

Giesbrecht, C. J., Stevenson, R., Zmud, L., & Fletcher, A. J. (2023.) Domestic violence and companion animals. In Shackleford, T. (Ed.) *The Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85493-5_291-1

This is a copy of the accepted manuscript. For the final published chapter, please visit https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85493-5_291-1 or email: Crystal J. Giesbrecht
Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS)
paths.research@sasktel.net

**Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence:
Companion Animals and Domestic Violence**

Crystal J. Giesbrecht¹, Rochelle Stevenson², Laura Zmud³, & Amber J. Fletcher⁴

¹ Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) & University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

² Department of Environment, Culture, and Society
Thompson Rivers University
Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada

³ Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

⁴ Department of Sociology & Social Studies
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence:
Companion Animals and Domestic Violence

Acronyms

DV	Domestic Violence
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
VAAC	Violence Against Animal Companions

Definitions

Companion animals, or pets, are kept for a variety of reasons, including company, pleasure, and protection. The most common examples of companion animals are dogs and cats; other companion animals include birds, rabbits, fish, rodents (e.g., guinea pigs or hamsters), or reptiles (e.g., snakes, geckos, or turtles). Larger animals, such as horses or pigs, can also be companion animals. Some humans may also keep exotic or wild animals as companions. The definition of “companion animal” employed in this chapter includes any animal considered a companion or pet by the human who cares for them. In this chapter, we use the terms “companion animals” and “pets” interchangeably.

We use the term “domestic violence” (DV) in a broad manner, encompassing intimate partner violence (IPV), child abuse and mistreatment, sibling abuse, abuse of older adults, and abuse of companion animals. IPV can include physical, psychological, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, and spiritual abuse; controlling behavior and excessive jealousy; and stalking or harassment (Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan [PATHS], 2018). In this chapter, we use DV to refer to the broader context and multiple familial

relationships within which violence occurs and IPV to refer to violence between current or former intimate partners.

We use “Violence Against Animal Companions (VAAC)” (Fitzgerald et al., 2021) interchangeably with the terms “animal maltreatment,” “animal mistreatment,” and “animal abuse” to include emotional and physical abuse and neglect directed toward companion animals, as well as threats to harm animals and instances of animals being killed or disappeared by perpetrators.

“Survivor” is often used when referring to humans who have experienced violence, survived, and are now living lives free from violence. “Victim” is used in legal contexts and may be appropriate when violence and abuse are currently occurring or when referring to victims who did not survive. People who have experienced DV or IPV may identify with either or both of these terms, depending on their own unique experiences. Recognizing the continuum from victim to survivor and the overlap between these terms, we often use “victim/survivor” in this chapter. The terms “victim,” “survivor,” and “victim/survivor” are used in relation to both humans and animals.

Introduction

Companion animals are important parts of many families; 58% of homes in Canada and 70% of homes in the US include companion animals (American Pet Products Association, 2022; Canadian Animal Health Institute, 2021). The number of families that include companion animals has been increasing in recent decades; in addition, many families have multiple companion animals and companion animals of different types (American Veterinary Medical Association, n.d.). The most common examples of companion animals are dogs and cats; however, birds, rabbits, fish, rodents, reptiles, and other small animals are also kept as pets.

Horses are also often considered companions by the humans that own/care for them. As well as being companions, animals may also be an income source (e.g., cattle ranching or sheep farming) or be used to support a survivor's financial livelihood (e.g., horses that are used to deliver riding lessons or for work on a farm or ranch).

VAAC often co-occurs with abuse of intimate partners and children (Ascione, 1998; Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Fitzgerald et al., 2021; Krienert et al., 2012; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Stevenson et al., 2018). This relationship between violence against humans (e.g., IPV, family violence, child abuse, abuse of older adults, gang violence) and violence against animals is commonly known as the "Violence Link" (Canadian Violence Link Coalition, 2022). As Arkow (2013) stated, "When animals are abused, people are at risk. When people are abused, animals are at risk."

IPV remains a pressing social issue, with 14%- 47% of adults in Canada and the United States experiencing physical or psychological IPV in their lifetime (Cotter, 2021; Niolon et al., 2017). IPV constitutes approximately one-third of all police-reported violent crime in Canada (Conroy, 2021). People of any gender can experience—and perpetrate—IPV; however, police-reported data indicates that the majority of victims/survivors are women. In Canada, for example, 79% of police-reported victims of IPV are women (Conroy, 2021).

