uncovered for the abuse, which exploited the close and affectionate relationships which many victims have with their pets and farm animals:

- Control and intimidating women into compliance;
- Assertions of supremacy as the most important object of women's affections; and
- Suppression and silencing of disclosures.

"These, in addition to their paralyzing impacts, have important ramifications for domestic violence work. The role that pets unwittingly play as pawns of the abuser highlights the need for tailored services to be offered to them as additional (and pivotal) victims of the abuser," concluded the researchers.

The study was conducted by Ang Jury, Natalie Thorburn and Kate Burry of the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges, a network of 40 affiliated shelters in New Zealand. They called for refuges to add an additional dimension of safety planning that includes the household and farm animals.

929 respondents were surveyed about their experiences, which most frequently involved abuse of dogs and cats but numerous other pets and livestock were also affected. The respondents reported what the researchers called "alarmingly common" and "grotesque" threats including:

- To get rid of an animal or harm or kill it
- To harm animals in front of the children
- To harm or kill the animal in a bid to get children to do something
- To force the child to kill the pet
- To commit suicide if the participant chose to take the pet to the vet instead of spending time with him

72% of respondents said their current or ex-partners intentionally intimidated or scared an animal. Other animal abuses included: leaving them outside for long periods; confining them in inappropriate small spaces; preventing them from getting needed medication; forcing them to fight with another animal; and giving the animals alcohol or drugs. A wide range of physical and sexual abuses of animals was also reported. Violence toward animals was typically associated with the escalation of other forms of aggression, such as toward the respondent.

“That nearly half of participants had partners who had threatened to kill or hurt animals is testament to how widespread the phenomenon of using pets as a manipulative tool in a pattern of power and control....”

53% delayed leaving the abuser out of fear for the safety of their pets or farm animals. “Many participants considered leaving without their animals as unthinkable, thus the fact that residential services like Women’s Refuges did not allow pets posed a significant barrier,” they noted, consistent with numerous other international findings.

“That nearly half of participants had partners who had threatened to kill or hurt animals is testament to how widespread the phenomenon of using pets as a manipulative tool in a pattern of power and control is amongst victims of abuse, and indicative of a long-standing need for specific support mechanisms that cater for pets,” they wrote. “Even more worryingly, more than three-quarters of respondents had experienced a current or ex-partner physically hurting a pet – positioning pets not just as pawns to be used to manipulate partners, but as primary victims of violence in need of protection.”

Respondents’ reactions to the animal abuse featured shock, terror and powerlessness. “These emotional impacts were occasionally exacerbated by a sense of hopelessness arising from the perceived futility of trying to escape without harm to themselves or their pets, whether as a result of the sheer magnitude of the threats or by the difficulty in getting others to recognize the abuse,” they wrote.

– Jury, A., Thorburn, N., & Burry, K. (2018). *Pet Abuse as Part of Intimate Partner Violence*. Wellington, New Zealand: National Collective of Independent Women’s Refuges.

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Rhode Island Now 34th State to Include Animals in Protection Orders

Rhode Island is now the 34th state, and the 36th political jurisdiction including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, to allow courts to include pets in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders. Gov. Gina Raimondo signed **H 5023** and **S 225** into law on June 28. The new law took effect immediately.

The law allows plaintiffs suffering from domestic abuse or sexual exploitation to file a complaint in family court for a protection order that may, in addition to many other provisions, provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets.



The movement to include pets and, in some states, all animals in protection orders was started in 2006 in Maine and has spread rapidly across the U.S. Earlier this year, Wyoming authorized pets to be included in protection orders in the wake of extensive research and experience that animals are harmed to intimidate spouses, partners and children during turbulent domestic violence and divorce situations. Similar bills, however, were defeated in Florida and Mississippi.

Social Work Student Writes Policy Brief

Noting that Alabama lags far behind the rest of the U.S. in protections for pets affected by domestic violence, a doctoral student at the University of Alabama has published a [policy brief](#) in hopes of getting Alabama to join the 34 states that already include pets in protection-from-abuse orders.



Amber Sutton, LMSW, wrote the policy brief as part of her work in the School of Social Work. Sutton cited statistics showing that in 2017, domestic violence in Alabama was recorded in 4,291 violent offenses including 30 homicides, 283 rapes, 111 robberies, and 3,867 aggravated assaults. “These numbers only account for reported incidents,” she cautioned.

Sutton outlined several steps that could move Alabama forward:

- **Legislation** – adding pets to existing laws for protection orders.
- **Judicial Offices Training** – alerting officers to the need to include pets, which are currently overlooked in protection orders because they are not listed specifically.
- **Expansion of Shelters with Pet Provisions and Pet Safety Plans** – making more shelters pet-friendly and including pets in safety planning.

“Domestic violence is a pattern, rarely just a one-time event. Documenting past or current abuse of animals can be relevant in painting a clearer picture of an abuser’s past failures,” she wrote.

RedRover, Purina Announce \$245,000 in Co-Sheltering Grants

In its latest round of awarding funds to domestic violence shelters that wish to co-shelter the pets of survivors, RedRover has just announced that 16 shelters will share more than \$245,000 in grants to create on- and off-site spaces to house pets. Of the 16 Safe Housing Program grants awarded, four are the result of RedRover's partnership with Purina's Purple Leash Project ([See the March 2019 LINK-Letter](#)).



The following shelters received Safe Housing grants:

- **Arizona:** Sojourner Center, Maricopa County, \$12,000
- **California:** Family Assistance Program, San Bernardino County, \$5,000
- **Florida:** Hubbard House, Duval County, \$20,000
The Spring of Tampa Bay, Hillsborough County, \$20,000
- **Iowa:** Friends of the Family, Black Hawk County, \$5,505
- **Kentucky:** Women's Crisis Center, Boone County, \$20,000
- **Michigan:** YWCA West Central Michigan, Kent County, \$20,000
- **Missouri:** Newhouse Shelter, Jackson County, \$20,000
- **North Dakota:** Abused Adult Resource Center, Burleigh County, \$5,000
- **Oregon:** Center for Hope and Safety, Marion County, \$20,000
- **Virginia:** Southside Center for Violence Prevention, Cumberland County, \$16,605
- **Wyoming:** Converse Hope Center, Converse County, \$6,500

The following shelters received Purple Leash grants:

- **Florida:** Refuge House, Leon County, \$30,000
- **Missouri:** Hope Haven of Cass County, Cass County, \$7,270
Lydia's House, St. Louis County, \$17,120
- **Texas:** Family Violence Prevention Service, Bexar County, \$20,000

"Domestic violence survivors too often delay leaving abusers because they are fearful of leaving their pet behind," said Nicole Forsyth, RedRover President & CEO. "Our Safe Housing and Purple Leash Project grants remove that barrier and enable survivors to escape abuse with their pets so that they can begin their healing process together."

RedRover and Purina are working towards the goal of having at least one pet-friendly domestic violence shelter in each state. Currently, Hawai'i, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and West Virginia lack pet-friendly domestic violence shelters. "We strongly encourage the shelters in these states to apply for Safe Housing grants," said Forsyth.

Since RedRover's Safe Housing grants were instituted six years ago, 99 grants have been awarded. The deadline to apply for the [next round of Safe Housing and Purple Leash grants](#) is October 15.

ANIMAL ABUSE AND... VETERINARY MEDICINE

Physicians and Veterinarians Need to Ask About Pets

Two recent articles in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* draw additional focus to the positive and negative roles of pets in families and why physicians as well as veterinarians should ask questions about animals in the home.



Kate Hodgson

The strong bond between people and their pets means that physicians, as well as veterinarians, can support activities that are healthy for animals and their owners. That's the One Health approach described by an interdisciplinary group of Canadian DVMs and MDs who argued that collaborations between physicians and veterinarians can improve the health of all species in the home.

Veterinarians can improve human health by encouraging dog-walking to motivate owners' physical activity. Physicians can improve patients' self-care by incorporating pet activities in education tools. But while inter-species health issues have usually focused only on zoonoses, animals pose other human health risks including physical injuries, environmental contamination and depleting family resources.

Because physicians rarely ask about the presence or relationship with pets in the home, they may ignore the significance of animal-related concerns or even arbitrarily recommend removal of animals. Drawing a "family mosaic with pets," a genogram of the household that includes the animal members, can facilitate communication with veterinarians and physicians about potential health issues. "Physicians who are aware of the important role pets have in the family may be more likely to consider pet management options rather than pet removal to address health concerns," they wrote.

