



Linking Animal Cruelty and Human Violence

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A Personal Evolution

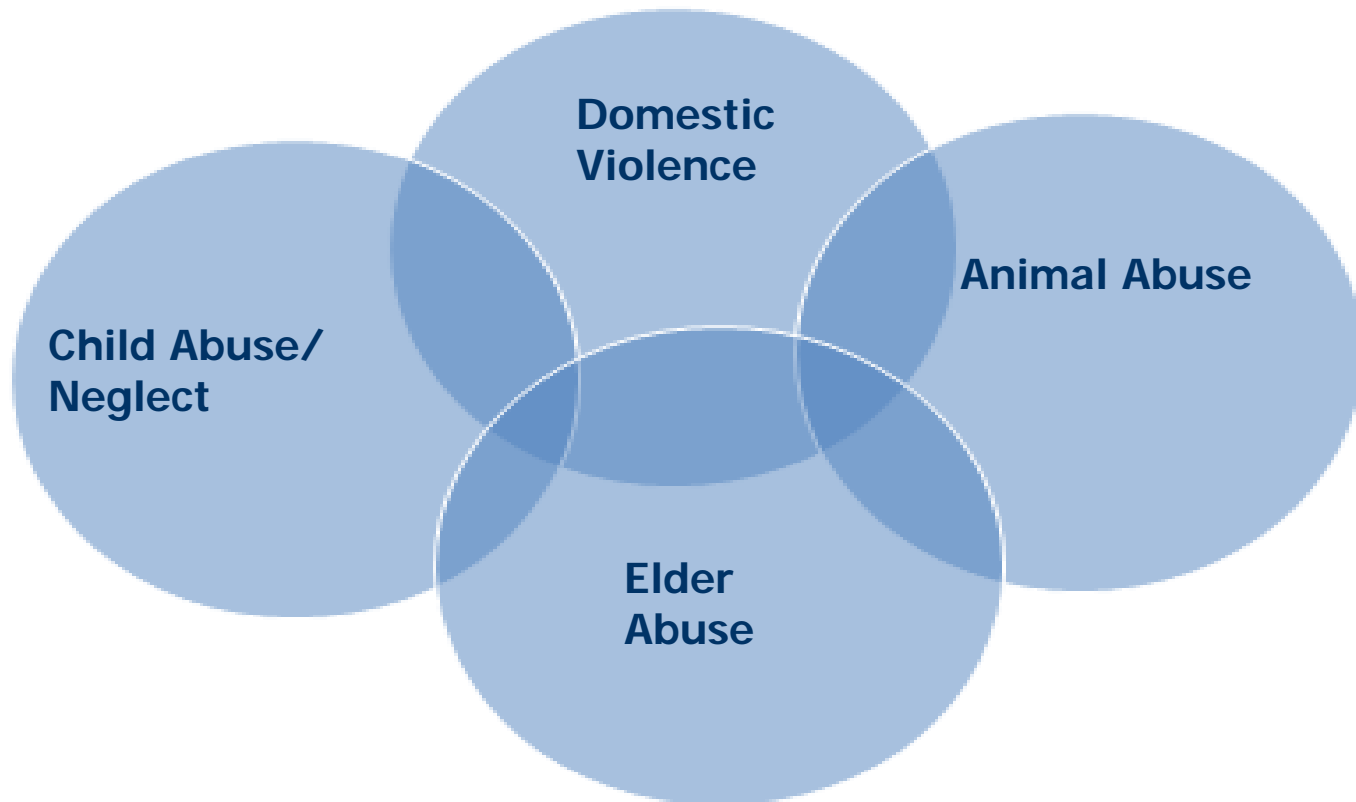




- 1874
- Mary Ellen Wilson
- New York SPCA
- Court action to remove Wilson from her abusive environment, using laws addressing the treatment of animals



The Cruelty Link



Why Does the Degree of Overlap Matter?

Researchers & advocates point to the practical utility of using the identification of a home with one form of violence as an indicator that other members of the household may also be at risk of victimization.

(Becker & French 2004; Boat 2005)

Two Related Categories

- 1) **Co-occurrence of animal abuse, child abuse and domestic violence**
- 2) **Perpetration of animal cruelty by children who witnessed animal abuse or where themselves abused**



Brief History of "The Link"

J.M. MacDonald ~ 1963

The MacDonald Triad

- Bedwetting
- Fire setting
- Torturing small animals

Margaret Mead ~ 1964



“One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it.”



research

Action

practice

Questions

process

researcher

researchers

understanding

actions

inquiry

one's

look

change

theory

evidence

taken

working

work



The Guelph Research

**“Reunification of Child
and Animal Welfare
Agencies: Cross-
Reporting of Abuse in
Wellington County,
Ontario.”**

Purpose of the Research

To examine the link between animal and child cruelty by gathering statistics in Wellington County's urban and rural locales.

