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Abstract

Although knowledge of the link between intimate partner violence (IPV) and animal maltreatment has increased significantly in recent years, few studies have examined service providers' experiences with IPV and concurrent animal abuse, as well as animal safekeeping in situations of IPV. The present study documented human service and animal welfare service providers' experiences supporting victims/survivors of IPV who owned pets and livestock, and included service providers in rural and northern communities in Saskatchewan.

Online surveys were completed by 128 human service professionals (including domestic violence shelter workers, domestic violence counsellors, victim services workers, police, and legal professionals) and 43 animal welfare professionals (including workers from animal rescues, humane societies, SPCAs, and veterinary clinics) (n= 171). Respondents shared information relating to their awareness of the link; their experiences responding in situations of IPV and concurrent animal abuse, including arranging animal safekeeping in situations of IPV; and successes and challenges related to effective service provision.

Results include descriptions of intersecting risks to people and animals. Service providers shared ways that they have assisted victims/survivors who own animals, such as through animal safekeeping programs. Both human service and animal welfare professionals expressed the need for pet-friendly domestic violence shelters and pet-friendly long-term housing options. Service providers offered recommendations for improving education and training; improving provision of services of victims/survivors of IPV and their animals, including improving access to Emergency Intervention Orders and establishing funding for animal safekeeping in situations of IPV; and strengthening existing and building new partnerships.

**Animal Safekeeping in Situations of Intimate Partner Violence:
Experiences of Human Service and Animal Welfare Professionals**

The intersection of intimate partner violence (IPV) and animal abuse (often referred to as “the link”) has been documented in research for over twenty years. As Arkow (2003) states, “Whenever one member of the family is abused, all others in the family are at risk” (p. 7). Animal maltreatment commonly co-occurs in relationships where IPV is taking place (Ascione et al., 1997, 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Fitzgerald et al., 2020; Krienert et al., 2012; McDonald et al., 2015; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Stevenson et al., 2018). A Canadian study by Barrett and colleagues (2020) found that approximately 89% of survivors of IPV who owned pets reported that their partner had mistreated the pet. Child maltreatment and abuse of pets commonly co-occur (Arkow, 2003; Ascione et al., 2007; Krienert et al., 2012; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007) and children are harmed by exposure to IPV and abuse and threats directed toward pets (Ascione et al., 2007; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Fitzgerald, 2007; McDonald et al. 2015).

Just as IPV encompasses different types of violence and abuse, including physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual violence, and controlling behaviours, violence against animals also encompasses a range of behaviours including threats, emotional abuse, physical neglect, and physical abuse (Fitzgerald et al., 2016, 2020; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020). In some relationships where IPV is present, animals are not physically harmed but are threatened with the intention of controlling the victim. Perpetrators of IPV exploit victims’ attachment to their pets as a way to coerce and control them (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008;

Fitzgerald et al., 2019, Hardesty et al., 2013; McDonald et al., 2015; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Wuerch et al., 2020).

Not all perpetrators of IPV abuse or threaten animals, however (Stevenson, 2012). Whether or not they perceive their animals to be in danger, victims/survivors of IPV who own animals may delay seeking help or attempting to leave the relationship because they are unable to take their animals with them and they do not want to be separated from their animals. When partners have abused, neglected, or threatened animals, victims/survivors fear for the animals' well-being if they leave them behind (Ascione et al., 1997, 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007; Hardesty et al., 2013; McDonald et al., 2015; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). Concern for companion animals exacerbates the stress that survivors experience as they manage the end of the relationship, relocating, and planning for their safety (Fitzgerald, 2020; Hardesty et al., 2013). Some victims/survivors have returned to their partner, or considered returning, because he had their pets (Ascione et al., 1997; Barrett et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007). Additionally, victims are often the primary caretaker for the animals (Hardesty et al., 2013; Wuerch et al., 2020).

The bond between victims/survivors of IPV and their companion animals has been documented in research on the link (Barrett et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007; Hardesty, et al., 2013). Research with survivors and with service providers indicates that many people who experience IPV view their companion animals as members of their family (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Hardesty et al., 2013). Children are affected by being separated from their pets, which are a significant source of comfort, emotional support, and companionship. Crawford and Bohac Clarke (2012) report that children worry about their pets when they are left behind and that while staying in shelter, children plead with their mother to return home to where their pets are. Given

that the extant literature has focused on the experiences of victims/survivors who owned pets, less is known about the bond victims have with livestock and large animals, such as horses, in the context of IPV. Such concerns are particularly pertinent for rural and farm women experiencing IPV.

Women in rural areas are faced with several unique risk factors and barriers to safety including geographic isolation (exacerbated by weather, inaccessible roads, and long distances to services and supports); emergency response time; limited housing; limited domestic violence services; lack (or perceived lack of) of anonymity and confidentiality; patriarchal social values; ownership of firearms; and farming (responsibilities for farm work and land ownership). Responsibility and care for livestock, financial investment in animals, and concern for animals' safety are additional barriers for many rural women (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Jeffery et al., 2019; Moffitt et al., 2020; Wuerch et al., 2019).

Previous research on the link between IPV and animal abuse has most often included survivors of violence recruited from domestic violence shelters. These include studies conducted in Canada by Barrett, Fitzgerald, and colleagues (Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Fitzgerald et al., 2019), Crawford and Bohac Clarke (2012), and Doherty and Hornosty (2008), and US studies by Ascione et al. (2007), Collins et al. (2018), Hardesty et al. (2013), and Simmons and Lehmann (2007).

A small number of studies have investigated service providers' experiences with the link. Ascione et al. (1997, n= 48) and Krienert et al. (2012, n= 767) surveyed domestic violence shelter workers in the United States. Stevenson and colleagues (2018, n= 116) surveyed domestic violence shelter workers in Canada. Wuerch et al. (2020) conducted key informant interviews and surveyed human service professionals (2021) (n= 51; including staff of domestic violence

shelters, domestic violence services, and victim services) and animal welfare professionals (n=32; including staff of SPCAs [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals], humane societies, and veterinary clinics) in Saskatchewan, Canada. Crawford and Bohac Clarke (2012) conducted qualitative interviews with service providers from women's shelters and animal welfare service providers in Alberta, Canada.