Much of the existing research on the Violence Link has been conducted with women receiving services at DV shelters (e.g., Ascione, 1998; Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Hardesty et al., 2013; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). This research has highlighted the prevalence of VAAC co-occurring with IPV, as well as barriers to accessing services and safety for survivors with companion animals. A smaller body of research has investigated the experiences

of survivors who did not access shelter (e.g., Barrett et al., 2018; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Giesbrecht, 2022b). Research has also explored the connection between IPV and ownership of/care for large animals (i.e., livestock), such as cattle and horses (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Giesbrecht, 2022a,b; Wuerch et al., 2020). Other research has highlighted how the intersection of IPV and VAAC affects people who are gender- or sexually-diverse (Taylor et al., 2019). Studies have also investigated service providers' (including veterinary professionals and DV shelter and service workers) experiences with the link between IPV and animal maltreatment (e.g., Ascione et al., 1997; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Giesbrecht, 2022a; Krienert et al., 2012; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). Other work, such as that by Arkow (2015) and Lockwood (2016), has provided guidance for animal welfare professionals in recognizing and responding to concurrent animal abuse and DV.

DV occurs within all social groups; however, humans' experiences of violence often vary by social location. Intersectional approaches examine how aspects of social location—including gender, sexuality, race, class, age, and ability—come together to shape our lived experience within larger systems of power and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991; Hill Collins, 2015). Some intersectional research has shown how abuse of animals can exacerbate barriers for human survivors from marginalized groups (e.g., Taylor et al., 2019). Other research has used the lens of intersectionality to position animals as victims in their own right who are deserving of support services and to make broader links between structural forms of oppression—including speciesism (Adams, 1994; Taylor & Fraser, 2019).

Human-Animal Bond

There is a multitude of slightly varied definitions of the human-animal bond. For the purpose of this chapter, we use the definition set out by the Human Animal Bond Research

Institute (HABRI) (2022), which states that “the human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both. This includes, but is not limited to, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment.” The relationship and bond are dynamic and mutual.

The bond victims/survivors of IPV have with their companion animals has been documented through research (Barrett et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007; Hardesty et al., 2013). Research has also shown that survivors view their companion animals as members of their families (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Hardesty et al., 2013). Perpetrators of IPV often isolate victims from their other family or friend relationships as a form of control and violence; during this time, animals may be a particularly vital source of support, security, and comfort for victims/survivors of IPV and their children (Barrett et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2018; Crawford & Bohac Clark, 2012; Fitzgerald, 2007; Flynn, 2000; Hardesty et al., 2013; McDonald et al., 2019). When other relationships are lost, the bond that a victim/survivor of IPV has with their companion animal may become vital to the victim’s survival.

Unfortunately, due to the strength of the human-animal bond and the importance of the bond for a survivor of IPV, perpetrators may attempt to control victims by exploiting this bond (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Hardesty et al., 2013; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Wuerch et al., 2020). This could include the perpetrator abusing the animal in front of the victim if the victim did something the perpetrator disliked, denying the companion animal food or medical care, or threatening to kill the animal if the victim were to leave the violent home.

The term “pet owner” or “owner” has been debated (Carlisle-Frank & Frank, 2006; Taylor & Fraser, 2019). In *Speaking for Spot* (2008), Kay explained how the term “owner” infers a hierarchy in which the human is seen as superior or dominant to the animal. Drawing on the HABRI definition of the human-animal bond, the relationship should ideally be equal and mutually beneficial to both humans and animals. Therefore, the terms “guardian” and “caregiver” speak to the human commitment to the animal while recognizing both the human and the animal as equal parts of the relationship. Likewise, “companion animal” has been suggested by scholars as more appropriately describing this relationship than “pet” (Adams, 1994; Taylor & Fraser, 2019). In fact, the journal *Society & Animals* uses “companion animal” in place of “pet” and “guardian,” “keeper,” or “caregiver” as opposed to “owner” (Society & Animals, 2022).