Positive health benefits that can accrue to people who live with pets include:

- Increased **social capital** with a ripple effect of more contact with neighbors and the community.
- Motivating **healthy behavior** by encouraging physical activity and a healthy living environment.
- Catalysts for **harm reduction**, motivating owners to refrain from smoking, so as to not expose pets to second-hand smoke, or altering their drug choices.
- **Therapeutic** improvements in cardiovascular functioning and stimulating release of oxytocin.



Responding to the article, which featured only these positive health benefits of the human-animal bond, California veterinarian Jennifer Woolf emphasized that physicians can also play a significant role in uncovering violence in the home, including child, elder and domestic abuse.

Jennifer Woolf "When physicians and others in the human health-care field include questions about patients' pets, they have an opportunity to develop a stronger bond with their patients and learn more about their patients' home environment," Woolf replied. Asking even basic questions, such as "Are there pets in the home?" and "Do you worry about your pets?" can gain valuable insights into family dynamics and reveal clinically relevant information about social determinants of health.

"The concept of One Health needs to include veterinarians and physicians. But it also needs to include consideration of both the positive and negative consequences of the human-animal bond," she argued.

-- Hodgson, K., Darling, M., Freeman, D., & Monavvari, Al. (2019). Engaging family physicians in one health. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 254(11), 1267-1269.

-- Woolf, J.A. (2019). One health and domestic violence. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 255(3), 278.

WSAVA Congress Addresses Veterinarian's Role in Domestic Violence

The emerging interest area of the veterinarian's role in responding to potential domestic violence was featured as part of a One Health focus at the World Small Animal Veterinary Association's 2019 Congress, held in Toronto in July in conjunction with the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association.

Veterinary forensics authority Melinda Merck presented on "One Health and Domestic Violence." Because statistics show that most veterinarians will encounter incidences of animal abuse, and because researchers have documented that violence towards animals can be both a component and a symptom of child, spousal and elder abuse, veterinarians are increasingly being called upon to be responsive to suspected animal abuse as a sentinel indicator of other violence against human family members. This has enhanced the veterinarian's role in One Health and public health responses to family and community violence, she said.



Melinda Merck

She noted that the World Health Organization's resolution on violence against women and children unfortunately does not include a plan for pets. This is a unique opportunity for the veterinary community to work with the WHO to educate and develop such plans to prevent harm to the animals that are frequently left behind and that are at risk for being injured or killed in retaliation by the abuser.

Pets surviving domestic violence environments often have suffered emotional and physical abuse. Many may not have received basic veterinary care amid all the turmoil. A common missing link in many veterinary examinations is to look for signs of abuse, especially chronic abuse.

Veterinarians can serve as resources to assist in planning and providing low-cost support for the increasing number of domestic violence shelters offering either co-living facilities with their families or off-site foster care, she said. The veterinary community can play a vital role in initiating and developing a well-rounded, collaborative program that involves all community stakeholders.

Domestic violence is the primary source of physical abuse cases seen in veterinary practice, she said. An owner may bring a pet to the primary vet or try to hide the abuse by going to other veterinary and emergency hospitals. The abuser may come to the hospital with the partner, or be the party bringing the animal in. Potential indicators of animal/domestic abuse include:

- Unexplained death or sudden death with no supportive medical history;
- Request for euthanasia without a sensible reason;
- Desperation to find a new home without a good explanation;
- The owner appears afraid to authorize diagnostics or treatment, especially for routine care;
- The owner, and especially the abuser, may decline necropsy.

Merck noted several telltale signs of physical abuse which may be particularly indicative of the types of chronic abuse seen frequently when animals are harmed to intimidate partners in domestic violence:

- A history of unexplained self-resolving lameness, swellings or neurologic signs.
- Sudden behavior changes in the home, house soiling, gastrointestinal problems, or extreme fear reactions.
- Repetitive injuries such as healing fractures, especially in different stages of healing.
- Dislocations in the tail or legs.
- Spiral fractures due to rotational forces without consistent history or explanation.

- Head trauma, particularly in the eye or ear.
- Rib fractures.

“Veterinarians must do a complete examination making sure to look for subtle findings of abuse. Radiographs are critical in cases of all suspected abuse cases,” she said. “The examination of pets of survivors of domestic violence and having a proper community program can play a critical role in the future safety of the pets and their human family.”

ANIMAL ABUSE &... CHILD MALTREATMENT

Literature Review Explores Impact of Animal Cruelty on Children

Despite the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention’s omission of childhood exposure to animal cruelty as an Adverse Childhood Experience, a growing body of research is finding that children who witness or commit animal abuse experience multiple negative outcomes. Committing and witnessing animal abuse have been found to be a prime risk factor for perpetrating animal cruelty, bullying behaviors and violence against humans.

Roshni Ladny, a criminologist from the University of Tampa, and Laura Meyer, from the University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology, synthesized the findings of 17 research studies from 1997-2017 that explored the outcomes of childhood witnessing of animal cruelty. They reported overarching themes of childhood exposure to animal abuse as making youth more susceptible to externalizing symptoms (negative behaviors directed towards others), internalizing symptoms (negative behaviors directed inward), and later cruelty to animals and humans.



Roshni Ladny & Laura Meyer

The review concluded that witnessing violence predicts and increases a child’s engagement in maladaptive behaviors, including the perpetration of violence towards humans and animals. The mechanisms by which witnessing violence may lead to perpetrating violence involve desensitization, decreased empathy, learned maladaptive coping mechanisms and other learned behaviors, and unresolved feelings of anger, fear, and resentment. They reported that these processes are believed to be very similar regardless of whether the child witnesses violence toward humans or toward animals; both potentially lead to violence against animals/or people. One factor that may influence a child’s outcome behaviors is the co-occurrence of family violence and witnessing animal cruelty.

They noted the often-reported difficulty in establishing prevalence of animal cruelty and children’s witnessing of these acts. They cautioned the need to clarify: the context of childhood exposure to violence towards animals may moderate its effects on youth wellbeing. For example, some children grow up in environments where witnessing animals being slaughtered on family farms is a regular occurrence. They explored the implications of these findings on public policy, humane education, and further research.

-- Ladny, R.Y., & Meyer, L. (2019). **Traumatized witnesses: Review of childhood exposure to animal cruelty.** *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma.* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-019-00277-x>

Humane Education Helps Counteract Adverse Childhood Experiences



Chris John

The toxic traumas of domestic violence, sexual abuse, gang warfare, and other experiences can have devastating, lifelong impacts on young children, but these effects can be mediated through the profoundly healing effect of learning to care for the pets in their lives and becoming guardians of the natural world. That’s the message of a British psychotherapist who is internationally recognized for his specialization in trauma reduction.

Chris John was interviewed recently by the [Caring Classrooms](#) humane education program in South Africa about how memories of early childhood trauma become locked deeply within the limbic area of the brain. These effects lead children to become developmentally immature in later life, carrying a “wounded inner child” with them that leaves them feeling vulnerable, victimized, insecure, and prone to uncontrolled behaviors.

“Traumatized children develop what I refer to as ‘silent or violent’ behavior. Their need for human connection is what has been lost or denied,” he said. In this process, children carry a sense of shame and develop equal measures of a fear of wanting and rejecting connection.

Children today, particularly in violence-prone areas like some communities in South Africa, are subjected not only to street violence but also inter-family conflicts. A legacy of attachment trauma, which includes abuse and neglect, often comes from parents who do not give their children enough good care because they themselves were victims of abuse and suffer from developmental immaturity, he argued.

Children growing up in what John called today’s “traumatized world” can develop more self-worth by doing something beneficial and of service, giving them a greater sense of purpose. “Humane education is a bastion for change and a beacon of hope and normality in the often violent world of children,” he concluded.

BUILDING LINK AWARENESS

Japan Holds First Veterinary Social Work Training

Sakiko Yamazaki (left), and Keiko Yamazaki presented at Japan’s first-ever Veterinary Social Work conference on July 28 in Tokyo. The Animal Literacy Research Institute organized the event which included trainings on The Link and human-animal welfare issues encountered in animal hoarding. Turnout was high despite the presence of a typhoon that hit Japan that weekend.