These previous studies with service providers have explored various dimensions of the link, greatly improving our understanding. Domestic violence service providers bring knowledge gained from working with many victims/survivors of IPV (Ascione et al., 1997; Krienert et al., 2012; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). A small body of research has examined animal welfare professionals' knowledge of the link. Most studies, with the exception of Wuerch et al. (2020, 2021) and Crawford and Bohac Clarke (2012), focused on veterinary professionals (Green & Gallone, 2005; Sharpe & Wittum, 1999; Williams et al., 2008). Other work, such as that by Arkow and Lockwood, provides guidance for animal welfare professionals regarding recognizing and responding to animal abuse and concurrent IPV and child maltreatment (Arkow, 2015; Lockwood & Arkow, 2016).

As Stevenson and colleagues (2018) explain, a limitation of most of the research on the link is that samples are comprised of women who are already in shelter. Therefore, how their experiences differ from those who do not seek shelter, and how many women choose not to leave due to concern for animals, is not known. For this reason, it is important to speak to victims/survivors of violence outside of shelter samples, as well as to service providers who have experience serving clients who do and do not access shelter and are aware of those who call for information but choose not to seek services due to care for their animals. Workers are often aware of those who phone but choose not to come into shelter because they cannot bring their

pets (Ascione et al., 1997; Stevenson et al., 2018). Professionals interviewed by Crawford and Bohac Clarke (2012) reported that when women who owned farm animals phoned the shelter, they did not follow up again or come to the shelter, due to not having supports in place for their animals.

While few domestic violence shelters are currently pet-friendly, previous research has indicated service providers' support for pets staying in domestic violence shelters with their owners (Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020, 2021). Respondents in Stevenson et al. (2018) suggested possible challenges to housing people and pets together and also suggested possible solutions. While several studies have examined the intersection of IPV and pet ownership, little research has included victims/survivors who owned livestock or the experiences of service providers who have assisted them. Exceptions include research conducted with service providers in Saskatchewan (Wuerch et al., 2020, 2021) and Alberta (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012).

The goals of the present study were to: 1) add to the small body of extant research on both types of service providers' (human service and animal welfare professionals) experiences with IPV and concurrent animal abuse; 2) document service providers' experiences with animal safekeeping in situations of IPV; 3) identify the unique challenges and barriers for service providers across the province of Saskatchewan, including those in rural communities and the north; 4) describe service providers' experiences working with survivors who owned pets, service animals, and livestock to find out what is working well and identify areas that require improvement to inform recommendations for continued work in this area. Service providers are important research participants because they are able to share knowledge gleaned from years of

professional experience and can provide insight into current organizational policies, potential challenges, and possible solutions (Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020, 2021).

Method

The present study included two online surveys (one for human service professionals and one for animal welfare professionals) and was part of a larger mixed-methods study which included an online survey for the general public, an online survey for survivors, and interviews with survivors. All surveys included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions. A benefit of mixed methods surveys is that they allow for a confirmatory exploration of findings from extant literature, as well as an investigation of new themes. A combination of quantitative and open-ended questions serves the purpose of answering specific research questions while allowing participants to voice other ideas that the researcher may not have thought of (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Additionally, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods can help to better understand the data, in that qualitative results provide context to quantitative findings and quantitative findings provide an indication of the generalizability of qualitative findings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

The study was approved by the University of Regina's Research Ethics Board. The online surveys were launched on January 3, 2020, and closed on March 31, 2020. The survey did not require responses to all questions, allowing participants to skip questions if they wished. For this reason, responses to quantitative questions do not always equal the total number of respondents. Areas that were explored during key informant interviews by Wuerch and colleagues (2020) were included as open-ended questions in the survey. This process allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from human service and animal welfare professionals in one step and increased the ability to solicit this information from a larger number of

professionals. Qualitative survey responses were coded with NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

The surveys asked about three kinds of animals: pets, livestock, and service animals and provided a definition for each. The surveys included questions regarding: professionals' knowledge of and experience with the intersecting issues of IPV, animal maltreatment, and animal safekeeping; services provided by the respondents and challenges and needs regarding service delivery; and recommendations for solutions. Some questions were the same for both human service and animal welfare professionals while others were worded differently or additional questions were asked depending on the profession.

Participants

An invitation to participate in the survey was shared by email with domestic violence shelters and services, victim services, veterinary clinics, SPCAs and humane societies, police, and legal professionals. The recruitment poster was posted on Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan's (PATHS) and Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (SPCA) websites and social media accounts and shared in the organizations' email newsletters. The service provider surveys were open at the same time as the two other surveys, for survivors and the general public. The link in the invitation to participate took respondents to a landing page on PATHS' website where links to the four surveys were posted. Respondents self-identified which survey to respond to (human service provider, animal welfare service provider, survivor, or public).

One hundred and twenty-eight (128) human service professionals and 43 animal welfare professionals completed the surveys (n= 171). Respondents to the human service professionals survey included individuals who worked at domestic violence shelters (59, 46%), domestic

violence services (13, 10%), victim services (12, 9%), policing agencies (municipal or Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP]; 12, 9%), or were lawyers or mediators (16, 13%). An additional 16 respondents (13%) reported that they worked for another type of service, specifying their area of employment accordingly. Their answers included: government, healthcare, counselling services, social services, addictions services, therapy dog programs, family justice services, prosecutions, social work, crisis/outreach work, and services for child victims. Experience among the human service professionals ranged from less than one year to 40 years, with the mean being 9 years of experience.

Respondents to the animal welfare survey included those who worked at veterinary clinics (13, 31%), animal rescues (12, 28%), and humane societies or SPCAs (10, 24%). An additional seven respondents (17%) worked in other areas of animal welfare, including animal protection and pet fostering. Years of experience among the animal welfare professionals ranged from one year to 50 years, with the mean years of experience being 13 years. Responses were collected from service providers from the far north to the south of Saskatchewan.