Abuse/neglect concerns were reported between the HS and FCS, to use the knowledge gained as an educational tool to raise awareness of this connection of violence.

Methodology

Investigators from both agencies were required to complete a checklist for each new investigation, prompting workers to ask questions about both animals and children in the home.

Time Line

February 1, 2001 to January 31, 2002



Family & Children's Services of Guelph & Wellington County & The Guelph Humane Society

Initial Intake Check-list

Client Name: _____
Client Address: _____
Client Phone#: _____

Worker Name: _____

Date of visit: _____

Some direct questions may need to be asked by each sector in order to gather the necessary information to complete this form.

F&CS Worker to Complete

Animals in home Yes No

If yes, list the following types and numbers of each (i.e. 2 dogs, 3 cats, 1 bird) _____

Observation of animals Yes No If no, state why (i.e. outdoors) _____

If yes, complete the following:

1. Concern with animal's physical condition Yes No
If yes, describe _____

2. Appropriate living condition (i.e. housing & environment)
 Yes No
If no, expand _____

3. Evidence/odor of excrement (i.e. feces, urine) Yes No
If yes, expand _____

4. Injuries noted on the animal Yes No
If yes, expand _____

5. Animal behavior problems (i.e. aggressive or withdrawn)
 Yes No
If yes, expand _____

6. Other comments, if applicable _____

Report to the Humane Society 824-3091 Yes No

If yes, list date _____

Name of person receiving report _____

Humane Society Worker to Complete

Children in home Yes No

If yes, list the following: Names and ages of each child: _____

Observation of children Yes No If no, state why (i.e. at school) _____

If yes, complete the following:

1. Clothed appropriately Yes No
If no, expand _____

2. Appropriate living conditions (i.e. furniture, hydro, environment etc.)
 Yes No
If no, expand _____

3. Signs of neglect (i.e. rotting food, insects, safety hazards) Yes No
If yes, expand _____

4. Injuries noted on child (i.e. bruises, cuts, etc.) Yes No
If yes, expand _____

5. Child behavior problems (i.e. aggressive or withdrawn) Yes No
If yes, expand _____

6. Other comments, if applicable _____

Report to F&CS - 824-2410 Yes No

If yes, list date _____

Name of person receiving report _____

Statistics for FCS Data Collection

# of Checklists Completed	1485
# of Homes in which animals were Present	747 (50%)
#of Referrals made to the Guelph Humane Society	16 (2.15)

FCS Data Collection

Physical Concern for Animal's Well-Being	12	1.8%
Inappropriate Living Conditions for the Animal	73	11%
Evidence of Excrement	32	4.7%
Presence of Injuries on Animal	4	.06%
Animal Exhibited Behavioural Problems	36	5.4%
Referrals to Guelph HS	16	2.15%

Statistics for HS Data Collection

# of Checklists Completed	247
# of Homes in which Children were Present	94 (39%)
#of Referrals made to FCS Guelph/Wellington	10 (10.6%)

HS Data Collection

Appropriate Clothing	0	0
Inappropriate Living Conditions	0	0
Signs of Neglect	1	2.3%
Presence of Injuries	0	0
Child(ren) Exhibited Behavioural Problems	1	2.3%
Referrals to FCS Guelph	10	10.6%

Cross Substantiated Cases

- 26 cases were cross reported
- 7 cases of abuse and/or neglect were substantiated by both the HS and FCS
- 2 cases were initially investigated by the HS and referred to FCS
- 5 cases were initially investigated by FCS and reported to the HS

Worker Feedback

- 44 (out of 54) evaluations completed
- General consensus > checklist was not difficult to complete.. yet checklists were not completed for each investigation
- Many workers did not ask direct questions – reason- it was not their priority - focus was on their mandated client

Did the research project enhance your understanding of the “Link”?

- 24 workers replied Yes
- 41 workers stated they believe there is a link between human and animal cruelty
- 42 workers said they would continue to ask about either children or animals when they investigate
- 38 workers stated they utilize the subject of animals as an engaging tool with children...20 of these workers said they had always done so.



Why did you not complete the section titled “additional comments”?