ANIMAL SEXUAL ABUSE... AND THE LINK

Study Examines 40 Years of Animal Sex Abuse Arrests and Prosecutions

- **31.6%** of animal sex offenders also sexually offended against children and adults.
- **52.9%** had a prior or subsequent criminal record involving human sexual abuse, animal abuse, interpersonal violence, substances, or property offenses.
- Only **39.1%** of arrests involving the direct sexual abuse of animals resulted in prosecution.

These are some of the more significant findings from the most comprehensive study to date of animal sex abuse offenders. Jenny Edwards examined 456 arrests for bestiality from 1975 to 2015 to explore patterns of offending, offender characteristics, and how cases were adjudicated. The results suggest that animal sex offending may be linked to other criminal behavior, and involves a spectrum of sexual acts, including: coercive, violent, and non-violent penetration; solicitation for sex with animals; and deviant behavior including torture and necrophilia.



Jenny Edwards

Edwards reports that the varied sexual assault patterns and legal outcomes suggest that bestiality is more pervasive and serious than previously thought and point to a need for additional research to aid in detection, intervention, sentencing, treatment, and supervision methods.

Edwards argues that zoophilia (human sexual interest in or attraction to an animal) and bestiality (deliberate use of animals for human sexual purposes) are not rare and unworthy of serious research or debate. Rather, they are a form of sexual assault, pervasive in society, worthy of investigation and vigorous prosecution, and often linked with other crimes. Other findings include:

- **15.8%** of offenders had prior convictions for interpersonal or domestic violence.
- **10.8%** had prior convictions for child pornography.
- Charged or convicted animal sex abusers were nearly **four times** more likely to re-offend.
- **7.5%** were diagnosed with voyeurism, necrophilia, sadomasochism, and pedophilia.
- Dogs were the most frequent victims, followed by horses, farm animals, and many other species. **16.3%** of arrests involved more than one animal.
- At least **213 children and 28 adults** were directly sexually victimized by the offenders.
- In **25 arrests** (5.5%), animal pornography had been used to groom a child for sexual behavior.
- **34 incidents** involved violent or sadistic acts resulting in death or euthanasia of the animal; four offenders had sex with an animal carcass.

Edwards notes that during the 40 years significant changes occurred: the number of states criminalizing bestiality tripled; Internet access and cell-phone technology facilitated greater access to animal pornography and interaction with others with zoophilic interests; and our understanding of the Link between animal and human cruelty increased, influencing how laws are written and enacted.

“The indication that nearly half of the offenders studied also sexually offended against children and adults is alarming and calls for increased research as well as cross-reporting by law enforcement, social services, and medical and veterinary professionals when responding to suspected incidents of domestic and interpersonal violence, child endangerment, and animal cruelty,” she concludes.

-- Edwards, M.J. (2019). Arrest and prosecution of animal sex abuse (bestiality) offenders in the United States, 1975-2015. *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 47(3), 1-12.

THE LINK AND... CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Link Issues Addressed at British Criminology Conference

Several Link lectures were included in the massive lineup of presentations offered at the British Society of Criminology’s 2019 conference on “Community, Conflict and Justice,” held July 2-5 at the University of Lincoln. The programs, based in a track on “Green Criminology,” included:

Piers Beirne, from the University of Southern Maine, presented on “Animals, Women and Terms of Abuse.” Beirne, who has written extensively about The Link, argued that “speciesist” language is often used to denigrate women. Animal-based terms used to debase women are enabled and intensified by human violence towards other animals.

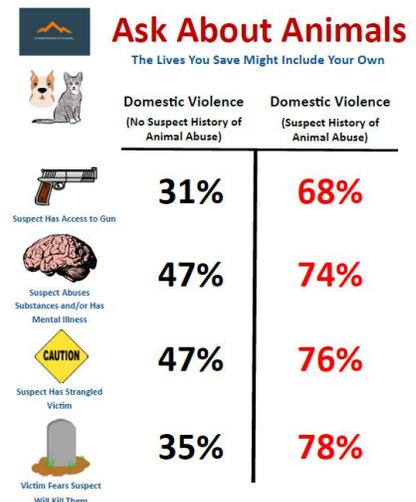


Diane Turgoose, from De Monfort University in the U.K., presented on “Domestic Violence and Abuse, Companion Animals and Independent Agency.” Turgoose argued that governments have begun to recognize the importance of supporting and developing strategies to address other “invisible” and “vulnerable” victims and survivors of domestic violence as distinct topics for empirical study and practical policy research. While such an extension has already begun to include children who should be given independent agency and research and practice to address their specific needs as well as within the broader context of domestic violence prevention, such agency now needs to be extended to include animals as well.

Non-human animal abuse and domestic violence are commonly perceived as separate issues and often handled independently by animal protection and human service agencies, Turgoose said, and while professional experts in both fields are often not surprised to learn that they are often dealing with the same families and perpetrators, non-human animal abuse is now largely considered as a risk indicator for human abuse. Companion animals should be recognized as victims and witnesses of domestic violence and therefore also worthy of victimhood status.

Infographic Describes Risks for First Responders When Animal Abuse Links with Domestic Violence

Andrew Campbell, whose research in Indiana has described the additional risks faced by unsuspecting first responders arriving at a domestic violence scene where animal abuse is also present (*See the July 2019 LINK-Letter*), has created a handy infographic summarizing the statistical risk. His findings document how domestic violence offenders who also abuse animals pose significantly greater risks for weapons offenses, mental health issues, physical violence, and lethality. The infographic is available from the National Link Coalition’s [web page of Resources](#).



THE LINK... IN THE LITERATURE

Study Identifies Animal Abuse's Links with Defense Mechanisms

A new criminology study from Slovenia explores extensive intersectional and interdisciplinary research on animal abuse, its connection to subsequent adult or concurrent domestic violence and child abuse, contributing factors such as defense mechanisms, and the roles of empathy and remorse. The study says that understanding animal cruelty as a part of human violence and as a sign of serious concern for the welfare of both animals and humans is a first step towards building sustainable social policies.

Ines Vrečko, a doctoral student at the University of Ljubljana Law School, writes that animal abuse is a complex phenomenon present in both children and adults with a 50-year history of being recognized as a multi-indicator for violence. This abuse affects families and social institutions, not only harming animals but also indicating various interpersonal types of violence and individual behavioral disorders.

Citing extensive Link research, Vrečko's review study argues that acts of animal abuse should be included among some 40 defense mechanisms which have been identified as individuals' ways of relieving stress and trauma and boosting self-esteem. Three defense mechanisms which may be connected to animal abuse are:

- projection (self-deception whereby a person allocates one's own unacceptable urges to others, making the problem to be the fault of others);
- identification with the aggressor (in which a person adopts the aggressive behavior of others, such as persons repeating in adulthood the child and domestic abuse they experienced in childhood); and
- displacement (transferring of anger and aggression upon objects with no connection to frustration but rather a chain-reaction fueled by social hierarchies).

These defense mechanisms may be triggered by external and internal stress, trauma or abuse. Animals become convenient targets due to widespread cultural value systems that lower the status of animals and decrease empathy towards them.

The expanding "triad" of domestic violence affecting women, children, the elderly, and pets points to shared characteristics and similarities in victimology and also deepens our knowledge of "the multiplicity of domestic violence as well as the determinants of violence for child development," Vrečko writes.

"Although methodological issues remain, numerous studies from various disciplines are consistent in discussing its growing prevalence and its dependence on social context and links to other forms of violence, and thus point to a need for a systematic scholarly and institutional approach to this serious issue," Vrečko concludes.

-- Vrečko, I. (2019). *Criminological aspects of animal abuse: A review study. Criminology & Social Integration, 27(1), 84-99.*

THE LINK AND... ANIMAL HOARDING

Report Describes “Harm Reduction” Approach to Animal Hoarding

While much research has investigated animal hoarding in the U.S., less is known about this phenomenon in Canada, where the barriers to legal intervention in hoarding are high. Linda Jacobson, Senior Manager of Shelter Medicine at the Toronto Humane Society, told the World Small Animal Veterinary Association’s Congress that the Canadian enforcement model is slow, expensive and frequently ineffective, with high recidivism rates. The Canadian Criminal Code and provincial legislation do not specifically address animal hoarding, and neglect is viewed differently from active cruelty. There is a need to balance the criminal actions of the hoarder with their attachment to the animals and their belief that they are helping them, she said.



Linda Jacobson

She described a new, coordinated hoarding initiative implemented in Toronto based upon the underlying theme of harm reduction, a concept originating in the substance abuse field that aims to reduce the harmful consequences of behaviors without attempting to “cure” them. The campaign was developed by the Toronto City Council with Toronto Animal Services and the Toronto Humane Society. It includes animal hoarding as well as object hoarding.