Quantitative Results

Human Service Professionals' Experience with Animal Safekeeping

Human service professionals were asked a series of multiple choice questions about their experience with the link between IPV and animal maltreatment and safekeeping (Table 1). When asked if, in their experience, safety and safekeeping of animals impacts an individual's planning and decision making to leave a relationship when IPV is taking place, 89% agreed. Overall, 65% of human service professionals reported that they had worked with survivors of IPV where their animals (pets, service animals, or livestock) were also abused, neglected, or maltreated. When examined by profession, 75% of victim service workers, 69% of domestic violence shelter and

service workers, 56% of legal professionals, and 33% of police officers stated that they had. Approximately half of human service providers stated that their agency asks individuals about the safety of animals as part of their intake process. When examined by profession, 64% of domestic violence shelter and service workers, 58% of victim service workers, and 33% of police officers stated that they ask. A small number of human service providers (28% of those who answered the question) felt that there was adequate access to resources for animal safekeeping in their local area; another 15% stated that they were unsure.

Table 1: Experience with the Link

	Human Service Professionals	Animal Welfare Professionals
	% (n)	% (n)
Feel safety and safekeeping of animals impacts planning and decision making regarding leaving a relationship when IPV is taking place. ¹	89 (114)	93 (40)
Have worked with survivors of IPV where their animals were also abused, neglected, or maltreated./ Have dealt with situations where animals were being abused, neglected, or maltreated and humans in the home were also being abused. ²	65 (81)	56 (23)
Agency asks individuals about the safety of animals as part of their intake process. / Agency asks individuals about the safety of children or adults in the home when animal abuse is suspected. ³	51 (63)	70 (30)
Feel there is adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in local area. ⁴	28 (18)	8 (3)
Personal awareness of the link between IPV and animal abuse/animal safekeeping changed or expanded in recent years. ⁵	68 (81)	68 (25)
Would like more information or training about IPV and animal safekeeping. ⁶	71 (84)	61 (22)

Note: Reported numbers represent “Yes” responses to yes/no or yes/no/not sure questions.

¹ Responses total human service n= 127; animal welfare n= 43. Responses total human service n= 124; animal welfare n= 41. ³ Responses total human service n= 124; animal welfare n= 43. ⁴ Responses total human service n= 64; animal welfare n= 37. ⁵ Responses total human service n= 119; animal welfare n= 37. ⁶ Responses total human service n= 118; animal welfare n= 36.

Nearly three quarters of respondents reported that their agency currently helps individuals plan for temporary safekeeping of animals as part of their plan to leave a relationship where IPV is occurring or have not done this, but know how to do this if and when it is needed (Table 2).

Others responded that they would like to do this. Some respondents (15%; legal professionals, including family justice services and prosecutions; therapy dog handlers; and two police officers) reported that helping someone to plan for animal safekeeping when leaving a relationship is not relevant to their work. Specifically, 70% of domestic violence shelter staff stated that they currently help clients to plan for animal safekeeping and another 14% stated that they are prepared to plan for temporary safekeeping of animals when needed.

Two thirds (64%) stated that they had received requests to assist with animal safekeeping. Over half of human service professionals (55%) reported that their agency had assisted with safekeeping of companion animals. A smaller number reported that their agency had assisted with safekeeping of service animals (12%) and livestock (4%). Regarding transportation of animals for safekeeping, 45% of domestic violence shelter and service professionals who answered the question, 64% of victim service professionals, and 75% of police officers stated that their agency can transport animals depending on the type, size, and number of animals.

Table 2: Experience with Animal Safekeeping

	Human Service Professionals	Animal Welfare Professionals
	% (n)	% (n)
Provide assistance with temporary safekeeping of animals when IPV is occurring¹		
Agency currently helps individuals plan for temporary safekeeping of animals	52 (64)	39 (16)
Have not, but know how to do this if and when it is needed	21 (26)	7 (3)
Would like to be able to	12 (15)	29 (12)
Not relevant	15 (18)	24 (10)
Have received requests to assist with animal safekeeping²		
	64 (76)	73 (30)

Note: ¹ Responses total human service n= 123; animal welfare n= 41; ns do not total 100 due to rounding.

² Responses total human service n= 119; animal welfare n= 41.

Over half (53%) of human service respondents stated that their agency worked with animal welfare organizations (in formal or informal partnerships). Specifically, 56% of domestic violence shelter and service staff, 83% of police officers, and 33% of victim services staff stated

that partnerships with animal welfare organizations were in place at their agency. Those with partnerships listed a variety of services including local SPCAs, humane societies, animal rescues, veterinarians, and kennels/boarding facilities.

Animal Welfare Professionals' Experience with IPV

Animal welfare professionals were asked a similar series of multiple choice questions regarding their experience with animal abuse and safekeeping in situations of IPV (Table 1). When asked if, in their experience, concerns for the safety and safekeeping of animals impacts an individual's planning and decision making to leave a relationship when IPV is taking place, animal welfare professionals resoundingly agreed, with 93% saying yes. Over half (56%) of animal welfare respondents had dealt with situations where animals were being abused, neglected, or maltreated and humans in the home were also being abused. Over two-thirds (70%) of animal welfare professionals stated that they ask questions regarding the safety of children or adults in the home when they suspect animal abuse. Few animal welfare providers (8%) felt that there were adequate resources for animal safekeeping in their local area; another 27% stated that they were unsure.

Nearly half of animal welfare professionals reported that their agency currently helps individuals plan for temporary safekeeping of animals as part of their plan to leave a relationship where IPV is occurring or have not done this, but know how to do this if and when it is needed. Others responded that they would like to do this (Table 2). Nearly three quarters (73%) of animal welfare professionals stated that their agency had received requests to assist with animal safekeeping. Around two-thirds (64%) reported that their agency had assisted with safekeeping of companion animals. A smaller number of reported that their agency had assisted with safekeeping of livestock (11%) and service animals (2%). Regarding transportation of animals

for safekeeping, 75% stated that their agency can transport animals (half of these stated that the ability to transport depends on the type, size, and number of animals).

One third of animal welfare respondents stated that their agency worked with IPV organizations, in formal or informal partnerships. Approximately the same proportion reported that their agency worked with other animal welfare organizations to assist in arranging animal safekeeping or other supports in situations of IPV. In a text box, respondents listed the organizations that they work with. These included: animal protection services, SPCAs, humane societies, animal rescues, the provincial Ministry of Agriculture, domestic violence shelters, counselling and outreach services, mental health services, health centres, RCMP and municipal police (including a Police and Crisis Team [PACT]), child protection services, and community corrections.

