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TALKING POINTS
ANIMAL CRUELTY AND ITS LINK TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CHILD
AND ELDER ABUSE
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We need to recognize the **strong link between people who abuse animals and also commit acts of domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse and other violence.**

FACT: There is an alarming association between people who torture, abuse and kill animals – and also torture, abuse and kill their spouses and/or partners, children and the elderly. The abusers seek to control the animals they abuse and likewise want to control the people that they abuse.

- In one national and other statewide studies – **71 to 83% of women entering domestic violence shelters reported that their partners also abused or killed the family pet.**
- **Researchers found animal abuse in 88% of those families in which there was child abuse,** and numerous other studies indicate there is a high statistical link between animal abuse and child abuse.
- According to the Humane Society of the United States, **“a 1997 survey of 50 out the largest shelters for battered women in the United States found that 85% of women and 63% of children entering [these] shelters discussed incidents of pet abuse in the family.”**
- Some **women** will **not leave** their **abusive spouse and/or partner because they fear for the life of the companion animal they would have to leave behind.** Fortunately, by recognizing this problem, there are increasing numbers of organizations that will work with the victim of domestic violence to either shelter the pet or partner with another group that will provide care and protection to the family pet. This then enables victims of domestic violence to be more willing to leave their abusive environment – secure in the knowledge that their pet will be safe.
- **There** is also a **strong link between those who abuse elders,** generally their caretakers, **and abuse of the elder’s companion pet.** Caretakers frequently threaten to injure the elder’s pet in order to get something from them.
- The **threat of, or act of, animal abuse** is also **used by the abuser to keep their victims silent about the abuse taking place in their homes.** The threat of animal abuse is frequently enough to make a child, adult and elder victims keep quiet about any abuse taking place. The fear that their pet will be tortured or killed keeps them from seeking help – or reporting the abuse.

Therefore, when a police officer and/or animal control official receives a report of animal abuse it should raise a red-flag. When the official responds they should not only investigate the charge of animal abuse but also know how to evaluate and check for signs of spouse/partner, child and elder abuse that may be taking place a well. If animal abuse or family violence is taking place – the abuser should be arrested and prosecuted.