She described several cases, including one involving an animal shelter, which illustrated the features of severe animal hoarding:

- The tremendous, long-term suffering it causes.
- The high costs of enforcement, medical treatment and animal care.
- The amplified harm of institutional hoarding, where the hoarder operates a shelter, sanctuary or rescue.
- The perpetuation of animal hoarding through societal inaction or enabling, particularly regulatory agencies that allow hoarders posing as shelters to continue operations.
- The difference a volunteer intermediary can make, by providing a conduit between an animal hoarder and an animal welfare organization.

Despite myriad difficulties, a harm reduction approach can work in a seemingly unmanageable situation. While shelter staff may feel frustrated with harm-reduction and expect rapid resolution of the problem, there is a “long game” in severe animal hoarding cases and interveners should not expect quick or easy resolutions, she said. They should regularly re-evaluate progress, goals and expectations.

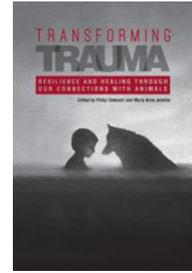


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THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS FOR OFFENDERS & VICTIMS

Animal-Assisted Interventions Help Victims Regain Resilience After Trauma

Our connections with animals are often our safest and most reliable relationships, offering unique and profound opportunities for healing after periods of hardship. Consequently, animal-assisted interventions can support victims of trauma and loss, including victims of child, domestic and elder abuse. This new compilation of chapters by 31 international experts in trauma and human-animal connection focuses on new research, models and practical applications of human-animal interventions for cross-cultural populations who have experienced trauma. Physiological and psychological trauma are explored across three broad and interconnected domains: child maltreatment and family violence; acute and post-traumatic stress, including military service, war, and developmental trauma; and times of crisis. The book offers numerous strategies to help victims build resiliency and foster healing to transform trauma.



-- Tedeschi, P., & Jenkins, M. A. (2019). *Transforming Trauma: Resilience and Healing Through Our Connections with Animals*. West Lafayette, ind.: Purdue University Press.

Journal Encourages Mandatory Psychiatric Evaluations of Offenders

Despite the shortage of therapists sufficiently trained in psychological or psychiatric interventions for animal abuse offenders and a lack of evaluation of the success of such approaches, a new law journal article is arguing that mandatory evaluations of adult and juvenile offenders would be more effective than current approaches which favor incarceration.



Ashley Kunz

Ashley Kunz, a J.D. graduate at St. Mary's University School of Law, argues that the relationship between animal abuse and violence toward people necessitates greater punishment for animal cruelty crimes. But because imprisonment alone does not always address the root of the issue, and because a person engaging in animal torture, hoarding or bestiality by definition is not conforming to societal norms of decency and often suffers from severe underlying mental illnesses, subjecting animal abusers to mandatory psychiatric evaluations would better protect people and animals from wanton, senseless brutality.

Kunz compares Texas's anti-cruelty laws with Illinois, Oregon and California. She spends considerable attention on legislative and judicial responses to crush videos, animal pornography and bestiality in the Internet Age. She argues that psychological interventions could help offenders who use gruesome tactics to abuse animals to intimidate partners in coercive domestic violence, with animal sexual abusers. and with animal hoarders to address underlying issues and prevent recidivism.

Kunz also addresses the need for mandatory reporting of suspected animal abuse by veterinarians. While veterinarians who report suspected cruelty risk alienating their clients, a mandatory reporting requirement may reduce this risk and may lead to the discovery of other related crimes.

She emphasizes that mandatory psychological evaluations for offenders not only offer treatment which incarceration alone does not provide, but also may help juvenile animal abusers to heal from their own domestic, physical or sexual abuse or bullying, thereby putting abusers on the path to recovery.

-- Kunz, A. (2019). *Skinning the cat: How mandatory psychiatric evaluations for animal cruelty offenders can prevent future violence. The Scholar: St. Mary's Law Review on Race and Social Justice, 21(1), 165-194.*

Incorporating the Human-Animal Bond in Mindfulness for Domestic Violence Survivors

Kate Hodgson, primary author of the *JAVMA* article on engaging family physicians in One Health ([See Page 6](#)), has developed several Pet Positive Exercises, pet-centric education tools that veterinarians and family physicians can use to facilitate rapport and promote client and patient self-care. In addition to a Family Mosaic with Pets genogram that describes human-animal bonds impacting clients' physical and emotional health. Hodgson has developed Calming Exercises with Pets.



These exercises incorporate pet interactions with mindfulness training to relieve stress. Patients are encouraged to select and schedule a calming activity they can engage in with their pet, such as cuddling with their cat, grooming their horse or sunbathing with their lizard. These activities enable the individual to identify a trait of their pet that they can use to refocus when their mind wanders.

Hodgson, a continuing education veterinarian in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, is curious as to whether these mindfulness exercises with pets might also be applicable to individuals in stressful situations, such as survivors of domestic violence. She has invited LINK-Letter readers who would be willing to pilot-test these exercises with their populations to contact her at kd.hodgson@utoronto.ca.

NEWS FROM LOCAL LINK COALITIONS Kentucky Social Workers Get Link Training



Joye Estes, Coordinator of the Kentucky Link Coalition (left), teamed up with Sgt. Lisa Nagle of Louisville Metro Police and representatives from Louisville Metro Animal Services to conduct an extensive Train the Trainers for social workers. The workshop covered: The Link between animal and human neglect; animal hoarding and puppy mills; the impact of animal fighting on children; bestiality and its links to human sexual abuse; and legislative needs. Kentucky is ranked #50 for animal welfare and has the nation's 2nd-highest rate of child abuse.

THE LINK... IN THE LEGISLATURES

Link Bills We're Watching

The majority of the 2019 state legislative sessions have ended, but we're following a record number of bills impacting animal abuse and its Links with other crimes. ***If you know of any such bills not included here, please let us know.***

Domestic Violence/Pet Protection Orders



Arizona HB 2161 would have allowed a petitioner to request an ex parte severe threat protection order based on the respondent's ownership of a firearm; in determining whether ground exist for an order, courts would have considered all relevant evidence including the respondent's cruel mistreatment of an animal. The order would have required the respondent to relinquish all firearms and ammunition. **The bill died when the Legislature adjourned.**



California AB 415 would expand provisions of the California Victim Compensation program to allow the costs of temporary housing for the pets of domestic violence victims to be reimbursable as part of relocation expenses. The Public Safety and Appropriations Committees have approved the bill.



Colorado HB 19-1177 creates "Extreme Risk Protection Orders" that allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a significant risk to self or others. In determining grounds for the issuance of such an order, courts can consider the person having been arrested for domestic violence and/or animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on April 12.**



Florida HB 379 and **SB 774** would have allowed courts to issue protection orders enjoining the respondent from interfering with the custody, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming, or disposing of any animals owned by the petitioner and/or respondent and minor children in the home. **The bills died when the Legislature session adjourned.**



Georgia HB 582 would have allowed courts to create a detailed "pet care plan" of responsibilities and schedules to ensure animals' best interests in marriage dissolutions. **The bill was in the House Judiciary committee when the Assembly adjourned.**



Indiana HB 1615 amends existing provisions in IC 31-9-2-42 which include "beating" an animal without justification within the definition of "domestic or family violence" to read "abusing" an animal. The bill passed both houses overwhelmingly and **was signed into law on April 29.**



Kentucky HB 25 would have: prohibited pretrial diversion for a person charged with torture of a dog or cat; made torture of a dog or cat a Class D felony; and prohibited early release for those who torture a dog or cat as a way to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family member or member of a dating relationship. **The bill died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Michigan HB 4498 would enjoin and restrain respondents served with personal protection orders, which include protection of pets, from possessing, using, transporting, selling, purchasing, carrying, shipping, receiving, or distributing a firearm or ammunition. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Mississippi SB 2014 would have prohibited respondents from removing, damaging, hiding, harming, or disposing of any companion animal owned or possessed by a person protected by the order. The court could have also authorized the removal of a companion animal from the respondent. The bill passed the Senate 51-0 but **died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri HB 370 would have added “intimidation” – injuring, killing, or threat to injure or kill an animal if such act is done to coerce, control, punish, or be an act of revenge against a household member – as grounds for a court to issue a protection order. **The bill died in the Judiciary Committee.**



New Hampshire HB 361 adds animals to the tangible property whose disposition may be determined by courts during divorce or annulment settlements; this property settlement “shall address the care and ownership of the parties' animals, taking into consideration the animals' wellbeing.” **The bill was signed into law.**



New Jersey A 5549 and **S 3886** would prohibit persons undergoing divorce from surrendering a dog or cat to an animal shelter without the consent of the other party. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources and Senate Environment & Energy Committees.