Qualitative Results

Human Service Professionals' Experience with Animal Safekeeping

Risk to People, Risk to Animals. Human service professionals shared examples from their work with clients whose pets were harmed by an abusive partner. Specific examples, such as dogs being killed and horses being starved, were provided by the respondents. Respondents also mentioned instances where access to animals had been withheld by the abusive partner and where the partner had abandoned animals after the victim left the home.

In many situations of IPV, threats are made and violence is enacted against both the people and animals in the home. A respondent from a domestic violence service wrote, “sometimes animals are used in situations where the violent partner harms or threatens to harm an animal and justifies it by saying ‘this could be you’ to the survivor.” Service providers noted that when animals are abused, abuse of the partner, children, and other family members is often

occurring at the same time. Witnessing animal abuse has a significant negative impact on survivors and their children. A shelter worker shared:

“A client who saw her beloved dog shot was left very badly traumatized, she also said her abuser liked to kick and hurt the animal, just to upset her. . . She also felt very depressed knowing that in order to live in low-income housing, as she couldn't afford private rentals, she had to agree to no pets, and that her abuser had taken this away from her too.”

Regarding their clients' experiences of IPV and animal abuse, several service providers' comments illustrate the connection between coercive control and animal abuse. Respondents wrote that:

“I heard many women say that their pet would be targeted as a way to intimidate them.”

“. . . their partners have hurt animals just to show what they would do to the client if she didn't comply with his wishes.”

“The abuser will use the love a victim has for their pet as a weapon against them, i.e. ‘Do this or I will do that to your pet.’ It's another aspect of control.”

“It's just been very clear to me (working in criminal law and family law) that violent partners don't hesitate to act violently towards pets and use access/health of pets to manipulate their spouses.”

A counsellor explained how all types of animals can be at risk, and that victims' emotional attachment to and financial investment in animals is capitalized on by abusive and controlling partners:

“Threatened or actual violence toward an animal unfortunately can and has been used as a means of threatening and controlling partners who are trapped in a cycle of violence. Abuse and violence toward any type of animal can happen. If one partner has an attachment or investment in an animal, that animal can potentially be just as at risk as the partner experiencing abuse or violence.”

When survivors cannot take their pets with them when they leave, they may end up returning home to care for, visit, or attempt to retrieve the pet, putting their own safety at risk. A shelter worker articulated, “women leave behind animals they care for and end up going back to the home to care for their pets, putting themselves in harm's way time and time again.” Women

who own livestock do the same, returning to the farm or ranch to feed, water, and care for animals.

Several respondents commented on the risk to service providers if they go to their client's home: "Usually it is a safety issue to go to the home of the victim for animals unless a police escort is available." They discussed the need for police escorts for victims when they return to the home as well as the need for other procedures to collect and transport animals—rather than sending survivors and/or their advocates into a potentially dangerous situation. Some respondents stated that their agency does not have the ability to provide or arrange transportation, while others shared they have transported small animals. In some cases, transportation is arranged through informal means, such as staff calling on personal connections to transport animals.

Assisting Survivors Who Own Animals. If survivors feel that they will not be able to leave a relationship with their pet because there is nowhere to go, or because their partner will prevent them from taking the pet, many are unwilling to leave. Sometimes, the partner has threatened to get rid of the pet if the survivor leaves. Many survivors are well aware that leaving a pet behind with an abusive partner would be dangerous for the pet. Human service professionals explained:

"I have had people choose to remain in relationships for their pets, people who have returned as a result of threats against their pets, and people who have lived in their cars because there was no place for their pets."

"Women fleeing [IPV] do not want to leave [because] they fear for their pet's safety more than they fear for themselves."

"Some clients finally made the decision to leave when their pets were physically harmed by the abusive partner. In my experience, victims of violence considered pets as part of their family and wouldn't abandon them even if staying endangered their own safety."

Many people who own companion animals have a very strong bond with their pet. For survivors who have been isolated and endured abuse, pets are a vital sense of comfort and support. A respondent from a domestic violence counselling service wrote: “This is a major factor for the individual when planning to leave. These animals are often the only thing that has kept them going and to leave them behind is unthinkable. It causes too much guilt and shame for them.”

For survivors whose lives are in a state of upheaval (sometimes losing access to their home and possessions, leaving their community, their job, and their connections), losing access to their animals exacerbates the turmoil that they are feeling. A domestic violence shelter worker shared: “Then we are dealing with residents feeling out of control because they can't access their pets.” Many workers detailed the stress and anxiety that survivors and their children feel when separated from family pets:

“It is very stressful when families have to leave an animal behind. Children are understandably upset by not knowing if their pet is okay or not. In response to this, children act out in anger and stress, which makes it even harder on the client. Clients wonder if they made the right decision to leave violence back home.”

“Many women rely on their companion animals as support when they are dealing with the aftermath of trauma or are currently living through it. When women and their children have to give that up, it can cause more anxiety.”

“I have had clients who have displayed clear signs of distress with not having access to their pets and this has affected their ability to focus on their goals moving forward.”

“Grief is a very real part of the cycle of abuse and having to leave their beloved pets behind adds more layers of guilt and grief.”

Respondents noted that being separated after fleeing abuse not only causes hardship for the pet owner, but it is upsetting and stressful for pets, as well.

Human service professionals shared the ways that they helped their clients to plan for animals' safety, such as helping to arrange temporary pet fostering while the woman went to a

shelter. While human service professionals often try to work with clients to find a safe place for their companion animals when they go to a shelter, in some cases clients were unable to take the animals with them when they left their home.

“I have been told by women wanting to flee domestic abuse situations that they can't leave because [their] partner will harm or kill their pets, livestock and/or service animals. I do ask if they have animals that need to be cared for because they can't come to the shelter. Problems arise when the caller is from out of town and has multiple animals. Others do not have the option to take the animals at all because they are a source of control and can be abused in a bid for control.”

Survivors are often reluctant or unwilling to be separated from their companion animals. A domestic violence shelter worker stated: “Some women who called the crisis line refused to leave a dangerous situation as they didn't want to be separated from their pets.” Another explained:

“Most clients are devastated to leave their animals, regardless if they are sheltered in a safe foster home. They feel isolated and more vulnerable without their pets. Many consider their pets as important as children.”

