

Does Your Partner...

- V**erbally insult, demean or threaten you?
- I**solate you from friends, family or other people?
- O**rganize schedules to follow or harass you?
- L**imit your mobility or access to money?
- E**xplode into a rage and assault you physically or sexually?
- N**egate your words, abilities, ideas and actions?
- C**hoke, punch, slap, kick or otherwise hurt you?
- E**xcuse each attack and promise to stop?

If this sounds familiar, you could be the victim of an abusive relationship. However, you are not alone. Whether you need information, support or a safe place to stay, there are people who can help.

Call your local domestic violence program...

**Because love can never
speak through violence.**

Know the Connections



In a violent home, anyone can be a victim.

More often than not, according to the Humane Society of the U.S., adults and children in domestic violence shelters mentioned incidences of pet abuse occurring in their homes.

Many domestic violence victims delay seeking shelter because they don't want to leave their pet(s) behind.

In the majority of cases of physical child abuse, an animal also has been abused.



Pets Are Victims Too!

Understanding the Link Between
Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse



Department of
Community and
Human Services

24-Hour Hotline and Office: 703.746.4911
www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence

Acknowledging Pet Abuse

"I know it's not safe for me to stay, but if I leave, I'm afraid that my partner will take their anger out on my pets and I can't stand the thought of that." - Domestic Violence Survivor

Intentionally hurting an animal is unthinkable to most of us. Unfortunately, for persons who abuse their partner and children, this is not the case. If a child or intimate partner is being abused, it is possible that any animal living in that home has also been hurt, mutilated or killed.

Abusers often use the threat or reality of harming or killing pets as a means of power and control over the entire family.

Domestic violence/sexual assault programs around the state often assist victims who fear for the safety of their pets as a result of the violence in their homes. They are able to assist people in developing a safety plan for their pets and in most cases programs can provide emergency shelter for their pet.

Pet Safety Planning Checklist

Questions to Ask Yourself...

- ☐ Do you worry about your pet's safety?
- ☐ Has your partner threatened to harm or actually harmed your pet?
- ☐ Does concern for your pet's safety keep you from leaving or seeking shelter?

If You Are Staying at Home...

- ☐ Keep emergency provisions (food, medicine) for your pet if the abuser withholds money from you.
- ☐ Keep the phone number of the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic.
- ☐ Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail (e.g. obtain a pet license, have your pet's veterinarian records put in your name).

If You Are Planning to Leave...

- ☐ Obtain the name of a safe emergency shelter for your pet.
- ☐ Pack a bag for your pet that includes the pet's food, medicine, documents of ownership, leash, carrier, toys and bedding.

If You Have Left...

- ☐ Keep the pet inside as much as possible and don't leave it outside alone.
- ☐ Pick a safe route and time to walk your pet and don't exercise or walk your pet alone.
- ☐ Explain your situation to your veterinarian and make sure they understand the importance of keeping your information confidential. If necessary, change veterinarians.

Abuser Characteristics & Signs

How Do Batterers Use and Abuse Pets?

- Kicking, hitting or throwing an animal
- Killing or maiming a pet to make a victim comply or to retaliate for a victim leaving
- Threatening to take a pet away to make the family keep the violence a secret
- Refusing or impeding someone from assisting an animal after it has been injured
- Pets mysteriously dying or disappearing

Why Do Batterers Threaten, Abuse or Kill Family Pets?

- Isolate the victim and children
- Eliminate competition for attention
- Force the family to keep the violence a secret
- Teach submission
- Perpetuate the context of terror
- Punish victim for leaving, prevent the victim from leaving, or coerce them to return
- Degrade the victim

Source: Human Society of the United States