New Mexico HB 52 would have defined an act of animal abuse intended to coerce, control or intimidate a domestic violence victim as an act of domestic violence. The bill **died in the Senate.**



New York A 588 would create a felony crime of animal cruelty to companion animals that is intended to threaten, intimidate or harass a family or household member, with additional penalties if committed in the presence of a minor child. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 767 and **S 1251** would amend language in pet protection orders to allow the court to grant petitioners exclusive care, custody and control of animals kept by the petitioner, respondent or child, and to order the respondent to stay away from, take, transfer, conceal, harm, or dispose of the animal. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Rules Committees.



New York A 1097 and **S 6222** would require courts to consider the best interest of companion animals in awarding their possession in a divorce or separation proceeding. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.



North Dakota HB 1537 would have allowed family members to file a petition for a “public safety petition order” prohibiting the respondent from having or obtaining a firearm if the respondent is believed to pose a risk of injury to self or others; among the criteria to establish such risk is a history of violence or cruelty toward an animal. **The bill died in the House.**



Pennsylvania SB 90 and **HB 1075** would create “Extreme Risk Protection Orders” that would allow courts to prohibit persons from having or obtaining a firearm upon a finding that the person presents a risk of suicide or of causing death or serious bodily injury to another person. Factors that could help make such a determination include a history of domestic abuse and/or animal cruelty. **HB 1028** would allow household members to file a petition for a “Firearm Restraining Order” prohibiting a respondent from having firearms, weapons or ammunition if the respondent presents an immediate and present danger to physical safety, as represented by acts of domestic violence or killing or threatening to kill pets or other animals. The bills are in their respective Judiciary Committees.



Rhode Island H 5023 and **SB 225** now allow courts to provide for the safety and welfare of all household animals and pets in protection orders for adult and child victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation. **The measure was signed by the Governor on June 28** and takes effect immediately.



Rhode Island H 5483 and **H 5822** would allow the district court to determine the ownership of a pet between “formerly cohabiting parties” based on what would be in the pet’s best interests. Both bills were held by the House Judiciary Committee for further study.



Texas SB 194 adds “indecent assault,” which encompasses numerous actions of illegal sexual gratification, to the list of crimes for which victims can obtain a protection order that includes harming or threatening the victim’s animals. Such pet protection orders are already in place for victims of domestic or family violence, sexual assault or abuse, and stalking. **The measure was signed into law on June 14 and takes effect Sept. 1.**



Texas HB 3021 would have directed the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to provide information the public about provisions that allow pets to be included in protective orders. The bill died **when the legislature adjourned.**



Texas HB 2516 would have added cruelty to non-livestock animals with the intent to coerce, control, punish or intimidate another family member to the definition of “family violence”. The bill was in the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



Utah SB 45 defines an act of aggravated animal cruelty intended to coerce, control or intimidate a spouse or partner as an act of domestic violence as well as animal cruelty. **The bill was signed into law on March 27.**



Virginia HB 2642 and **SB 1276** would have made any animal cruelty violation a Class 6 felony if carried out with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member. **The bills died in the Senate.**



Wyoming HB 235 will allow courts to issue protection orders that grant sole possession of any household pets kept by the petitioner, the respondent, or a minor child to the petitioner “for the purpose of protecting the household pet.” The order will also order the respondent to not have any contact with the animal and to not abduct, remove, conceal, or dispose of the household pet. **The bill became law on March 8 and took effect July 1.**



Animal Abuse and Elder Abuse



Maryland HB 561 would have added the crime of psychological abuse of a vulnerable adult to include the destruction or harm of an animal owned by the vulnerable adult. **The bill was withdrawn from the Judiciary Committee.**



New York A 1153 would bar landlords from denying residential occupancy or evicting persons over age 62 solely for keeping a common household pet. Property owners could establish reasonable rules for the care and handling of pets. The bill is in the Assembly Housing Committee.

Animal-Assisted Interventions for Crime Victims and Witnesses



New Hampshire HB 513 would allow victims and witnesses of child abuse and sexual abuse, and persons with intellectual disabilities, to have a comforting facility dog or therapy animal accompany them to court. The court would have to consider the age of the victim or witness currently and at the time of the incident, the interests of the victim or witness, the rights of the parties to the litigation, and any other factor deemed relevant. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



New Jersey A3729 would allow assistance dogs to be used to help facilitate the taking of testimony of victims or witnesses in open court in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Animal Abuse and Child Maltreatment



Colorado HB 19-1144 would have allowed courts to permit a child witness, as in a case of child sexual abuse, to be accompanied by a court facility dog while testifying. **That bill was postponed indefinitely by the House Judiciary Committee.** A more expansive measure, **HB 19-1220**, which allows any witness, regardless of age, to be accompanied by a court facility dog while testifying, **was signed into law on May 1.**



New York A 831 would increase the penalty for aggravated cruelty to animals from two to four years when the crime is committed in the presence of a child. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York A 955 would make it a misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine, to knowingly cause a minor child under age 16 to attend an animal fight. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.



New York A 1211 and **S 3415** would permit individuals already mandated to report suspected child abuse to report suspected animal cruelty, notwithstanding other provisions of confidentiality, if the act were committed by a person also suspected of child abuse or maltreatment. Individuals already permitted to report suspected child abuse (which includes everyone in New York State) would also be permitted to report suspected animal cruelty. Reports made in good faith would be immune from civil and criminal liability. **S 3415** passed the Senate and both measures are in the Assembly Children & Families Committee.



New York A 2664 and **S 3327** would amend the definition of child endangerment and other related statutes to include committing acts of animal cruelty in the presence of a child and to strengthen penalties for existing animal cruelty charges when committed in the presence of a child. The bills are in the Assembly Codes and Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committees.



North Carolina H 507 would make it a felony to bring a minor under the age of 18 to a dog- or cockfight. The bill passed the House 113-0 and is in the Senate Rules & Operations Committee.



Washington HB 1235 would have created a new crime of “providing a harmful material to a minor” that includes bestiality and animal mutilation, dismemberment, rape, or torture. The bill was in the House Committee on Public Safety **when the legislature adjourned.**

Animal Abuse and Other Crimes



Massachusetts S.1027 would allow juvenile courts to prosecute youths for inflicting or threat of serious bodily harm to a person or an animal. The bill is in the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.



Mississippi HB 843 and **HB 984** would have required law enforcement officials investigating animal cruelty to use a standardized form. **The bills died when the legislature adjourned.**



New Jersey A3693 and **S2239** would add individuals convicted of animal cruelty to the list of offenders who are prohibited from possessing a firearm and obtaining a permit to purchase a handgun. The bills are in the Assembly Judiciary and Senate Law & Public Safety Committees.



New Jersey A 1334 and **S 3294** would define the theft or release of an animal during a burglary as animal cruelty. The bills are in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



New York A 1069 would add a felony conviction for aggravated animal cruelty, animal fighting, poisoning, or injuring a service animal or racing animal, to the “serious offense” which would affect the ability of someone to possess a firearm. The bill is in the Assembly Codes Committee.



New York A 1834 and **S 186** (“Kirby and Quigley’s Law”) would expand aggravated cruelty to animals to include harm to a companion animal during the commission of a felony. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture Committee and the Senate Rules Committee.



New York A 2509 and **S 609** would allow animal fighting charges to be eligible for an enterprise corruption charge. Both bills are in the Assembly Codes Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 353 would add animal fighting to the definition of corrupt organizations’ “racketeering activities.” The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 1071 would add sentencing enhancements to crimes of burglary and criminal trespass if a domestic animal is killed or harmed. The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Washington HB 1541 would have made it illegal for offenders convicted of 2nd-degree animal cruelty to possess a firearm. The bill **died when the legislature adjourned.**



What is The LINK?

Legislation...

Intervention...

Networking...

Knowledge...

