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WELFARE CENTRE AND THE AVC
ANIMAL WELFARE CLUB PRESENTS:

ANIMAL WELFARE IN PRACTICE

SYMPOSIUM

FREE ONLINE PUBLIC TALK

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“BUT THEY SAID THEY WERE SORRY”...

THE VIOLENCE LINK: BREAKING THE CYCLE

Inspector Leslie Hadfield BA, CLW II, CAE, M.Ed.



- 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.
- When you suspect animal abuse, please keep in mind there is a likelihood that it may be linked to human abuse

...THE VIOLENCE LINK



RESEARCH

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

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)



Gangs

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

Major Crime

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



- Int'l Journal of Law & Psychiatry – ½ of rapists and 1/3 of child molesters committed animal abuse during adolescence. Pedophiles use animals to lure and/or groom their victims –

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)



Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- **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)



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Definition: IPV (intimate partner violence) refers to behavior 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.**
- It is not a big city problem... rural communities are more dangerous (risk factors)



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Vary in duration and legal formality, and include current and former dating, common-law or married couples.
- Abuse does not end with separation
- When a partner is leaving the relationship is the most dangerous time

Paula Armstrong

Paula was killed in Petticodiac Moncton on June 17, 2015 by her estranged common-law partner. They were working out the details of separation when he killed Paula with a knife and took his own life. Paula had gone to his home to pick up her dog when he attacked her.



It is about **power**
and control not
relationship
conflict

Gaining Power
over the victim
using control in
any way possible



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- What better way is there to control someone than through the threat of violence or death to someone/something they love and value
Often more than their own life, a **child** or another **family member**, or an **innocent animal/pet**
- If you tell anyone you and “XXX” will regret it
- Sometimes it just takes a “look”
- Then showing or demonstrating that they are capable.....



ONE OF THE MOST DEGRADING FORMS OF ABUSE AND METHODS OF CONTROL

- Abusers have forced and/or trained animals to penetrate their partners
- May or may/not include pornography (personal or commercial use)
- Abusers may partake in bestiality and force victims to watch and/or participate
- Resulting trauma leaves victim totally defeated as no greater humiliation left as well if the animal is penetrated may involve harm to it as well

**** These types of acts represent the total control of the victim as their moral principles have been completely violated**



THE VIOLENCE LINK

- Animal abuse is a better predictor of sexual offenders 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
- In research out of New South Wales/Australia indicates **100%** of sexual homicide offenders examined had a history of animal cruelty.
- Changes to the criminal code under bestiality
- VICLAS: The Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System helps investigators identify serial crimes and criminals. It focuses on the linkages that exist among crimes committed by the same offender.

