

# Violence Link Training

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# INTRODUCTION

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# WHAT IS THE VIOLENCE LINK

What is known as the Violence Link is the link between animal abuse and human abuse. It is important to note this is **NOT** animal abuse training. **It is to recognize human abuse.**

It has been established through decades of evidence-based research that where there is animal abuse there is a high probability a violent crime has or will be committed on a human. This research is supported by the CACP, FBI, IACP, and various crime studies by Universities.



“All animals and humans residing in a home where both animal abuse and domestic violence are known to co-occur are at a substantially heightened risk of suffering **severe or fatal injury**”

*Campbell et al, 2018; Ascione et al, 2017*

*Domestic Violence Death Review*

*Committee now looks for animal abuse*



“Women who reported more frequent and severe animal abuse also reported more severe physical violence at the hand of their partner” *Barrett et al (2017) and Ascione et al (2007)*



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**Partner**  
 89% IPV cases involved animal abuse.  
 43% - 74% of IPV victims in Canada report they either don't report, or stay in dangerous domestic situations to protect their pets  
 (Daniell, 2001; McIntosh, 2004; Crawford & Clarke, 2012)

**Gangs**  
 82% arrested for animal abuse had prior convictions for assault, weapons, or drug offences  
 (Chicago Crime Commission)

**Youth**  
 Youth who engage in repeated childhood animal cruelty are more likely to engage in recurrent violent crimes as adults - robbery, sexual assault, aggravated assault, and murder (Overton et al., 2012)

**District Investigations**  
 In an analysis of FBI reports, 96% of animal cruelty offenders had other documented criminal offences  
 (Levitt et al., 2016)

**Major Crime**  
 FBI accepts animal cruelty as a indicator for serial killers  
 43% of school shooters were found to have committed animal abuse  
 (Arluke & Madfis, 2014)

**Forensic Identification**  
 Dr. Melinda Merck (Vet) solved cases involving crimes from pedophilia to drug dealing using forensics on animals (The Role of Vet Forensics -IACP)

**SACA**  
 Int'l journal of Law & Psychiatry – 1/2 of rapists and 1/3 of child molesters committed animal abuse during adolescence. Pedophiles use animals to lure and/or groom their victims -

# RESEARCH

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# Partner Abuse

Definition: IPV (intimate partner violence) refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and **controlling behaviour**.

IPV knows no boundaries in terms of socio-economic status, cultural background, sexual identity or preference in gender relationships.



## Context of IPV

The consequences of experiencing IPV vary, but can last across the lifetime and may include:

- Mental health issues
- Aggression
- Physical health issues (broken bones, etc)
- Suicide
- unwanted pregnancies
- alcohol/drug use
- intergenerational violence
- chronic disease

**Partner abuse crosses all socio-economic groups.** Judges, CEOs of large corporations, and police officers have been victims of partner abuse.

It is important that police have a shared knowledge and understanding of IPV and its complexities (ie **victim reluctance and vulnerabilities, vulnerable groups, barriers/challenges and risk factors**), in order to obtain the best possible outcome for all individuals with in the family and/or relationship.





# We need every profession to be intuitive - Pick out cries for help

56% of domestic abuse victims will not report domestic violence but they will report other crimes and they will take pets to Veterinarians.

Victims of partner assault or elder abuse will not always start by telling you about the abuse, but they will talk about their pet or children.



If you are being abuse, or you suspect someone you know is being abuse, being informed can prevent further victimization.

**How to do this in relation to the violence link?** Know these evidenced based facts:

1. **56%** of women stay or will not report abusive situations to protect their pets – **know the shelters who will take both the victim & their pet, or a service that will care of the victim's pet until the victim finds alternative housing;** (Interval House, Safe Pets Ottawa)
2. A woman whose partner had threatened pets was 5X more likely to experience domestic physical violence in the relationship. **Not just idle threats. Report to Police or talk to VCU.**
3. **Pets are used to coerce, humiliate and control their victims.** Over **71%** of female victims of IPV who own pets reported that their batterers had harmed, killed or threatened animals to coerce, control and humiliate them. **If an animal is being abused/neglected a human may be being abused. Talk to VCU or police.**
4. 80% of victims of IPV in homes with animal abuse reported concerns that they will be killed, and thus **are considered at extremely high risk compared to households without animal abuse: Again talk to VCU or report to police** (*Campbell et al,*