*...to protect **ALL** vulnerable members of the family*

Animal Sexual Abuse



California AB 611 would: close loopholes to make any sexual act with an animal a crime; authorize the seizure of animals in such cases; expand the ban of owning or keeping animals to animal sexual abusers; and require veterinarians to report suspected animal sexual abuse as they are already mandated to do for animal abuse or cruelty. The bill passed the Assembly and is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.



Hawai'i HB 24 would have added a new crime of sexual assault on an animal with eight specific actions considered illegal. It would have been a Class C felony unless a minor were involved, in which case it would be a Class B felony. Offenders would have had to surrender or forfeit all animals to a humane society; pay the organization for the animals' care; obtain psychiatric or psychological treatment; and be prohibited from owning, keeping, residing, working, or volunteering with animals for at least five years. **The House Agriculture Committee recommended it be deferred.**



Kentucky SB 67 creates a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to establish the felony offense of sexual crimes against an animal, and amend KRS 436.605 to add sexual crimes against an animal to the list of crimes for which an animal control officer may utilize peace officer powers. **The bill was signed into law** on March 26.



Kentucky HB 98 would have created a new section of KRS Chapter 525 to prohibit cruelty to equines including situations involving abuse, neglect and sexual contact. **The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee when the Legislature adjourned.**



Maryland HB 641 amends §10-606 of the Annotated Code of Maryland defining Aggravated Cruelty to Animals to include "sexual contact with an animal." It further defines aggravated cruelty to animals as a crime of violence. Persons convicted of sexual contact with an animal will be included among Tier III sex offenders. **HB 641 was signed into law by the Governor on April 18.** The new law takes effect on Oct. 1, 2019.



Massachusetts S.891 would replace the archaic "Crime against nature" – the "abominable and detestable crime against nature, either with mankind or with a beast" – with a new crime of a "sexual act on an animal." The bill is in the Judiciary Committee.



Pennsylvania HB 1312 would deny offenders convicted of sexual intercourse with animals the right of having their criminal records expunged. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



West Virginia HB 2792 would have prohibited activities connected with sexual abuse of an animal; establish criminal penalties; and provide for forfeiture of animals, payment of associated costs, and restrictions on owning animals upon conviction. The bill was in the House Judiciary Committee **when the regular legislative session ended.**



Wisconsin AB 152 and **SB 139** would increase penalties for bestiality from current misdemeanor levels to a variety of felony charges for sexual contact with an animal; advertising, harboring, transporting, providing or transporting animals for sexual contact; and creating, distributing or possessing animal pornography. Penalties would be further enhanced if a child is involved. The bill would also require offenders to register as a sex offender; current law only permits courts to order such registration. The bills are in the respective Committees on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

Psychological Evaluation of Offenders



California SB 580 would amend current procedures requiring animal abuse offenders on probation to complete counseling for behavior or conduct disorders, to instead undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation, treatment, and a responsible animal owner education course as the court deems appropriate. The bill is in the Public Safety Committee.



Colorado HB 19-1092 allows courts to order mental health treatment to adult and juvenile offenders convicted of cruelty to animals; current law only allows courts to impose anger management treatment. The bill also requires courts to impose a ban of three to five years upon a felony conviction for adults and permits such a restriction for juvenile offenders. **The bill was signed into law on May 1.**



Mississippi HB 984 would have required offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to a dog or cat to undergo psychiatric or psychological evaluation or counseling. **The bill died in the House Judiciary Committee.**



Missouri HB 111 would have allowed courts to require adults and juveniles convicted of animal abuse to undergo psychological or psychiatric evaluation and treatment; these would be mandatory if the offense were torture or mutilation, or upon a second conviction for animal abuse. *The bill also addressed Cross-Reporting*. It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**



New Jersey currently requires juveniles (but not adults) convicted of animal cruelty to undergo mental health counseling. Five bills would expand that to include adults as well. **A3049** and **S1636 (“Shyanne’s Law”)** would require a mental health evaluation for juvenile and adult animal cruelty offenders, to be followed by mental health counseling if warranted by the evaluation. The bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Health, Human Services & Senior Citizens Committee. **A3856** and **S2165** would require both juveniles and adults to undergo mental health counseling; those bills are in the Assembly Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Economic Growth Committee. **S2749** would likewise require mental health counseling for all persons convicted of animal cruelty; it is in the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.



New York A 984 and **S 385** would require courts to impose mandatory psychiatric evaluation and treatment for juvenile and adult offenders convicted of aggravated cruelty to animals. **S 384** would require juvenile offenders to undergo psychiatric evaluation and treatment where necessary. The Assembly bill is in the Agriculture Committee. The Senate bills are in the Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.



New York A 987 and **S 2007** would prohibit a person convicted of “Buster’s Law” from having a companion animal unless authorized by court order after they complete appropriate psychiatric or psychological testing. **A 987** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee; **S 2007** is in the Senate Domestic Animal Welfare Committee.

Animal Hoarding



New Jersey S 2242 and **A3762** would define animal hoarding as possessing too many animals with inadequate care which leads to death, bodily injury or other serious adverse health consequences, a 4th-degree crime. Courts would be required to order psychological evaluation and counseling for convicted offenders. The bills are in the Senate Environment & Energy Committee and the Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.



New York A 261 would criminalize companion animal hoarding of more than 25 pets in conditions likely to jeopardize the health and well-being of animals and people in the home. Offenders would be required to undergo mental health evaluation and may have to complete treatment and counseling. The bill is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

Cross-Reporting



Florida HB 7125 allows veterinarians to report suspected animal abuse to law enforcement or certified animal control officers without notice to or authorization from the client unless the suspected violation occurs at a commercial food-processing animal operation on agricultural land. **The measure was signed into law.**



Illinois SB 1778 would designate domestic violence crisis line and program personnel and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. The bill passed both the Senate and the House with extensive amendments and was sent to the Governor on June 28.



Iowa SF 3 would have mandated veterinarians who “conclude that an animal is being subjected to animal cruelty” to complete an animal cruelty report and submit it to a local law enforcement agency. Individuals who report, cooperate with or assist in such investigations in good faith would have been immune from civil and criminal liability. The bill was in the Senate Judiciary Committee **when the legislature adjourned.**



Michigan SB 352 would require Child Protective Services workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect to an animal control or law enforcement officer, with immunity from civil and criminal liability. Failure to report would be a crime, with escalating penalties based on whether the animal abuse is a misdemeanor or a felony. The bill is in the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee.



Minnesota HF 1530/SF 1517 would have granted veterinarians, who are already mandated to report suspected animal cruelty, immunity from civil and criminal liability for making such a report in good faith. **HF 1530** was in the Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division; **SF 1517** was in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee, **when the legislature adjourned.**



Missouri HB 111 would have granted immunity from civil liability to all persons, including veterinarians, teachers and school personnel, who report suspected animal abuse to a law enforcement agency in good faith. *The bill also addressed Psychological Evaluations.* It was approved by the Rules and Crime Prevention & Public Safety Committees but **died when the Legislature adjourned.**



New York A 1170 would require veterinarians who reasonably and in good faith suspect that a companion animal is the victim of cruelty, abuse or neglect to report the incident and disclose necessary records to law enforcement and humane investigators. Currently, N.Y. veterinarians are permitted to make such reports. Both the existing and proposed law accord veterinarians who report in good faith – to protect the health and welfare of the patient or the public – immunity from civil and criminal liability. The bill is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education.



Ohio HB 33 would require veterinarians, children’s services agencies, adult protective services, counselors, social workers, and marriage and family therapists to immediately report suspected animal abuse in situations where a child or older adult resides with the alleged violator. Good-faith reporters would be immune from civil and criminal liability; however, penalties and court costs would be assessed if reports are made maliciously and such penalties would go towards providing funding for domestic violence shelters to assist victims in finding temporary shelter or other support for their companion animals. The bill would also add dog wardens and animal control officers as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. The measure is in the House Criminal Justice Committee.



Oregon HB 2227 adds animal control officers to the list of individuals mandated to report child abuse. **The measure was signed into law** by the Governor on May 22.



Oregon HB 2500 allows veterinarians addressing the effects of animal abuse to sue the person inflicting the abuse. Plaintiffs who prevail will be able to collect compensatory damages for expenses incurred in providing veterinary care, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. **The bill was signed into law and becomes effective Jan. 1, 2020.**



Rhode Island S 82 would amend the law which permits veterinarians, technicians, and animal shelter and kennel personnel to report suspected animal abuse, to mandate such reporting with immunity from lawsuits if made in good faith. The measure would also impose a \$500 fine for failing to report. The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended it be held for further study.