Animal Ownership/Guardianship

Legislation involving animals varies between jurisdictions. Ownership, financial implications, custody, and protection orders are areas of the law that impact victims/survivors of IPV who care for animals. An understanding of animals’ cognition, consciousness, and ability to feel and subjectively think are increasing in Western science (Baciadonna et al., 2021). However, in contemporary legal systems, animals are not viewed as the sentient beings that they have been demonstrated to be by research in the social and natural sciences. Rather, animals are legally categorized as property. This poses challenges for survivors who care for animals, as well as those assisting and supporting survivors. Given that companion animals are viewed as property, courts have repeatedly expressed that animal custody disputes will not be viewed in a similar manner to that of a child custody dispute. In some cases, however, custody of companion

animals is included in divorce settlements, and although courts are reluctant, a “best interest of the pet” test has been used (Mickovic, 2022).

Ownership is most commonly decided based on who has invested money into the animal(s); this may be defined by who purchased the animal(s), who purchases their food and supplies, and who pays for veterinary care. Perpetrators of IPV will often control the victim’s finances; thus, it may appear that the perpetrator is the one who has financially invested in the animal(s), ultimately granting the perpetrator ownership even if the survivor was the caregiver of the animal(s). Ownership of animals is also complicated in cases where animals are linked to economic livelihood for the survivor or family. This could include a cattle ranch operation, a horse used to offer riding lessons, or other income sources related to an animal. If the perpetrator has ownership of the animal, it can be financially difficult for survivors to leave the relationship and the home with no income source. There is, however, an increasing number of protection orders that are inclusive of companion animals, allowing survivors to continue caring for and ensuring the safety of companion animals during the breakdown of the relationship between the perpetrator and survivor (Animal Welfare Institute, 2022).

Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Maltreatment

DV and IPV can include a range of forms and types of abuse and violence, such as emotional, verbal, financial, physical, sexual, and controlling behaviors. Similarly, VAAC can also include many forms, such as threats, neglect, physical, emotional, and sexual violence and abuse (Adams, 1995; Ascione et al., 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 2016, 2021; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020). Some abusive partners prevent victims/survivors from accessing veterinary care for animals who have been abused. Human victims may put themselves in harm’s way to protect their animals, and companion animals may also be harmed when they try to protect their humans.

Some human victims/survivors experience their partners killing their animal companions, whether through neglect or violence. Companion animals also “go missing” or have “accidents” that victims attribute to their partner’s violence (Adams, 1995; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2007). The most dangerous time for many victims of IPV is when they have left, or are planning to leave, the relationship. Danger to animals can similarly escalate when the human victim has left or is planning to leave. Some perpetrators threaten, harm, or even kill animals to send a message to the victim that they will not get out alive, or to hurt or punish the human victim.

Extant research has shown correlations between types of VAAC (e.g., physical violence and neglect, emotional abuse, and threats to harm) and IPV (e.g., physical and sexual violence, emotional and economic abuse, and controlling behaviors) (Barrett et al., 2020; Fitzgerald et al., 2021, 2022; Giesbrecht, 2022b; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). VAAC has been identified as a risk factor for severe IPV (Barrett et al., 2020; Walton-Moss et al., 2005) and domestic homicide (Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, 2019).

Animals may also be used as a method of control or coercion. In some relationships where IPV is occurring, the animal may not be physically harmed, but perpetrators may exploit the bond the victim has with their animal companion to coerce and control the victim. Additionally, extensive research has shown the connection between threats and coercive control against human partners and abuse directed at companion animals (Ascione et al., 1997, Barrett et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Fitzgerald et al., 2019, 2022; Flynn, 2000; Giesbrecht, 2022b; Hardesty et al., 2013; McDonald et al., 2019; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007; Wuerch et al., 2020).

Companion Animals and Barriers to Ending Relationships Where Intimate Partner Violence is Occurring

There are many reasons why people may delay or choose not to end relationships in which they are experiencing violence from their intimate partner. Some victims/survivors may love their partner and hope they will change—they do not want the relationship to end; they just want the violence to stop. Others may want to end the relationship but face barriers to doing so. These barriers can be internal or external and differ in relation to victims' intersecting identities and social locations. For many victims, fear is a barrier to escaping the relationship. Both researchers and Domestic Violence Death Reviews have documented that leaving is the most dangerous time for many victims—violence often escalates, and many victims are murdered after they have left the relationship or when their partner finds out that they are making plans to leave (Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, 2019). Perpetrators of IPV often threaten that they will harm or kill the victim if they leave; children, animal companions, and others that are close to the victim may also be the subject of these threats. Depending on several factors—including where the survivor lives and works, their access to safe housing and safety precautions (such as a cell phone or home alarm system), shared children and custody arrangements with the perpetrator, police response time, and the specificity of the threats made by the partner—some survivors may feel that they will be safer if they stay than if they leave. Victims/survivors may also feel that they will harm their children by breaking up the family or fear judgment from parents, extended family members, and their community if they initiate divorce. Cultural and faith communities' values can pose substantial barriers by discouraging relationship dissolution. Economic barriers also prevent survivors from ending relationships; if they are not employed or do not have access

to the family's income or own joint property or a business with their partner, survivors may lack the resources to live independently.