FCS workers made the following comments:

- **priority needs to be child welfare**
- **this is not a child protection role**
- **it was just one extra task**
- **too time consuming, frustrating**
- **I completed the forms because I had to**
- **not helpful in any way**
- **incredibly basic, too primary**
- **it was a nuisance, just more paperwork.**

More Questions Than Answers

Attitudes about the roles of animals in our lives and appropriate treatment of such creatures are developed within the family system ~ for pets, this means they are exposed to the risks as well as the benefits of being a part of a family.

What is the Nature of the Interconnection Between Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty?

- Does childhood or adolescent animal abuse predict later perpetration of domestic violence in support of the *graduation hypothesis*?
- Do juveniles simply experiment with cruel treatment to animals as part of their socialization process, as would be suggested by the *generality of deviance hypothesis*?
- Or, do various types of violence, against both humans and animals occur simultaneously among members of a household experiencing domestic violence?

“Study of a “General Population”

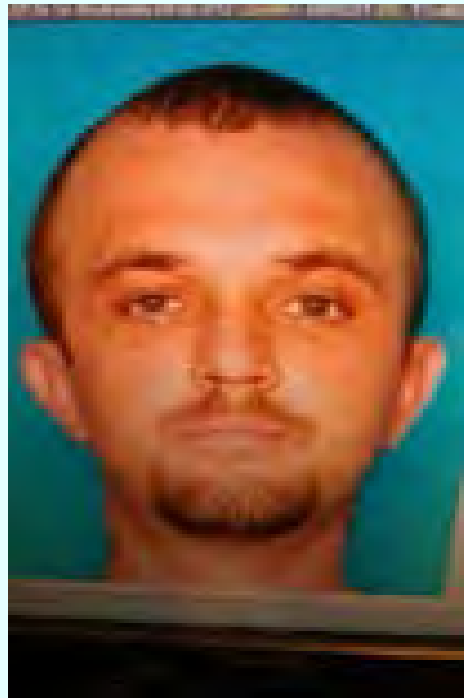
Lisa Anne Zilney. (2007). *Linking Animal Cruelty and Family Violence*.
Youngstown, NY: Cambria Press

Findings:

- **Animal abuse during adolescence was a significant predictor of later abuse against a domestic partner**
- **Animal abuse during adolescence, though not during other phases of the life course, was a significant predictor of later abuse of children**
- **Negative attitudes toward animals were a significant predictor of perpetration of child abuse**



Texas Animal Cruelty Investigation Uncovers Suspected Child Abuse



Animal Abuse as Antisocial Behavior

Gullone, E. (2011). Conceptualising animal abuse with an antisocial behaviour framework. *Animals, 1*, 144-160.
doi:10.3390/ani1010144,

- **By considering animal abuse as an aggressive behavior rather than as a behavior that is somehow different, a more practical framework emerges for the study of animal cruelty.**
- **The implications of such a framework are that law enforcement, health and other professionals should not minimize the presence of animal abuse in their enforcement, prevention and treatment decisions.**



Georgia Couple Jailed After He Beats Her with Her Dead Dog



Research From Spain

Nuria Querol Viñas; 2012

- **Incorporated a screening tool in the hospitals**
- **76% of abused women reported their animals had been abused as well**
- **An 8-year-old boy, who was abused by the father, killed a pet fish and tried to kill a canary; he also presented for enuresis, fascination for fire, self-harm, and bullying**
- **82% of the children reported their pets were sources of comfort and love.**

Results- Continued

- **Women without children reported a greater propensity to remain because of the animal (the median amount of time that respondents had remained was two years)**
- **Lack of pet-friendly rental accommodations, prohibitive costs of boarding facilities, logistical problems, and misconceptions about SPCA services were barriers to women trying to leave.**

And Finally

- **Children had witnessed someone in their family threaten (32.7%) or actually injure or kill (24.5%) a pet. The majority of these incidents were made by the women's partner.**
- **85% of the incidents involved pets, with dogs being the most common targets**

“Link” Findings in Shelters

Carlisle-Frank and Flanagan 2006

Study in the Northeast, US

- **48% of women delayed leaving their home because of a concern for their animal companion**
- **25% of women indicated that at a previous point they had returned home out of concern for their animal.**

“A woman undergoing an assessment at a domestic violence shelter sat emotionless throughout all of the questions about the physical, emotional and sexual abuse she and her children had suffered. When the questions moved to animal abuse however, she wept openly as she described the torturing and killing of her dog. The abuser first shot the dog several times with a BB gun, then left her to suffer for several hours while he took the family on an outing. When they came home the abuser was angry because the dog was still alive. Making his family watch, he took a shovel, dug a hole in the backyard, and then beat the dog to death with the shovel and threw her body in the hole.”