Texas SB 1750 and **HB 2787** would have allowed veterinarians to report suspected animal cruelty to appropriate governmental entities without violating veterinarian/client confidentiality. Both bills died **when the legislature adjourned.**



Washington HB 1919 expands provisions against animal fighting to include fighting paraphernalia and mutilating or abandoning fighting animals, but a requirement that the Washington State Patrol establish and maintain a statewide toll-free hotline to allow the public to report animal abuse **was deleted in a substitute bill.** The deleted section would have facilitated community reporting and law enforcement response to animal abuse by creating a central repository of incidents of animal abuse, neglect fighting, and sexual abuse for inclusion in the FBI’s National Incident Based Reporting System. The State Patrol would have referred incidents to local law enforcement agencies for investigation as appropriate. The animal fighting provisions were **signed into law by the Governor on April 29 and take effect July 28.**



“CASA for Animals”



Illinois HB 1631 would have allowed pro bono attorneys or law student advocates to be court-appointed to represent the health or safety of a cat or dog in judicial proceedings. The bill was in the House Rules Committee [when the legislature adjourned](#).



Maine LD 1442 would allow a court to appoint volunteer advocates for justice in animal cruelty cases, either under its own initiative or upon the request of a party or counsel. Advocates could monitor the proceedings, consult with individuals and records relevant to the case, and present appropriate information and recommendations. The bill passed both the House and Senate and is being held by the Governor for review at the beginning of the next legislative session on Sept. 19.



Michigan HB 4592 would allow courts to appoint pro bono lawyers or law students as advocates to represent the interests of animals in criminal prosecutions. The bill is in the House Judiciary Committee.



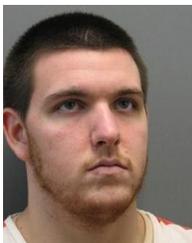
New Jersey A 4840 and **S 3322** would authorize courts to appoint advocates in criminal cases that affect the welfare or care of cats or dogs. Advocates would monitor the case, attend hearings, consult with relevant individuals, review records, and present information and recommendations to the court in the animals’ best interests. The bills are in the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees.



New York A 25, S 3027 and **A 702** would create court-appointed advocates for animals. **A 25** and **S 3027** are in the Judiciary Committees; **A 702** is in the Assembly Agriculture Committee.

THE LINK... IN THE NEWS

Dog-Stabbing Bomb-Maker Gets Two Life Sentences for Murdering His Father



A man who served jail time in 2014 for stabbing a dog in a case that involved suspected terrorism and bomb-making materials was sentenced to two consecutive life sentences for murder and arson in the 2017 death of his father. Michael Bowles, now 22, of Lucketts, Va., received the sentences on May 22 in Loudoun County Circuit Court for fatally shooting his father with a sawed-off shotgun and then burning down his parents’ home. [Loudoun Now](#) reported that the sentence came after a plea agreement that dropped several other charges. The [Loudoun Times-Mirror](#) reported **Michael Bowles** that Bowles had told a high school friend two days before the murder that he needed a human sacrifice to bring about the resurrection of Christ. Bowles was [arrested in October, 2014](#) for stabbing the family’s American bulldog in the neck. Loudoun County Chief Animal Control Officer Chris Brosan tells *The LINK-Letter* that federal agencies became involved with the dog-stabbing case when items associated with bomb-making and terrorism were found.



Joyce McKinney

Pit Bull Advocate Charged with Vehicular Manslaughter

A pit bull advocate with a checkered history of bizarre crimes, who once spent thousands of dollars to have her dog cloned, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, vehicular manslaughter and hit-and-run driving for allegedly twice running over a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor on a street in Los Angeles. [Animals 24-7](#) reported that Joyce Bernann McKinney, 68, was charged in the 5:30 a.m. June 17 incident that killed Gennady Bolofsky, originally from Ukraine. Surveillance footage reportedly showed McKinney's pickup truck knocking Bolofsky down, stopping, then running over him again.

Detectives arrested McKinney, who was living out of a cockroach-infested truck near the Burbank airport. [Animals 24-7](#) reported that McKinney had been profiled by mass media more than 150 times in 2008 for traveling to South Korea where she reportedly paid \$50,000 to have her pit bull "Booger" cloned from his frozen ear. Media had reported that McKinney had been named Miss World/Wyoming in 1972 and participated in the 1973 Miss World-USA pageant.

Several years later she reportedly became infatuated with a Mormon missionary whom she pursued to England, where she allegedly chained him to a bed with mink-lined handcuffs and forced him to have sex with her for two days between Bible readings. He eventually escaped and McKinney jumped bail and fled. She later reportedly posed as a nun and then topless for magazines in Atlanta, where she jumped bail again. She allegedly stalked the same missionary again in 1984 in Salt Lake City.

In 1993 she disguised herself with a wig and sought work at the Washington County, Tenn. Animal Shelter where she was charged with attempting to break into the shelter to rescue several pit bulls that were scheduled to be euthanized for attacking a couple. That case was dropped in 1997, according to the Johnson City, Tenn. *Press Chronicle*.

In 2004, she was charged with conspiracy to commit aggravated burglary, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and speeding for allegedly recruiting a 15-year-old boy to raise funds to buy a prosthetic limb for a three-legged horse. Again, she failed to appear in court.

The Bristol, Tenn. *Herald Courier* reported that in 2008 she was charged with threatening another woman and for alleged burglary.

She later got into protracted battles with genetics labs in South Korea and Texas, trying to win custody of five pit bulls and to recover Booger's frozen ear.

Suspected Dogfighting Raid Nets Weapons and Narcotics

A raid on a Macon, Ga. residence for a suspected dogfighting operation also turned up illegal weapons and narcotics. The Bibb County sheriff's Special Investigations Unit charged Jonriquez Jermaine Grayer, 22, with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and seven counts of dogfighting. He was being held without bond and seven dogs were removed from the property, according to [WMAZ-TV](#).



Jonriquez Grayer

Teen Accused of Setting Chicken on Fire Also Charged with Child Sex Assault

One of three Texas teens who were indicted on felony animal cruelty charges for allegedly setting a chicken on fire and cheering while it burned to death has also been charged with a child sex crime.

[KTXS-TV](#) reported that a Taylor County grand jury indicted Jaden Jonathan Blake, 18, of Wylie, Texas on the sex assault charge involving a girl who said Blake had taken her clothes off and assaulted her twice. Earlier this year, Blake, Kallan Jack Christopher, 17, and an unnamed 16-year-old were indicted on animal cruelty charges after a school resource officer reportedly saw a social media video of a chicken being set on fire. Court documents identified Christopher as the one who set the bird on fire and Blake as the one who shot the video. In the video, one of the teen screams, “Mr. Chicken’s gonna die!” followed by “Oh my God” and laughter. Police said Christopher said the chicken was his and that he set it on fire using lighter fluid.



Jaden Blake (left) & Kallan Christopher

Burglars Attack Dog Protecting Her Pups During Brutal Home Invasion

Police in Manchester, UK arrested a burglary suspect who broke into an apartment, attacked the resident, ransacked the property for cash, keys and a phone, and then used a machete to slash a dog who tried to protect her six newborn puppies. The pups were recovered two miles away and their mother, “Zena,” was said to be “over the moon” at the return of her pups. Zena suffered a deep gash on her face and the owner suffered defensive wounds to his hands and forearms. Detective Constable Nick Kershaw told [The Independent](#), “This was an incredibly callous robbery, where the offenders showed absolutely no regard for the safety of anyone, human or animal, who was present at the time.”



Zena was recovering

Man Charged with Attempted Murder in Drive-by Shooting that Killed Dog



Tianté Winn

Tianté Nathaniel Winn, 21, of Empire, Calif., was charged with attempted murder in connection with a 4 a.m. drive-by shooting in Modesto that injured two people and killed a dog. The [Modesto Bee](#) reported that someone from Winn’s vehicle is believed to have shot into the victims’ vehicle. A man suffered major injuries but survived and a woman suffered minor injuries. The dog, however, had to be euthanized. It was unclear whether Winn would also be charged with animal cruelty.