Research has provided insight into how victims' reasons for staying in or leaving violent relationships are influenced by their caring relationships with animals. Studies frequently report that survivors did not leave because they could not take their companion animals—either because their partner would not allow it or because they could not find anywhere to go with their animals and did not want to be separated. Victims often fear for their companion animals' safety if they are unable to take the animals with them when they leave the relationship (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Fitzgerald, 2007; Giesbrecht, 2002b; Hardesty et al., 2013; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). For example, Barrett et al. (2018) reported that 56% of survivors delayed leaving the abusive relationship because they were concerned about their animal companions, with 47% stating that they would have left their abuser sooner if they could have brought their pets to the shelter, where everyone could be safe. In other cases, however, harm to an animal companion may solidify a survivor's decision to end the relationship so they can seek safety with the animal (Barrett et al., 2018; Collins et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). Some victims/survivors have returned to their partner, or have considered returning, because their partner had possession of the companion animal(s) (Ascione et al., 1997; Barrett et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007); others reported visiting the home that they had left to continue providing care for animals left behind (Giesbrecht, 2022a; Wuerch et al., 2020). Not every survivor who lives with companion animals experiences their animals being abused or mistreated, however. Regardless, being responsible for the caregiving of animals poses a barrier to leaving the violent relationship to access safety for many survivors.

Finding shelter and securing permanent housing is often difficult for survivors, but housing solutions are much more difficult to find when survivors have animal companions. Low-income social housing and private rentals in many jurisdictions do not allow companion animals (Giesbrecht, 2022a,b; Lindsay, 2022), making it difficult for survivors to find new accommodations. Upon leaving their relationship, some human victims/survivors will initially stay in a DV shelter. Through the uncertainty and upheaval of leaving a violent relationship, leaving behind or losing access to companion animals can worsen the loss that survivors and children are experiencing during this time. Being separated from their humans is also upsetting for animals. The process of leaving a violent relationship is even more complicated with multiple companion animals, larger companion animals (such as horses), or livestock that may be threatened or harmed by the abusive partner. Traveling with animals, especially large animals, also poses significant challenges.

Pet-friendly DV shelters and temporary pet-safekeeping programs are limited in many areas, though the number of agencies providing these options is growing steadily (Lindsay, 2022; Phillips, 2020). Access to DV shelters and animal shelters or safekeeping programs (such as boarding at animal shelters or with foster families) differs depending on where survivors live and is limited in rural and northern communities. When animal safekeeping options are available, survivors may not be aware of their options, or may be informed by shelter staff only upon their arrival, which limits their ability to include their companion animals in their plan to leave (Barrett et al., 2020). Research has shown that service providers are often aware of the challenges that survivors who have animal companions face when escaping IPV (Ascione et al., 1997; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Giesbrecht, 2022a; Krienert et al., 2012; Lindsay, 2022; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020). DV shelter staff surveyed by Stevenson et al. (2018)

were aware of victims in the community who refused to come to the shelter because they would not leave their animals behind in a potentially dangerous situation.

Theoretical Frameworks

The theories surrounding DV broadly, and IPV specifically, have been presented in detail elsewhere in this volume. Here, we focus on the intersection of IPV and VAAC.

Several theories have been proposed to explain the intersection of animal mistreatment and violence against humans generally (Stevenson et al., 2023). Two of the most common are the violence graduation hypothesis (VGH) and the generality of deviance hypothesis (GDH). The VGH, made popular with the connection to serial murderers, posits that an individual begins with violence to animals and then “graduates” to perpetrating violence against humans. The core idea of the VGH is that the animal mistreatment must precede the human-directed violence. The VGH has mainly been tested with incarcerated populations (e.g., Trentham et al., 2018), with a consistent finding that animal abuse or cruelty in childhood is correlated with interpersonal violence offenses in adulthood. The challenge with much of this research is that it primarily uses retrospective reports to assess the temporal order of animal and human violence, which is fraught with memory recall issues. However, the covert and hidden nature of most animal mistreatment means that there are unlikely to be official records of such offenses; therefore, the reliance on retrospective reports is often necessary to test the VGH. The other challenge with such research using incarcerated populations is the nature of the sample itself. Incarcerated individuals do not have the opportunity to engage in animal maltreatment. This means that while the temporal element of the VGH may be supported from one direction (childhood to adulthood), there is no ability to test the validity of the theory (whether animal cruelty would continue in adulthood in concert with interpersonal violence).