## OTHER IPV FACTORS:

Of the children exposed to IPV, 66% have also been exposed to pet abuse. 51% said they protected one of their pets from being hurt. **Children witnessing animal cruelty experiences significantly more risk of adolescent or adult interpersonal violence, and they experience more mental health issues.**

The same research that revealed 56% of IPV victims stay to protect their pets also indicated those who reported animal maltreatment, 50% also reported physical IPV. **Only 4% of those who reported no animal maltreatment reported physical IPV.**

**IT IS NEVER JUST AN ANIMAL ABUSE CALL!**



# Human Trafficking

Often involves domestic abuse

Victims will take pets to Vet

Vet has a duty to report animal abuse, but not human abuse

Police then have to be able to recognize it is not only an animal abuse call

Example



## **Animal abuse call that turns out to be domestic abuse**

Veterinarian calls police to report suspected abuse of dog (cracked skull).

Owner advised dog's head got caught in stairs, but another person in the home says something fell on dog's head.

Two stories do not match.

**It's never just an animal abuse call!**



# New South Wales Police Service Study

Examined a random sample out of 947 offenders convicted of animal cruelty, homicide or sexual homicide.

Findings:

-Animal abuse is a better predictor of sexual assault than previous convictions for homicide, arson or weapons offences

-Animal cruelty offenders predominantly have criminal records related to sexual assault, **domestic violence** and firearm offences

## IT IS NEVER JUST AN ANIMAL ABUSE CALL!



## Bestiality - Section 160 CCC

The Int'l Journal of Law & Psychiatry conducted a research study ½ of sexual offenders & 1/3 of child molesters committed animal abuse during adolescence. (Reported by Dr. Melinda Merck, The Atlantic, *The Link between animal abuse and murder*)

This same study confirmed childhood sexual assault abusers use animals to lure and/or groom their victims. An example of grooming would be "I touched the doggy there, so it's okay for you too". Then it is "you can touch me where you touched the doggy".

Pedophiles try to get the child normalized to the inappropriate feeling of touch on their private parts, so that it is not foreign for the child to have their private parts touched for reasons other than medical or cleaning. **It's a desensitized process used to normalize sexual touch to children.**



**Bestiality** legislation now includes touching an animal for any sexual purpose to make our communities safer for all living beings; No longer has to include penetration. Legislated June 2019.

### **Why changes to the Bestiality legislation were so important?**

To be able to charge pedophiles using animals to groom children. Number one thing found on a pedophiles computer, other than child pornography, is animal pornography. If you see animal pornography start to suspect other crimes.

Police Services also investigate cases where one partner forces another into posing and/or committing sexual acts with an animal, and takes pictures or video tapes it. Then the abusive partner blackmails the other into staying with them and putting up with the abuse.

The vulnerable spouse will not report to police for fear of retaliation. Many research studies have identified animals are used to control their victims.





Forensic Psychiatrist and FBI have long recognized one of the top five signs of a serial killer is animal abuse.

A Chicago Police Study found that generally people charged with animal abuse over the course of 3 years, **65% had been arrested for assault of a human being**. In an analysis of FBI reports, **96%** of animal cruelty offenders had other documented criminal offences (Levitt et al., 2016)

A recent IACP paper discussed how veterinary forensics have solved cases from pedophilia to drug dealing

**IT'S NEVER JUST AN ANIMAL ABUSE CALL!**



The IACP state in their February 2018 issue of The Police Chief Magazine, “police officers and detectives should be appropriately trained in the recognition and documentation of crimes against animals – and they should have sufficient resources to enforce animal cruelty laws”.



# Desired next steps

- All organizations working with victims should ask questions about animal abuse (was the pet threatened or physically abused, did the abuser say if you do not do this I will do this to the pet, etc. Perhaps a standardized questionnaire
- All staff members working with victims should be trained on the violence link. They need to be able to recognize it.
- Collectively we need to demand policing organizations across the country train police personnel on the violence link – it should be mandatory training
- Need more shelters that will take pets; Red Rover will assist shelters



# QUESTIONS?