The utility of Emergency Intervention Orders (temporary orders that grant the victim the right to stay in the home while the perpetrator is removed from the home; Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.) was noted by some of the respondents. A legal professional stated that it is “easier to obtain immediate orders to keep the survivor and children (and pets) in the home—the concept of requiring the victim to relocate and make all of these arrangements in an already stressful time is inherently unfair.”

Animal Safekeeping Programs. Human service professionals shared their experiences with animal safekeeping, including what their agencies had organized, what their clients had accessed in the past, and times when assistance was not available. Human service professionals want to see more options available overall for animal safekeeping—such as fostering, boarding

at kennels and animal shelters, and pet-friendly domestic violence shelters. A shelter worker expressed the desire to be able “to give them options so they do not feel like they have to choose between their animal’s well-being and their own well-being.” Respondents also identified the importance of having a process in place, that includes different options, thus making it easier to respond quickly and effectively to assist survivors with animals when needed.

Many of the human service professionals expressed in their responses that “there is nowhere in the community to safely keep the animal.” Some stated that there was no animal welfare organization (such as a humane society or SPCA) in their location. One respondent noted that their local animal shelter used to reserve space for animals in situations of IPV, but no longer does. In the larger urban centres where these services are available, there is more demand than space available and animal safekeeping could not always be provided at the time it was requested.

In some cases, animal safekeeping is provided through informal means, including by volunteers from local organizations, such as churches. Domestic violence shelter staff also reported arranging for informal fostering of their clients’ pets with people that they know. Some shelter staff have taken small animals home with them for temporary safekeeping until other arrangements can be made. One respondent wrote that, “Often clients will have family members take care of their animals or they resign to having to let them go.” This is especially true for clients in rural, remote, and northern Saskatchewan where services are limited and often located a great distance from where clients live. The unique challenges in the province’s north were described by respondents:

“Some of our clients arrive from ‘fly in’ communities and there are no animal shelters in their community so they either have to pay for the flight for the animal or surrender it.”

“We work with a lot of clients from isolated communities who travel by taxi and air to reach our shelter, so they are unable to flee with their animals.”

Several human service professionals explained that when pets are kept at local animal shelters or fostered with volunteers, owners are not allowed to visit their animals. When survivors cannot see their companion animals, they worry about their pet’s well-being and struggle without the emotional support and companionship they are used to receiving from their pet. A professional from a domestic violence counselling service wrote, “many are afraid to be separated from their pet by putting them in a temporary shelter. These pets are often like their children so they worry that a shelter may not give them the same level of care they do.” IPV service providers wished that their clients could visit their pets regularly. Some animal shelters or foster homes had sent photos and videos of the pet to survivors, allowing them to see the pet was okay. While not a replacement for real-life contact with pets, this helped ease some of the anxiety that survivors were feeling.

Other barriers to animal safekeeping are time limits on animal safekeeping programs provided by animal shelters that do not coincide with the length of time that women are able to stay at a domestic violence shelter. In some cases, animals could be put up for adoption if not reclaimed within the agreed upon timeframe. Survivors may be unwilling to reach out for help for themselves and their animals if they risk losing their pet.

“It has been a challenge finding long-term temporary [animal] shelter. Often the animal safekeeping places are able to take the animals for a few days, otherwise the animals get put up for adoption. We have had better success with places that are willing to foster for about a month which is the duration for the women in shelter.”

Human service professionals emphasized that “a guarantee that they can get their animal back when ready” is needed for survivors to be able to entrust their pet to safekeeping services.

One of the biggest barriers to accessing animal shelters, as stated by human service professionals, are the hours of operation. They stated that these agencies are not staffed 24-hours per day and are often closed when a victim/survivor is trying to flee. Some respondents shared a successful resolution, explaining that an agreement had been reached where, in one community, police can now access the humane society's facility after hours, allowing the police to assist domestic violence shelter workers in placing clients' pets.

Overwhelmingly, human service professionals mentioned the need for funding as a key obstacle to supporting survivors who own animals. As one shelter worker remarked, "There needs to be increased funding for animal safekeeping in general both for pets and livestock. Much of the work is done by under-funded non-profits and volunteers, and this creates precarity and gaps in much needed supports." For survivors with limited financial resources, paying for boarding and care of their animals is extremely difficult. A crisis worker explained:

"Some animal shelters require a fee to be paid and the person we are assisting is unable to afford this. Often times there is a level of financial abuse that inhibits an individual's ability to access funds."

Related to this, another professional presented the idea of boarding survivors' pets at kennels/dog boarding businesses, suggesting that a fund could be developed for this purpose. Human service professionals also noted that when animal shelters or fosters care for animals in situations of IPV, this places a significant financial burden on those agencies. They expressed the need for funding to support partnerships for animal safekeeping, without a cost to volunteers or already under-funded animal welfare organizations.

Positive working relationships have been developed between IPV agencies and animal rescues and animal shelters, as well as veterinarians:

"The opening of the new SPCA. . . they have specific spaces for animals while the women are in the [domestic violence] shelter."

“The local vets will often keep the animals for a few days free of charge until a foster home can be arranged.”

“The local animal shelter has been amazing finding a foster home for client's pets, when required.”

Safekeeping of Livestock. Many of the respondents wrote about the challenges for safekeeping of livestock. Several noted that while their agency had developed processes for assisting with pets (mainly dogs and cats), solutions for livestock were extremely difficult. A shelter worker in an urban centre shared:

“In the case of livestock, we have had no success in helping women find temporary safekeeping and I suspect that some women particularly in rural areas have chosen to stay in the relationship because they could not leave their farm animals behind.”

Needs for the safety of livestock vary, depending on the type and number of animals. In situations where survivors owned a relatively small number of horses, service providers have been able to help clients to find ways to transport and board them. For larger herds of animals (horses, cattle, sheep, or other farm animals) the challenges are much greater. A victim services worker wrote:

“In terms of livestock it is a bit more challenging. . . I once had a client who had horses and I worked with her to find a neighbour who was willing to take her horses in order to ensure their safety. However, this is not always a viable solution.”