Another theory is the generality of deviance hypothesis (GDH), in which animal cruelty is simply viewed as one of many antisocial or criminal behaviors. This is also referred to as the “deviance generalization hypothesis.” The research supporting the GDH is robust with a variety of samples (e.g., Arluke et al., 1999; Lucia & Killias, 2011). Arluke et al. (1999) used 153 case files of adults convicted of animal cruelty and matched the individuals with neighborhood controls (individuals similar in age, socioeconomic status, and street of residence). They then searched for criminal records of both the animal cruelty offenders and the neighborhood controls, finding that animal cruelty offenders were more likely to engage in both violent and non-violent offenses (Arluke et al., 1999). Importantly, Arluke and colleagues did not find a temporal order to the animal maltreatment, instead finding that violence toward animals was equally likely to follow interpersonal violence as it was to precede such acts. Lucia and Killias (2011) analyzed data from the 2006 Swiss National Self-Reported Delinquency Survey to assess the connection between animal maltreatment and criminal behavior. They found significant relationships between animal maltreatment and both violent (robbery, assault, fighting) and non-violent (vandalism, shoplifting) offenses, though the connection to violence (e.g., robbery, assault) was stronger (Lucia & Killias, 2011). While there is support for both the VGH and GDH in the literature, the GDH offers a better explanation for the inclusion of animals in situations of DV because, as discussed previously, VAAC may be interwoven with the violence directed towards human family members.

One aspect missing from both the VGH and the GDH is attention to the role of power in violence toward others. Several theories focusing on the intersection of DV/IPV and animal maltreatment explicitly consider power and control. For example, the Power and Control Wheel (Pence & Paymar, 1993) highlights the different spheres in which the abuser exerts control,

including physical and sexual violence; coercion and threats; intimidation; emotional abuse; economic abuse; isolation; minimizing, denying, and blaming; using children; and using male privilege. In the Power and Control Wheel, VAAC is placed alongside other acts of intimidation, such as “smashing things” and “destroying her property” (Pence & Paymar, 1993, p. 3). This represents one way that the intersection of animal maltreatment and IPV is conceptualized: with VAAC as a tool of the abuser for controlling the human family members. Fitzgerald et al. (2019) surveyed survivors in Canadian DV shelters, asking, in part, about the abuse that their companion animals experienced as well as the perceived motivations for the animal mistreatment. The survivors connected emotional abuse, threats, and neglect of the animal to the abuser’s need to exert power and control, and they noted how animals were used as a tool in the abuse of human family members. Interestingly, however, the survivors in Fitzgerald et al.’s (2019) study did not connect power and control to *physical* abuse of the animals. The authors postulate that survivors can more easily connect threats with controlling behaviors and that physical and/or lethal violence towards the companion animal risks damaging the “tool” (i.e., the companion animal). The challenge with this research is that it tends to center the victimization of humans, instrumentalizing the abuse of animals, which overshadows the suffering and abuse that animals may suffer. That said, the anthropocentric approach of illustrating how animal maltreatment impacts human survivors has opened space for important policy changes, including more animal-friendly DV shelters and foster or boarding programs for companion animals of IPV survivors (e.g., Giesbrecht 2022a; Lindsay, 2022; Phillips, 2020; Stevenson et al., 2018).

Some theorists, primarily feminist scholars, have pushed back against the instrumental conceptualization of companion animals, arguing for conceptualizing animals as victims/survivors of DV in the same manner as humans. Adams (1995) theorized that the

vulnerability of women, children, and animals embedded in the patriarchal social order is part of the foundation of DV. Adams (1995) connected violence against women, children, and animals to patriarchal hierarchies which position men above women and also position animals and women together. This hierarchy is premised on a culture/nature dualism where men are aligned with valued culture, and women are associated with the less valued nature (and animals). Evidence of these hierarchies, and the power and control dynamics present within IPV and DV, has been provided by research with survivors (e.g., Adams, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007).