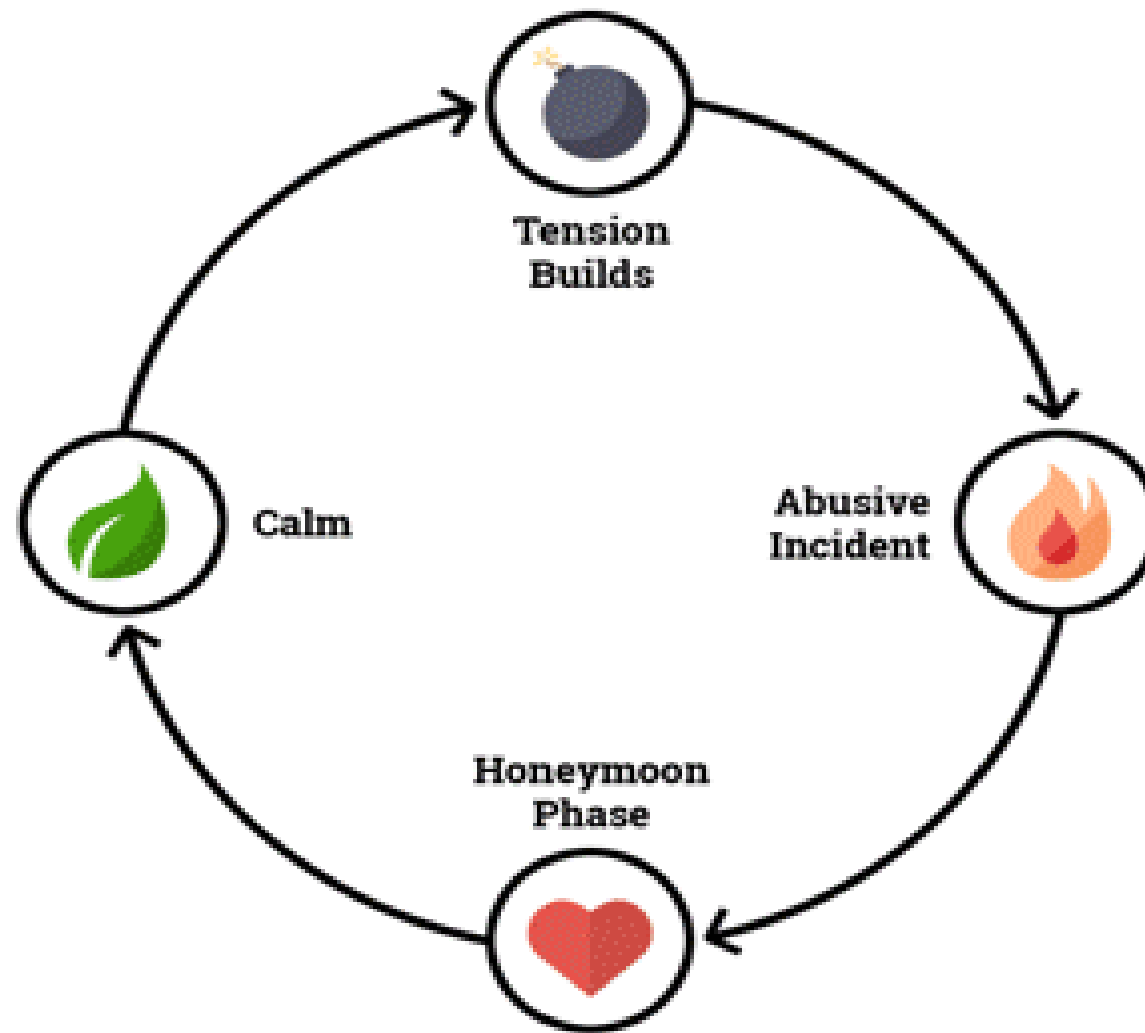


THE VIOLENCE LINK

- 93% of IPV cases involve the use of an animal
- 56% of women stay or will not report abusive situations to protect their pets
- Those who self-identified as lesbian or bisexual significantly higher rates of violence by a partner than heterosexual women



The Cycle of Abuse



1: TENSION BUILDING PHASE

- Occurs prior to an overtly abusive act
- Characterized by poor communication, rising interpersonal tension, and fear of causing outbursts in one's partner.
- Victims may attempt to modify his or her behavior (or response) to avoid triggering their partner's outburst.
- Alternate between tiptoeing around them, trying not to set them off, and making an extra effort to provide physical and emotional support.
- **Simmering tension.....**



2: ACTING-OUT PHASE

- The abuser eventually releases this tension on others, attempting to regain power by establishing control.
- Characterized by outbursts of violent, abusive incidents
- Batterer attempts to dominate his/her partner (victim), with the use of violence
- Abuse might involve to: Insults or name-calling, threats of harm or property destruction, attempts to control your behavior, sexual or physical violence, emotional manipulation



3: RECONCILIATION/HONEYMOON PHASE

- Characterized by affection, apology, or, alternately, ignoring the incident.
- An apparent end of violence, with assurances that it will never happen again, or that the abuser will do his or her best to change.
- Abuser feels overwhelming feelings of remorse and sadness, or at least pretends to.



3: RECONCILIATION/HONEYMOON PHASE

- Some abusers shower their victims with love and affection.
- Some abusers may use self-harm or threats of suicide to gain sympathy and/or prevent the victim from leaving the relationship.

“I will kill myself if you leave...”

“I can’t live without you... I love you”



3: RECONCILIATION/HONEYMOON PHASE

- Abusers are so convincing, and victims so eager for the relationship to improve, that victims who are often worn down and confused by longstanding abuse, stay in the relationship.
- Outpouring of affection and remorse is what often perpetuates the abuse.
- May be what controls and convinces outside individuals not to report.



I will never idolize someone else's relationship based on a pic. You never know what happens behind closed doors.