While it is possible to recruit volunteers to care for pets, caring for farm animals requires a significant amount of work and time as well as travel to the animals' location. Finding volunteers who have the necessary experience with livestock poses another hurdle. Risk assessment is necessary to ensure that the person who is providing care is not being placed at risk. It is not always possible to arrange for care of livestock without the agreement of the abusive partner, due to issues surrounding legal ownership of the animals and the property where they are kept.

Additionally, if a survivor is no longer able to stay on the farm or ranch with their livestock, this may result in animals being harmed or neglected. A domestic violence counsellor shared that, often, “those experiencing [IPV] living on farms were the ones caring for the animals and leaving [meant] the animals would not have been cared for.”

Domestic Violence Shelters. The need for pet-friendly domestic violence shelters was a resounding theme in the data. A small number of respondents from domestic violence shelters stated that their agencies had accommodated women with small companion animals.¹ Many more expressed the desire that their shelter do so: “I think it would be great if the person leaving abuse could bring their pet to stay with them at the shelter. This could really aid in their healing journey as well.” Allowing pets to stay with their owners in shelter would allow survivors the comfort of having their pet with them and would meet the needs of those who are reluctant to have their animals kept where they cannot see them. A shelter worker stated: “Shelters are anxiety inducing. Having pets present may reduce stress.”

A few survey respondents suggested issues that may occur if animals were allowed in domestic violence shelters, such as if clients and staff have allergies to dogs or cats, or if other clients are afraid of dogs. They also presented possible solutions, such as requiring residents to keep the pet in their own bedroom and in a crate (or on a leash) when outside of the client’s room. Other challenges that were raised by respondents included shelter or safekeeping when a client has multiple pets or exotic pets.

Respondents stated that funding would be necessary to make upgrades to domestic violence shelters to “to create a safe and health conscious space for both humans and pets.”

¹ While service animals are permitted in domestic violence shelters, as per human rights legislation (*The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*), no respondents shared qualitative comments regarding supporting clients with service animals in a domestic violence shelter.

Some human service professionals suggested that the ideal solution for survivors with pets would be housing in separate units, as in second stage shelter, where residents have their own apartment. In Saskatchewan, most second stage shelters operate out of buildings owned by other entities, including local housing authorities, which have no-pet policies.

Even if a survivor and their pet are able to access a pet-friendly domestic violence shelter or an animal safekeeping program while in the process of leaving a relationship, barriers to securing more permanent housing remain. Survivors must often look for rental housing. The majority of publicly funded social housing in the province does not allow pets. Additionally, pets are not allowed in many apartments or condominiums. Service providers shared that they knew of clients who felt they could not leave their relationship as they would not be able to find housing that would allow pets. Other clients struggled to find rental housing to move to after an initial stay at a domestic violence shelter.

Domestic violence shelters, as well as animal shelters, exist in larger centres. Professionals stated that to access domestic violence shelters, victims often have to travel several hours—a significant barrier if they do not have their own vehicle. Transporting pets to larger centres when the survivor must relocate for shelter adds another barrier.

Animal Welfare Professionals' Experience with IPV

Risk to Animals, Risk to People. Some professionals explained that while their job is to deal with situations of animal abuse, they refer human victims to the appropriate resources. Others stated that they do not ask questions relating to abuse that humans may be experiencing. An open-ended question invited respondents to share more about situations that they had dealt with where abuse of animals and abuse of people were co-occurring. Responses included stories

of animals that were injured during domestic assaults, beaten and abused in the context of IPV, and denied appropriate care. For example:

“. . . the dog tried to protect the woman many times and then the anger was transferred to the dog.”

“The husband had beaten the dog to the point where it was terrified of men.”

“The animals were being used as a way to keep the victim in the home.”

“. . . been aware of situations where the woman who owns horses is unable to care for them due to husband controlling money and disallowing her from obtaining health care for her horse.”

Animal rescue organizations are making the link between animal abuse and IPV and offering resources when possible:

“. . . we have had cats surrendered under special circumstances because the partner leaving is fearful for the safety of their animal if they go.”

“Women will call to say they need to rehome the dog, that the partner doesn't like or is not nice to the dog. We follow up with questions about animal abuse and eventually give resources for human help in their area even if they deny partner abuse, just in case.”

Animal Safekeeping Programs. Regarding challenges experienced when helping people to arrange animal safekeeping in situations of IPV, animal welfare professionals listed a number of practical challenges. The need for increased funding, additional space in both domestic violence and animal shelters, and more fosters were the most common themes. Like human service respondents, animal welfare service providers pointed out “a lack of options for livestock” as well as the “lack of housing options that will allow people to bring companion animals with them.” A lack of resources (including veterinary care, animal shelters, and fosters) in rural communities was noted by many respondents.

Physical space was described as a significant barrier to animal safekeeping. Given that animal shelters are often at capacity, it is challenging to accept animals in need of safekeeping in

situations of IPV while maintaining enough available space for other shelter animals. The number and size of animals in need can make finding space, whether in an animal shelter or a foster placement, more difficult. A professional from a veterinary clinic explained: “Sometimes it can be hard to find immediate placement for large dogs or groups of animals with short notice and an unknown amount of time they may need to be cared for.”

A respondent from a rescue organization explained that their mandate is to help stray and feral cats (as opposed to owned animals) and that their organization often runs at full capacity with hundreds of cats in need of care. Another respondent noted that their organizational policy prevented them from assisting in situations of IPV: “We currently do not have a policy or capacity for temporary safekeeping. We only accept animals that are eligible for permanent adoption.” Another respondent from a rescue added that challenges include: “extinguishing ownership rights as we have no authority to do so and there would be concern should the owner cease communication with us [and] the legality of rehoming the cat after a period of time.” Others expressed the need for the development of guidelines “regarding liability issues, costs, length of time commitment, etc.”

A challenge with animal safekeeping is not knowing the length of time that an animal will need to be safely cared for while their owner finds safety and makes arrangements for new housing: “The biggest challenge we face is having the space to help. While we may have the space to take the animal in initially, our capacity changes on a daily basis and it can be difficult to have the room if the animal has to stay with us for an extended period of time. The usual stay is 2 weeks to a month.” Another service provider wrote that this “can be difficult to plan but it’s manageable.” Some animal service providers were concerned that if the owner/survivor was unable to secure safe housing, they would not be able to reclaim their pet.