Adams (1995) highlighted how power and control are motivations for the abuse of both humans and animals. For example, motivations for violence against the animal may be to demonstrate or confirm the perpetrator's own power or to teach submission, illustrating to the human family members not only that he is in control but that they are the more vulnerable and less powerful members of the family. The research by Fitzgerald et al. (2019), in which survivors clearly connected their abuser's motives to power and control, supported this theory.

Simmons and Lehmann (2007) used the Checklist of Controlling Behaviors with a sample of survivors to assess the breadth of IPV and the correlations with companion animal abuse, finding that threats or harm to companion animals were connected with every category of controlling behavior (e.g., emotional abuse, minimizing behavior, blaming victim, intimidation, threats, physical abuse, male entitlement). Giesbrecht (2022b) found similar results. Adams (1995) also stated that threats or violence against animals are motivated by preventing the victim from leaving, to get the victim to return to the relationship (e.g., "I'll hurt your pet if you don't come back now"), or as punishment for leaving. These motives are all based in the control over

the victim/survivor and are supported by subsequent studies (e.g., Barrett et al., 2018; Stevenson et al., 2018).

Measuring the Link

Although existing research has clearly demonstrated the link between DV/IPV and abuse of animals, measuring the prevalence of animal maltreatment in the context of IPV is challenging. First, animal maltreatment is a covert offense—the victim cannot speak of their own abuse and relies on humans to report the mistreatment to others. Second, VAAC consists of a constellation of behaviors, and researchers have not defined or measured maltreatment consistently. That said, several studies over the past two decades have offered an indication of the prevalence of animal maltreatment in the context of IPV.

An early study in the United States, based on a sample of women staying in DV shelters, indicated that 71% of survivors' companion animals were threatened or harmed by the abusers (Ascione, 1998). A subsequent study by Ascione and colleagues (2007) found that 52% of women in a shelter sample reported threats or harm to their companion animals. Other US-based research conducted during this time reported a similar proportion of animals who had been threatened or harmed, ranging from 48% (Faver & Strand, 2003) to 53% (Carlisle-Frank et al., 2004). International studies also revealed similar proportions of companion animals being threatened or harmed in situations of IPV: 56% in Ireland (Allen et al., 2006) and 53% in Australia (Volant et al., 2008). These studies used smaller samples, mainly from survivors in DV shelters.

The challenge is that these samples are often not representative of the larger population. DV shelter clients generally have experienced more severe abuse at the hands of their intimate partners than those who do not seek shelter and because the shelter is often a space of last resort,

survivors in shelter may have fewer social and financial resources than others. While these smaller shelter-based samples have been crucial in understanding the connection between IPV and VAAC, offering nuanced accounts of the multiple types of violence perpetrated, the need for prevalence research using large representative samples is a consistent call in the literature.

Recent Canadian research has met this call, using data from the 2014 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS) to assess the prevalence of VAAC and IPV. The 2014 GSS was the first to include a question specifically about animal maltreatment in the context of IPV, asking respondents if their spouse or partner “harms or threatens to harm” their pets. Fitzgerald, Barrett, and Gray (2021) found that there was a significant difference between the prevalence of animal maltreatment experienced by the general population (less than 1%) and VAAC experienced by people who also experienced IPV (just over 13%). Female survivors, as well as those with a disability, were significantly more likely to report animal maltreatment in the context of IPV, as were younger respondents and those with lower incomes (Fitzgerald et al. 2021, 2022).

When individual types of IPV were analyzed, physical (e.g., beaten, strangled [“choked”], hit, kicked, slapped) and sexual (e.g., forced sex, sex without consent) violence were both statistically significantly higher among respondents who reported VAAC (Fitzgerald et al., 2021). Further, respondents reporting animal mistreatment had experienced statistically significantly higher rates of emotional abuse (e.g., limiting contact with others, jealous behavior, insults, destroying possessions) and financial abuse (e.g., preventing access to income, forcing the victim to provide money) (Fitzgerald et al., 2022). The proportions of respondents reporting the different types of IPV are illustrated in Figure 1. This large-sample research illustrates the prevalence of co-occurring VAAC and IPV.