4: CALM PHASE

- Often considered an element of the honeymoon/reconciliation phase
- Relationship is relatively calm and peaceable.
- Interpersonal difficulties will inevitably arise, leading again to the tension building phase.

Rinse and repeat

This cycle then repeats over time. This “cycle” happens over and over within abusive relationships. The length of time between each repetition can vary. It often shortens over time as the abuse escalates. As time goes on, the calm period may become very short or even disappear from the cycle entirely.



A LIFE LINE

- Animals MAY BE the life line for victims who have been purposefully isolated from family and friends as part of the domestic violence cycle
- We know that effective social support has been identified as a key factor in the general population for reducing likelihood of suicide

“my animals were my lifeline to stay alive ... I often would sit and debate whether I wanted to live or die”



A LIFE LINE

It can be a relationship of complete dependence for support and hope and survival....

After her husband shot and killed her kitten and two cats despite her hysterical pleas not to, one victim stated “***I wish I were dead. I wish I had been shot too***”.



A LIFE LINE

When interviewed by victim services or “safe houses”, the vast majority of victims of intimate partner violence in homes with animal abuse reported concerns that they would be killed, and thus are considered at extremely high risk compared to households without animal abuse.

- **Victims AND THEIR CHILDREN** may develop mental illnesses such as: depression, anxiety, PTSD, conduct disorder, addictions (self medicating)
- A victim may feel completely hopeless and helpless unable to protect those they love (including the pet and the children) and contemplate or attempt suicide....



ANIMALS PROTECT/DEFEND

- Animals may get in-between during a domestic trying to protect a victim and be injured in the process...

Charlottetown case (2021):

- Process of separating
- Suspect was drinking heavily, victim went into bedroom, followed by partner started to physically assault when k9 got in-between, suspect injured the k-9
- Suspect charged with assault and **causing unnecessarily pain & suffering to an animal**



ANIMALS PROTECT/DEFEND ...

- It is an **offence** to cause pain and suffering to an **animals**. ...
 - Dog (animal) fighting
 - Used in gangs to teach and desensitize
 - Used in luring
- It is an offence to threaten pain or threaten to harm animals
- Extortion is an offense
- Animals may suffer severe anxiety and distress at witnessing the abuse of their guardian



WHAT WE KNOW

- The victim likely been assaulted **35 times** on average before they ever contact police for the first time
- **Only 22% of these cases of violence were FORMALLY REPORTED to police**
- **Fear.** The threat of bodily and emotional harm is powerful, and abusers use this to control and keep women trapped. Threats and coercion using animals
- We know they will return to an abusive relationship 7 X's on average
- The victim is blamed for NOT leaving



WHAT WE KNOW

- That domestic violence can lead to homicides ... *Tracy Lynch, Maureen MacDonnell, Crystal Dawn Beirsto, Mary Waite, Debbie Holmes, Shirley Anne Duguay, Elaine Edith Myers, Della Waddell and Mary Louise Bernard and Ann Marie Perry Anderson.*
- Domestic violence (verbal or physical, child present or not) is a form of child abuse that perpetuates the violence both in the home and in the community



EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- Of the children exposed to IPV, **66% have also been exposed to pet abuse.** (Ascione, 1998)
- These children often 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.**
- Abuse observed to caregiver has more negative impact than being abused themselves.
- 1/3 to 1/2 of battered/abused women develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- This has a major, negative impact on the quality of parenting this battered/abused parent is able to provide



EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

- Desensitized to seeing violence, bloodshed
- Witnessing DV is detrimental to their emotional, developmental and physical well-being.
- They can be traumatized, which may result in PTSD, if not treated, does not go away.
- Many are misdiagnosed with ADHD because the symptoms are similar.
- Trauma = autoimmune disorders, mental illness, **perpetuation of violence**
- Kids that are raised in a home with abuse are classified as being abused themselves (changes to the Children's reform act)



THE VIOLENCE LINK IN CHILDREN

- FBI Ressler notes: a fascination with cruelty to animals is a red flag in the backgrounds of serial killers and rapists.

“These are the kids who never learned it’s wrong to poke out a puppy’s eyes.”