(Carlisle-Frank & Flanagan 2006:55-56)



Animal Torture/Domestic Violence Case



The Relationship With Vets

- **92% indicated they were unwilling to discuss the animal abuse with a veterinarian, either because they did not feel able to speak to the veterinarian about the abuse, fear of repercussions from their partner, they believed the veterinarian would be judgmental about them, or they felt ashamed of the abuse.**



Motivations for Animal Abuse

- 1) To demonstrate power and teach submission**
- 2) To perpetuate the context of terror**
- 3) He may kill a pet to isolate her from a network of support and a relationship.**



Motivations...continued

4) Because he is angry when he sees self-determined action on the part of the woman.

5) As a preemptive strike against her leaving him, as a form of separation violence.

6) He punishes her for leaving by harming her pet



What About Canada?

New Jersey joins 21 other states plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico with Pet Protection Order laws..... which enables judges to include animals in domestic violence protection-from-abuse orders.

“Abuse Reactive” Behaviors

Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione, 2011

- **Children who have witnessed abuse or been victimized themselves frequently engage in “abuse reactive” behaviors re-enacting what has been done to them**
- **Children have even been known to kill the pet themselves in order have some control over what they see as the animal’s inevitable fate.**

More Questions Than Answers

Attitudes about the roles of animals in our lives and appropriate treatment of such creatures are developed within the family system ~ for pets, this means they are exposed to the risks as well as the benefits of being a part of a family....including abuse & neglect.



James Fiengo tortures "Joey" the family cat





A Cruelty Link?

A four-and-a-half-month-old boxer puppy suffered from anorexia, multiple fractured ribs, chest trauma and respiratory distress. The dog had difficulty breathing and needed the use of a portable oxygen tent when taken to the Intensive Care Unit. The dog had chronic chest disease and associated pain, and had lost weight. Investigators determined that the dog was in severe pain as a result of being kicked and discovered that the human caregiver waited two days to take the dog to a veterinarian. The dog was apprehended by the Humane Society. It was later learned the man had a wife and 6-month-old baby.



Another Case to Consider

An anonymous caller reported a dog was being kept in her cage for long periods of time. The dog, a cross between a black lab and whippet weighed a mere 17 pounds, instead of her estimated appropriate weight of 40 pounds. The dog was covered in feces, lesions and debris. In the presence of the animal protection worker, the woman hurriedly attempted to wash off feces from the dog. Her tail was later amputated due to damage caused from her banging it against the wire cage for several months.

The woman & her husband reside with their 4 children.

Working Toward Solutions

Train the entire community on the cruelty link..... with attention given to service providers such as; shelter workers, child welfare workers, mental health workers, counsellors, therapists, police, probation, Crown attorneys, judges, veterinarians, social workers, social work students and animal protection workers.

More Solutions

- **Add to agency intake forms, questions for clients about the occurrence of human and animal cruelty in their homes**
- **Enhance child welfare training so that investigations include observation and questioning about animal cruelty**

Solutions Continued

- **Enhance animal protection training so that investigations include observation and questioning about child abuse/neglect**
- **Train veterinarians to recognize non-accidental injuries and provide them immunity from civil liability when reporting animal abuse**

And

- **Include pets in protective/no contact orders**
- **Develop fostering programs so that women readily seek safe shelter, knowing their pets are also safe**
- **Develop cross reporting systems and widely share this information with various arms of law enforcement and social service agencies**



Finally....

- **Conduct research regarding agency cross reporting and the cruelty link**
- **Develop a Coalition in your Region**
- **For us.....continue to develop the *HAV Coalition of Waterloo Region* in conjunction with what the research informs**

HAV (Human Animal Vulnerability) Coalition of Waterloo Region

To facilitate and advocate a coordinated, seamless and effective approach to responding to human and animal vulnerability and/or violence within the community of Waterloo Region



HAV Coalition Mission

To maximize the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of the programs, services and systems supporting at risk individuals, families and their pets through collective efforts.



HAV (Human Animal Vulnerability) Coalition of Waterloo Region

Steering Committee

Community Relations

Human Animal Violence Link
Education/Research

Vet Care (Clinics & spay/neuter)

Community Fostering

Service/Therapy Animals

Leaders Needed To Reach 100%



Charlotte, North Carolina



Sharing Resources

- 1) **National Link Coalition:
Monthly Newsletter**

Phil Arkow

arkowpets@snip.net

- 2) **“Understanding Animal Abuse”**

A Sociological Analysis

Author: Clifton P. Flynn, Ph.D.

2012 Lantern Books

Closing...Link Humour



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