Convicted Sex Offender Charged with Abusing Kitten



Brian Kim

A Thurston County, Wash. sex offender was charged with first-degree animal cruelty for allegedly yelling at a kitten, squeezing it, trying to bite it, and slamming it down on the floor of a store. Brian L. Kim, 49, has a criminal history that includes convictions for raping a man with Down syndrome and strangling a woman. [The Olympian](#) reported that a store employee feared Kim would kill the kitten, which he was also allegedly using to lure a woman to go with him. A search warrant removed the kitten during Kim’s weekly sex offender check-in; a veterinarian said the kitten had a concussion or brain swelling.



Jonathan Aldama

SPCA Warns About Convicted Opossum Torturer

A police crime lab in Lynwood, Calif., matched DNA found on a noose used to hang an opossum that was found stabbed, beaten and burned with a convicted felon who was later found to have a stash of weapons in his bedroom. Jonathan Aldama, who lived only 400 feet from where spcaLA officers found the opossum, pled no-contest to 3 years felony probation and 367 days in jail with credit for time served. He must undergo mental health counseling and can never own animals again SPCA Capt. Cesar Perea told [Fox11 News](#) that this was not only one of the most sadistic cases he'd ever seen but also that Aldama had 15-20 sharpened and handmade weapons in his bedroom. A large amount of blood was also found on and around the weapons.

“Not only did he admit to the crime that we were investigating, but he admitted to doing that two prior times, to torturing and killing animals. He had some really bizarre comments that he made that one of the opossums was calling to him, that he came over to try to help it,” Perea said.

“He’s young, and unfortunately he’s had a lot of opportunity to practice this, so if there is no real intervention somewhere in his life then most definitely we’ll be seeing him doing this to humans at a later time,” Perea warned.

You Can't Make This Stuff Up...

Manhunt Ends After Naked Suspect in Dog Stabbing and Burglaries Found Asleep Under Bed

A police manhunt for an Alabama suspect wanted for a traffic violation came to a bizarre and unfortunate end when a homeowner found the man sleeping naked under a bed after he allegedly stabbed the homeowner’s dog to death. [WSFA-TV](#) reported that when Dothan police tried to stop a truck driven by Jason Dewayne Creel, 44, he hit the gas and fled hauling a utility trailer loaded with lawn mowers, tools, TVs, and electronics stolen in recent burglaries of a church and other locations. After driving through the yard of a home, he abandoned the truck and fled on foot, triggering two county sheriffs’ offices, Alabama state troopers and an aviation support unit joining in the manhunt.



Jason Creel

While the search went on, Creel apparently broke into a home, stripped down, raided the refrigerator for lunch, and logged on to the family’s computer to view online porn. Apparently fatigued from his day’s work, he crawled under a bed to take a nap, where the homeowner saw his feet sticking out. When he woke up, it was to the face of a Dothan K9 police dog who bit him on the bicep.

The family dog named “Buddy” was missing, however, and was eventually found under a deck having been stabbed multiple times in the throat with a pocket knife. Creel was identified as a habitual criminal and had served time in prison. He was charged with aggravated animal cruelty, theft, receiving stolen property, and burglary, and other charges were pending.

LINK TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Aug. 21 – Denver, Colo.: Phil Arkow will present on “Animal Abuse, Animal Hoarding and Elder Abuse: Challenges and Strategies for APS” at the 30th [Annual National Adult Protective Services Association Conference](#).

Aug. 27 (online): Terry Mills of the ASPCA will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “What Dog Fighters Don’t Want You to Know: Considerations for the Justice Professional.”

Sept. 9 – Edinburgh, Scotland: Phil Arkow will be the keynote speaker at the [Scottish SPCA and University of Edinburgh](#) conference on “The Links between Animal Cruelty, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Human Violence: Research and Practice.” Other Link speakers will include Paula Boyden, Jo Williams, and Mike Flynn.

Sept. 9 – 10: Albuquerque, N. Mex.: The [New Mexico Conference on The Link](#) between Animal Abuse and Human Violence will feature multiple Link authorities in a two-day event at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. John Thompson will be the keynote speaker.

Sept. 12 – Norman, Okla.: “Removing the Pet Barrier” will be presented at the Oklahoma Attorney General’s [Partners for Change Conference on Domestic & Sexual Violence and Stalking](#). Speakers will include Kathleen Romero of the Oklahoma Link Coalition and representatives from Domestic Violence Intervention Services, the Women’s Resource Center and the Palomar Family Justice Center.

Sept. 12 (online): Claudine Wilkins will conduct a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Prosecutor & Law Enforcement Tools in Animal Abuse Cases,” including cross-reporting mechanisms.

Sept. 13 – Dallas, Texas: Sandra Brackenridge will present on “Crisis Intervention, Workplace Stress and Compassion Fatigue: Veterinary Social Work” at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Sept. 16 – Quedgeley, Gloucester, U.K.: [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

Sept. 18-19 – Albuquerque, N. Mex.: 10 world-renowned speakers will be featured at Positive Links’ biennial [New Mexico Conference on The Link between Animal Abuse and Human Violence](#).

Sept. 19 (online): Allie Phillips will conduct a [webinar](#) for Canadian humane and animal protection professionals about “Sheltering Animals & Families Together (SAF-T): A Life-Saving Initiative for Canada.”

Sept. 19 (online): Richard Samuels and Micelle Welch will present a Justice Clearinghouse [webinar](#) on “Advanced Cockfighting Investigations and Prosecutions.”

Sept. 19 – West Palm Beach, Fla.: The [South Florida Link Coalition](#) will meet with community partners to review recent outcomes and conduct strategic planning for the future.

Sept. 22 – Falls Church, Va.: Deborah L’Heureux will present on “Animal Cruelty and The Link” at the [VCA SouthPaws CE conference](#).

Sept. 24 – Saskatoon, Sask., Canada: Leanne Sillers and Tami Vangool will present “Safe and Secure: How Animal Safekeeping Programs Assist the Victims of Violence” at the Saskatchewan SPCA’s [2019 Conference](#) on Making Connections: The Human-Animal Bond.

Oct. 1 (online): Jessica Rock will conduct a [Justice Clearinghouse](#) webinar on “Creating an Animal Abuse Task Force: How Law Enforcement Can Work with Local resources to Investigate and Prosecute Crimes” on behalf of the National Sheriffs’ Association and the National Animal Care & Control Association.

Oct. 11 – Dallas, Texas: Chelsea Rider will present on “The Nexus of Animal Cruelty and Serious Crime” at a 3-hour CEU training event hosted by the [North Texas Link Coalition](#).

Oct. 14-15 – Sydney, Australia: Numerous presentations will discuss cross-disciplinary collaborations that foster the Links between animal welfare and human well-being at [One Welfare Conference II](#).

Oct. 18-20 – Alpharetta, Ga.: The [21st Annual Animal Protection Conference & Expo](#) will feature several presenters discussing Link topics including “Human Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Gangs, and the Link to Animal Abuse,” “Collateral Crimes and Animal Abuse,” and “Animal Cruelty Task Forces.”

Oct. 24 – Plano, Texas: Phil Arkow and Felicia Kerney will present at the 17th Annual [North Texas Facing Family Violence conference](#) on “The Cruelty Connection: Breaking the Cycles of Domestic Violence by Preventing Animal Abuse” The conference’s theme is “All Systems Go: Working Together – Family Violence Across the Lifespan.”

Oct. 27 – Cambridge, U.K.: [The Links Group UK](#) will conduct a training for the BSAVA.

Nov. 3 – Madison, Wisc.: Melinda Merck will lecture on veterinary forensics and The Link at the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostics Laboratory’s [veterinary forensics seminar](#).

Nov. 8 – Dallas, Texas: Cody Pinkham will present “The Battersers’ Intervention and Prevention Program” at the [North Texas Link Coalition](#) meeting.

Nov. 13-15 – Phoenix, Ariz.: The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, in partnership with the Animal Legal Defense Fund, will host the [9th National Animal Cruelty Prosecution Conference](#).

Nov. 21-22 – Toronto, Ont., Canada: The [Canadian Violence Link Conference](#) will examine the Link between violence to humans and animals, look at the vulnerabilities among both populations, and explore how various sectors can learn from each other and gather the necessary tools to stop the cycle of violence.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL LINK COALITION



The National Link Coalition is an informal, multi-disciplinary collaborative network of individuals and organizations in human services and animal welfare who address the intersections between animal abuse, domestic violence, child maltreatment and elder abuse through research, public policy, programming and community awareness. We believe that human and animal well-being are inextricably intertwined and that the prevention of family and community violence can best be achieved through partnerships representing multi-species perspectives.

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