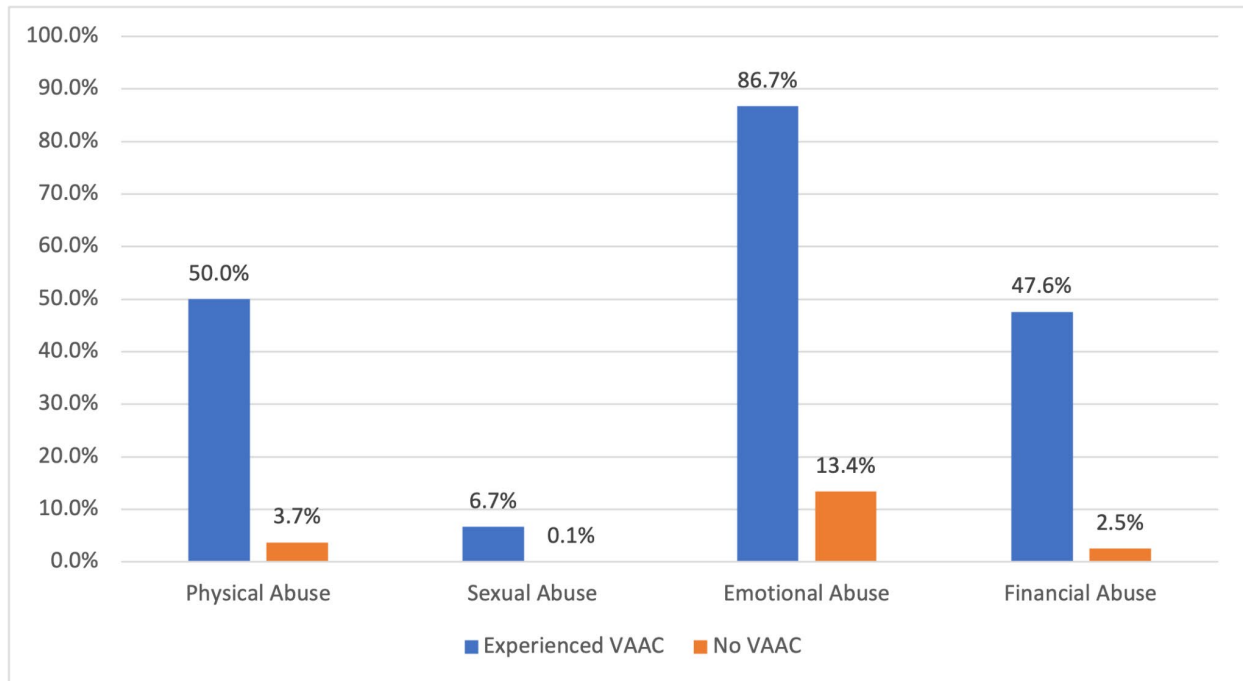


Figure 1: Prevalence of Violence Against Animal Companions based on the 2014 General Social Survey (n = 17,850) (adapted from Fitzgerald et al., 2021; Fitzgerald et al., 2022)

Another challenge to determining the prevalence of VAAC is how animal maltreatment is defined. Most of the studies noted above typically measured animal mistreatment with simple questions: whether the partner had ever threatened a companion animal and whether the partner had ever harmed or killed a companion animal. If the answer is yes, this question may be followed up with an invitation to describe the threats or harm or provide examples. This is not necessarily the case with all studies; the 2014 GSS asked a single question: whether the partner “harms or threatens to harm your pet(s),” with no follow-up for additional detail. While the simple measure was a needed starting place, there are challenges with single-question measurements of animal mistreatment. Not everyone will identify the “smaller” actions that comprise animal maltreatment as such; for example, refusing food or water may not be conceptualized as harm in the same light as kicking or throwing an animal. Yet, refusing food

and water is considered a criminal offense in Canada and the United States. A simple question about whether the animal was threatened or harmed can lead to an underestimation of the prevalence of VAAC. Recognizing these limitations, Fitzgerald and colleagues (2016) developed the 21-item Partner Treatment of Animals Scale (PTAS), a comprehensive measure of the range of behaviors that comprise animal maltreatment. Using the more nuanced assessment of animal maltreatment, the authors found that 89% of women in Canadian DV shelters who had pets reported that their animal companions had been mistreated (Barrett et al., 2018). Overall, this body of research illustrates that VAAC in the context of IPV is not a rare occurrence.

Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence and Animal Maltreatment

Broadly, violent behavior can be categorized into two types: reactive (expressive) or proactive (instrumental). Individuals who use reactive violence are impulsive and lack self-control, whereas instrumental offenders are known to be callous, cruel, and sadistic, as well as more controlled. Proactive violence is deliberate and enacted with a goal in mind, whereas the choice to use reactive violence comes in response to a perceived provocation (Wright et al., 2015).