FBI CASES

- **Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold** Columbine High School, shot killed 12 classmates
- **Jeffrey Dahmer** – sexually assaulted , murdered and dismembered 17 men
- **Nikolas Cruz** in Parkland, Florida and Luke Woodham, in Pearl, Mississippi
- **Albert DeSalvo (Boston Stranger)** – killed 13 women
- **David Berkowitz** (Son of sam) - killed 6, wounded several others (New York)
- **Henry Lee Lucas** – killed at least 11 people

Recently In Canada

- **Gabriel Wortman** - killed 22 people during a 13-hour rampage across NS
- **Luca Magnotta**



ANIMAL PROTECTION PARALLELS CHILD PROTECTION

1. Officials called to tied dog who was deprived of food and water outside
 - Inside found 3-month-old boy lying near piles of feces, trash, and rotten food and a half-clothed toddler
2. Officials responding to neighbors' concerns: 40 sick and emaciated dogs confined to filthy animal carriers in inches of feces
 - Three children—ages 3, 10, and 15

Sixty percent cases of child abuse also had animals in the home who had been abused.



COVID AND THE VIOLENCE LINK

‘It’s been amazing’: Pet adoptions on the rise amidst COVID-19 pandemic

- ‘Perfect storm’: Calls to help lines for domestic violence up 415%

Shelters struggle to keep up with skyrocketing demand for pet adoptions during COVID-19

- National survey finds domestic violence during pandemic was more frequent and more severe

Human–dog relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic: booming dog adoption during social isolation



BREAKING THE CYCLE

- Many domestic abuse victims will not report domestic violence, or will stay to protect their pet.
- 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**
- *Lets break the cycle!... Together*



CONTACT BETWEEN PROFESSIONS

- More communication from variety of professions that may play a crucial role in identifying this violence such as social services, veterinarians, humane societies, victim services, police
- Veterinarians and their staff may be the first to see problems and have an opportunity to save human lives as well as animals



THE ROLE OF THE VETERINARIAN

Research conducted by Carol Morgan, DVM found that Veterinarians may be reluctant to report.....

- **If their clients express concern or remorse (remember the cycle of abuse... the reconciliation stage)**
- **Difficulty in recognizing or defining abuse**
- **Lack of confidence in responsible authorities**
- **Personal concerns - personal safety, litigation or complaints to professional body, unwilling to commit time**
- **Veterinarians viewed favorably clients exhibiting concern for the animal or remorse for the abuse**
- **Some veterinarians viewed reporting abuse as punitive to the client rather than a means of protecting the animal**



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- If you suspect abuse, go with your gut and report!
- Look back at previous history with the animal, do injuries match with client's "story"?
- Do not go on characteristics of the owner/caregiver alone

More on this at Saturday's Symposium!

<https://awc.upei.ca/animal-welfare-in-practice/>



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

abuser profile (what you may see)

- Level headed, calm
- Good public image i.e.. caring, concerned
- Apologetic, remorseful (remember the cycle, honeymoon/reconciliation)
- Manipulative, persuasive
- Jekyll/Hyde



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- If you suspect animal abuse, consider victims: the animal(s), intimate/domestic partner, elder, pedophilia, children
- In Canada 60% of spousal homicides are preceded by a history of family violence
- That means there were possible moments of intervention where victims, overwhelmingly women/children, could have been helped, perhaps saved (domestic violence death review team)
- Consult and collaborate on “suspicious cases” with other service providers: adult protection, police officers, humane society



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Know what your protocols are for reporting (this may be different for each province/state)
- Get to know your resources in the community: Humane society, provincial government, shelters, social workers, police
- Help determine who will assist with animals if help is required (e.g., if a victim goes to a shelter and is unable to care for animal, can you help the animal be re-homed?)

Be part of an initiative to spread the word about the Violence Link



FINAL THOUGHTS

- **Look violent behavior and abuse of an animal not as a separate incidents but rather as a symptom or a LINK to something larger that will escalate!**
- **PLEASE don't turn a blind eye or question your moral compass, remember the cycle of Domestic Violence and the statistics**
- **As a community and as professionals we need to recognize that abuse to any living being is unacceptable and can endanger everyone.**
- **Remember knowledge is power! When we know better, we do better!**
- **Together we can break the cycle!**



PEI VIOLENCE LINK INITIATIVE

Fairly new group of individuals who have come together because of a personal and/or professional interest in the violence link.

Veterinarians, Lawyers, police officers, social workers, mental health workers....

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THANK YOU!

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