Respondents wrote of the need to recruit more foster families and have fosters who are available on short notice for situations of IPV. There is a need for “additional foster homes who understand that long-term fostering may be required” in situations of IPV. A lack of available foster homes was cited by several respondents. It was also noted that in small communities, this deficiency is even more profound. Physical distance between available foster homes and those in need creates barriers to access.

One service provider noted that housing animals away from their owners in situations of IPV is not ideal. They went on to explain that there is often: “anxiety on the owner’s part from being separated from their pet as well as the pet showing signs of stress.” The need for “tools and help needed for an easy transition to reunite the dog with its owner,” when they have been separated was mentioned. Areas where pets are housed in animal shelters are typically open to the public for viewing. Pets being kept in situations of IPV need to be housed in “a more private setting where abusers could not come and see the animal.”

Funding is a challenge for all types of animal service organizations, for different reasons. For example, in veterinary clinics, “. . . we have to weigh if we are to do for free or not help. As a business we want to help for sure but it can be a burden as a small business.” Others also shared that when they provide assistance, it is at their own cost. Related to funding, it was noted that animals that are in need of safekeeping may not be up to date on vaccinations and survivors of IPV are often unable to cover the cost. “For both kinds of animals [pets and livestock], questions arise as to who will pay the bills for the animals should they need vet care.” A foster-based rescue program noted that testing, deworming, and vaccinations must be provided to animals before they can be placed with a foster. In rural and northern communities, these challenges are exacerbated by a lack of available veterinary services. Other issues related to

funding and resources included staff and volunteer time to coordinate safekeeping and to care for the animals.

Animal welfare staff indicated that they require information regarding effectively responding to human victims in situations of IPV and felt that domestic violence shelter staff require information about animal care, as well as around reporting of animal abuse. Professionals highlighted the need to work toward effective information sharing and “cross-reporting between child protection and animal protection agencies.” Animal safety was raised by some respondents, with one writing, “many people go back to their abusive partner, it would be difficult to allow them to take the animal back into harm's way.”

Domestic Violence Shelters. In agreement with human service professionals, animal welfare professionals stated the need for domestic violence shelters that can accept clients with pets. “We struggle to recruit foster homes for this type of service. It would be best if shelters would accept pets into their facility.” One respondent noted that the local domestic violence shelter was not large enough to accept companion animals. Another stated that if domestic violence shelters could accept clients with pets, even temporarily, until a foster placement was located, this would help. An employee of a SPCA stressed “the benefits of having your animal with you in a time of crisis.”

Animal welfare professionals also expressed that a lack of pet-friendly rental housing is a significant barrier. Professionals hope to see “more landlords allowing pets. Often when people leave they are unable to find permanent housing that allows pets and they end up having to surrender their pets in the end which is very traumatizing.”

Discussion

It is evident from the results of the present study that both service providers who work with humans and those who work with animals have a clear understanding of the link. This is in line with previous research conducted in Canada (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020, 2021). In both qualitative and quantitative responses, these service providers also indicated that their awareness of the link between IPV, animal abuse, and animal safekeeping had changed or expanded in recent years. Service providers identified the connection between abuse and threats toward animals and coercive control and provided examples of ways that perpetrators use animals to manipulate and control victims/survivors.

Despite service providers' awareness of the link, not all human service professionals ask survivors of IPV about animal abuse at intake or help their clients plan for the safekeeping of their animals. The same is true for animal welfare professionals when they encounter situations of animal maltreatment that may indicate that humans are at risk. It is possible that when professionals feel that they will not be able to assist or are not aware of resources to offer, that they do not ask the question. Few service providers felt that there were adequate resources for animal safekeeping in their local area.

Stevenson, Fitzgerald, and Barrett (2018) wrote that supporting animal safekeeping in situations of IPV is a social justice endeavour—part of building a safer and more just society for both humans and animals. Stevenson and colleagues (2018) also stated that when IPV agencies ask about animals' safety, they are fulfilling their mandate by reducing barriers to victims' safety. Additionally, when animal welfare organizations ask about IPV, they help to build a society where both people and animals are free from violence.

Service providers are clear that safety and safekeeping of animals impacts an individual's planning and decision making to leave a relationship when IPV is taking place. Animal welfare and domestic violence service providers indicated that concern for animals was a significant factor in decision making, with some choosing not to leave and some returning to the home to care for pets or livestock—a finding consistent with Wuerch et al. (2020, 2021). As with previous research (Wuerch et al., 2020, 2021), professionals indicated that they were aware of people who were experiencing violence but chose not to seek services at a shelter because they could not bring their companion animals with them or because they would not be able to see their pets while they were being fostered or kept at an animal welfare agency. Whether or not animals harmed directly, care for animals prevents people experiencing IPV from leaving. Whether or not they perceive their animals to be in danger, victims/survivors of IPV who own animals may delay seeking help or attempting to leave the relationship because they are unable to take their animals with them and they do not want to be separated from their animals.

Service providers in the present study noted the significance of the human-animal bond. Pets offer emotional support and companionship to survivors and their children. When ending their relationship, many victims/survivors of IPV lose access to their home and must relocate for safety, sometimes staying in a domestic violence shelter. Losing access to their animals exacerbates the upheaval and the loss that victims/survivors and their children experience. Service providers relayed that being separated from their owners is upsetting for pets, as well.

Consistent with extant literature (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Jeffery et al., 2019; Moffitt et al., 2020; Wuerch et al., 2019), service providers in this study indicated barriers for victims/survivors living in rural, remote, and northern areas, including geographic isolation and transportation challenges. Some survivors must travel for hours to get to the nearest shelter or

service agency and in some northern communities, must travel by air. This makes fleeing with pets significantly more difficult. For rural women who own livestock, responsibility for the daily care of animals as well as financial investment in livestock are additional complications. Both human service and animal welfare professionals in the present study indicated they receive requests for assistance from victims/survivors who own livestock.

Recommendations

Service providers offered several recommendations, including: developing education and training for human and animal service organizations and the public regarding the connection between IPV and the need for animal safekeeping; ensuring that screening for concurrent animal abuse and animal safekeeping needs happens routinely in situations of IPV; training service providers to plan for animal safekeeping in situations of IPV; spreading awareness about available IPV services and animal welfare services; strengthening existing partnerships between IPV and animal service organizations; building new partnerships; and creating additional options, including pet-friendly domestic violence shelters.

