

Animal Cruelty & Domestic Violence

The Link

- Animal abuse is **“The Tip of the Iceberg”**:
- The way animals are regarded in a family is a window into interpersonal relationships and family dynamics. Investigators who find animal cruelty, abuse or neglect are rarely surprised to see other issues lurking beneath the surface.



The Intergenerational Cycle of Violence

- Animal abuse is part of an **inter-generational cycle of violence**.
- Children living in homes with domestic violence and animal abuse absorb unhealthy attitudes and family norms... and hand these values down to their own children when they grow up.



The Power & Control Wheel

Animal abuse is a **form of power and control** used to manipulate, intimidate, and retaliate against others in domestic violence. It is one part of the Duluth Model of Power and Control used widely in the domestic violence field.

The "Power and Control Wheel" of Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence



Isolation: Refusing to allow her to take her pet to her vet. Prohibiting her from socializing her dog with other dogs.

Threats: To harm or kill her pet if she leaves or asserts any independence.

Legal Abuse: Custody battles over pets. Filing theft charges if she leaves with the pet.

Denying & Blaming: Blaming her or the pet for his cruelty. Killing the pet and saying it didn't matter because the pet was old.

Emotional Abuse: Disappearing, giving away or killing pets to take away her source of unconditional love. Forced participation in animal sexual abuse.

Economic Abuse: Refusing to allow her to spend money on pet food or vet care.

Intimidation: Harming or killing pet: "Next time it'll be you..." Targeting pets of family/friends who aid her escape.

Using Children: Harming/killing children's pets to intimidate them. Blaming the "disappearance" of the family pet on her to create a wedge between her and the children.



The Link in the News

- A Fayette County, Tenn., couple charged with hoarding 168 animals and 25 dead birds...were charged with aggravated child abuse for subjecting two teenagers to a house filled with animal feces, urine, debris, and trash... *(September, 2012)*
- A 12-year-old girl was so upset about her father's torturing her cat that she secretly videotaped the incident — and showed it in a court hearing for her mother's domestic violence restraining order against him. *(March 2013)*
- An Everett, Wash. man pleaded guilty to animal cruelty and domestic violence and was sentenced to six months in jail for killing a parrot that his ex-girlfriend had had for 18 years, by stabbing it with a serving fork. *(Nov. 2012)*
- Authorities arrested a Rose, Okla. man on charges of beating a woman and a child with a whip and broom handle and forcing the girl to watch as he decapitated a puppy with an axe, and threatening to beat the woman with a braided whip if she did not beat the girl. *(July 2012)*

Public Act 14-70

- Requires animal control officers (ACO), who have reasonable cause to suspect that an animal observed in the course of the officer's employment is being or has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly in violation of section 53-247, or who have filed a verified petition of neglect or cruel treatment, to make a written report to the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture within 48 hours;
- Requires The Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture to send a report to the Commissioner of Children and Families (DCF) each month;
- Requires that, within a week of receiving the report, the DCF Commissioner shall determine if any address in the report is an address where DCF has an open child protective service case, and if so: 1. provide the assigned DCF social worker with all relevant information; and, 2. include that information in the Department's record of the child.

Public Act 14-70, continued...

- Requires DCF staff member who has reasonable cause to suspect that an animal is being or has been harmed, neglected or treated cruelly, to make a written report to the Commissioner of Agriculture, within 48 hours
- Annually, the Commissioners of Children and Families and Agriculture shall, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children on the number of written reports regarding actual or suspected instances of animal neglect or cruelty received from employees of the Department of Children and Families

Definitions of Abuse, Neglect, & Cruelty

Child Abuse

- **ABUSE** is:

A non-accidental injury to a child which, regardless of motive, is inflicted or allowed to be inflicted by the person responsible for the child's care

- **ABUSE** includes:

- Any injury which is at variance with the history given
- Maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

- **TYPES OF ABUSE**

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
- Emotional Abuse or Maltreatment

Neglect

- **NEGLECT** is:

The failure, whether intentional or not, of the person responsible for the child's care to provide and maintain adequate food, clothing, medical care, supervision, and/or education.

- **TYPES OF NEGLECT**

- Physical Neglect
- Medical Neglect
- Educational Neglect
- Emotional and Moral Neglect

Animal Cruelty

- Types of Animal Cruelty
 - Simple Neglect
 - Abandonment
 - Gross, Willful, Cruel or Malicious Neglect
 - Intentional Abuse, Torture
 - Animal Hoarding
 - Organized Abuse
 - Ritualistic Abuse
 - Animal Sexual Assault (Bestiality)

DCF Response to PA11-194 and PA14-70

- Development of policy and procedures for receiving and making reports about suspected animal cruelty/neglect
- Reporting form modeled after the ACO reporting form
- Staff training

DCF Protocol for Handling Suspected Animal Abuse Reports by the Department of Agriculture

- 1. Reports are received and logged by the Commissioner's Office
- 2. Reports are forwarded to the Careline Director
- 3. Reports are logged-in by Careline support staff, and are catalogued utilizing key identifiers to track future reports of the same incident
- 4. Reports are assessed by the Careline Director to determine if they meet the statutory definition of Abuse/Neglect and to verify whether DCF has an open case for the subject of the report
- 5. If the address provided has an open child protective service case or investigations case, Careline staff will provide the assigned social worker with all relevant information from the report, and such information shall be included in the department's record on the child.

... Protocol for Suspected Animal Abuse Reports

- 6. If the information received about a family with an open case, meets legal sufficiency, a new investigation on that family will be conducted, the results will be provided to the assigned social worker, all relevant information from the investigation will be included in the department's record on the child, and appropriate service and supervision will be made by the department.
- 7. If the address provided in the report does not have an open child protective service case/investigations case, and **does not meet legal sufficiency**, no additional action will be taken
- 8. If the address provided in the report does not have an open child protective service case/investigations case, and **meets legal sufficiency** for investigation by DCF, the Careline shall conduct an investigation of the allegation, and will follow all established protocols for investigating cases of alleged abuse or neglect.