Related to service providers' desire to see more options for survivors who own animals, it is necessary to investigate reasons why Emergency Intervention Orders are rarely used in situations of IPV in the province of Saskatchewan and to promote the use of Emergency Intervention Orders, when appropriate, for animal owners. For pet owners who are experiencing IPV, staying in the home (while the partner is required to leave) allows them to continue living with their pets without the need to seek emergency animal safekeeping after a violent incident has occurred. For survivors who own livestock, staying in the home allows them to maintain the animals' regular care and feeding schedules, thus ensuring that livestock continue to be cared for and that the victim is not required to return to the home where the partner still resides to provide

this care. Of course, an Emergency Intervention Order will not be a safe choice in all situations of IPV, but it is important that options are available and are offered by professionals so that victims/survivors can choose what they feel will work best in their situation.

Pet-friendly domestic violence shelters. Respondents in the present study highlighted the need for pet-friendly domestic violence shelters, including second-stage shelters. Human service and animal welfare professionals indicated the importance of the human-animal bond and the negative impact on victims/survivors, children, and pets when they are separated during a time of crisis. Further, service providers noted challenges with animal safekeeping, such as limited space at animal shelters, the length of time animals can be cared for by an animal shelter or other animal welfare organization, and challenges recruiting foster families to care for pets. Both animal welfare and human service professionals indicated support for pet-friendly domestic violence shelters and only a few respondents noted potential barriers (such as allergies). In the *Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T) Start-Up Manual*, Phillips (2020) outlines different shelter models to house pets with their owners and offers suggestions to overcoming potential issues, such as allergies, fears or objections from staff or other residents, and pets with behavioral problems. Ideally, some domestic violence shelters in the province will adapt to allow residents to bring pets with them. Infrastructure and equipment needs will vary, depending on shelters' existing facilities. It will be necessary to develop policies and guidelines for pets in shelter and partnerships with animal welfare professionals, including veterinarians, will be essential.

Even with pet-friendly domestic violence shelters available, the need for animal safekeeping at animal shelters or foster homes may be a more appropriate option for some families experiencing IPV, highlighting the importance of partnerships between the IPV and

animal welfare sectors. It is urgent and necessary that accessible, longer-term safekeeping options are developed and that survivors who access these services have a guarantee that they will be able to get their animals back.

The current lack of pet-friendly rental housing is a barrier to victims/survivors leaving IPV and a barrier to maintaining safety and stability after an initial stay at a domestic violence shelter. It is necessary to advocate for greater availability of second stage housing overall and for this housing to be pet-friendly and to advocate for pets to be allowed in publicly funded social housing. Further, landlords should consider renting to pet owners.

Respondents also highlighted barriers that exist in rural communities, given distances between service providers and a lack of animal welfare (and IPV) service providers in small communities. These gaps in service provision point to the need to create more safekeeping options and to develop partnerships with businesses and local volunteers to provide assistance in rural areas.

Resource Needs. Agency procedures (such as always asking questions about animal safety when working with victims of IPV or inquiring about the safety of humans when dealing with animal abuse) can be improved with clear direction from management and updated agency materials, such as intake forms. Training and information are needed to accompany any policy change. When staff ask about the link when potential clients initially phone for service, as well as at intake, they must be trained on what to do if a client identifies that animal abuse or IPV is occurring, as well as if safe accommodations for animals and humans will be needed, and be equipped with information on available resources. Therefore, it is necessary that resources are available. Both IPV and animal service providers stated funding as a major barrier to the provision of accessible and consistent support for animal safekeeping in situations of IPV.

In addition, economic abuse is a common form of IPV and many victims/survivors of IPV do not have financial resources (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). When escaping a relationship where IPV taking place, survivors are usually faced with costs of moving and relocating. Before accessing animal safekeeping, some pets need vaccinations, and animals of all types may need routine veterinary care and treatment of injuries caused by abuse. Additionally, some animal boarding options are paid services. Some survivors need assistance in finding animal care but are able to pay these costs, whereas other survivors cannot afford to. Animal welfare and domestic violence agencies should consider partnering to raise funds for these costs.

Education and Awareness. While it is clear from the results of the present study that the service providers who do this work are aware of the link and that awareness continues to increase, there is more work to do. Providing for animal safety and safekeeping is complex and professionals indicated an interest in receiving additional training on related topics—including training on the link in general, supporting survivors to plan for animal safekeeping, supporting clients who own livestock (including financial implications when livestock is the client's economic livelihood), safely transporting animals, laws pertaining to animal ownership and animal abuse, and establishing cross-sectoral partnerships.

It was noted by respondents that assistance with animal safekeeping came from informal supports in some cases, such as community volunteers fostering pets or neighbours caring for horses. To engage community support and promote willingness to help in situations of IPV, increased public awareness about the dynamics of IPV and the link between IPV, animal abuse, and animal safekeeping is necessary. Further, it is imperative to ensure that individuals providing informal safekeeping resources are not placed at risk from perpetrators of violence. In this way,

organizations such as Saskatchewan SPCA, PATHS, and their member agencies and partners have an important role in providing education on the link to professionals and the public.

Future Research Directions

While the present study adds to the small body of extant research on service providers' experiences working with survivors who owned livestock, the results make it clear that finding solutions for survivors who own livestock poses incredible challenges. In many cases, service providers were at a loss as to how to assist in these situations. Respondents offered a few suggestions for interventions when IPV and ownership of livestock intersect; however, more work is needed to develop practical solutions. Additional research into how the needs of victims/survivors of IPV and their animals could be better met in both rural and urban communities would significantly add to the existing knowledge and inform service provision.

Participation in this survey appeared to promote reflection on the intersecting issues of IPV, animal maltreatment, and animal safekeeping. Some respondents commented that after participating, they would be taking steps to talk to others in their workplace or at partner agencies (animal welfare or IPV services), gather more information about the issue, and think about their own organization's policies and processes. This illustrates that research can be a vehicle for knowledge translation, not only when results are communicated back to participants, but also during the research process.

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