Research indicates the existence of IPV perpetrator subtypes (Ali et al., 2016). Perpetrators differ in terms of the ways they enact violence and in their choice of victims. Some of the typologies validated by empirical research include perpetrators who are antisocial and violent to their partners as well as others and those who confine violence to their partner (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000); other typologies differentiate the use of coercive control (intimate terrorism) from IPV that is not rooted in the dynamics of control (e.g., Johnson, 2006). Coercive control is a continuum of behavior; tactics may include surveillance, monitoring, regulation, and control of all the victim's daily activities by using isolation, degradation, and

humiliation. Most of the existing IPV typologies do not address animal abuse (Ali et al., 2016), however the dataset analyzed by Johnson (2006) included “Directs his anger to the children or pets” as a potential response to the question “When your husband is angry with you, how does he show it?” In Johnson’s (2006) typology, VAAC is identified as a behavior of the intimate terrorist.

Research with survivors of IPV who had companion animals has illustrated survivors’ experiences with different types of perpetrators who harm intimate partners and animals. Threats and violence toward animal companions are often part of a pattern of coercive control (Barrett et al., 2020; Fitzgerald, 2007; Fitzgerald et al., 2019; Flynn, 2000; Giesbrecht, 2022b; Hardesty et al., 2013; Johnson, 2006; McDonald et al., 2019). Some perpetrators use instrumental violence toward animals and humans; others may not enact violence but use threats toward animals to terrorize and control human victims. Other perpetrators are abusive and cruel to both animals and people; in some cases, this may be reactive or impulsive and not rooted in dynamics of power and control (Giesbrecht, 2022b). As Arkow (2013) stated, violence against humans is an indicator that animals are also at risk; likewise, violence against animals is an indicator of risk to humans. Domestic Violence Death Reviews (e.g., Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario, 2019) have noted violence against pets as a risk factor for domestic homicide.

Not all perpetrators of IPV harm animals, however; some report positive relationships with their pets (Stevenson, 2018). Regardless, care for animal companions poses barriers to safety when survivors are ending or leaving relationships (Ascione et al., 2007; Barrett et al., 2018, 2020; Collins et al., 2018; Fitzgerald, 2007; Giesbrecht, 2002b; Hardesty et al., 2013; Stevenson et al., 2018; Wuerch et al., 2020).

Children and Companion Animals

Research demonstrates that IPV, child maltreatment, and abuse of companion animals commonly co-occur (Ascione et al., 2007; Krienert et al., 2012; Simmons & Lehmann, 2007). Children are harmed not only by exposure to DV/IPV; they are harmed by the various ways that the perpetrator's behavior impacts the family's functioning (Mandel & Wright, 2019). Further, children are harmed by exposure to violence and threats directed toward human and animal family members (Ascione et al., 2007; Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Fitzgerald, 2007; Hawkins et al., 2019; McDonald et al., 2019). Just as adult survivors experience perpetrators threatening or harming their animal companions as part of a pattern of coercive control, perpetrators also engage in VAAC to coercively control children (McDonald et al., 2019). Children can also be harmed by perpetrators when they intervene in an attempt to stop physical assaults on companion animals (McDonald et al., 2019).

Children form strong attachments with companion animals (Hawkins et al., 2019; McDonald et al., 2019). Animals provide companionship, support, and love for children. When children experience or are exposed to violence and abuse, relationships with companion animals provide stability and comfort. A study by Hawkins and colleagues (2019) found that children's positive engagement with companion animals mitigated internalizing and posttraumatic stress symptoms associated with exposure to IPV.

Adult survivors have shared that they did not leave, delayed leaving, or returned home because of their children's attachment to their animals (McDonald et al., 2019). Children worry about their animal companions when they are left behind and, in some cases, plead with their mothers to return home to where their animals are (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Giesbrecht, 2022a). In situations of DV, adult and child survivors must often leave their home and their

community. Children experience upheaval when they have to leave their homes and may lose connections to step-siblings or extended family members. Animals have been a constant source of emotional support for many children who have experienced or been exposed to violence; the loss of these relationships adds another layer of harm for child victims.

IPV and Animals in Rural Communities

Victims in rural areas experience several unique risk factors and barriers to safety. Geographical isolation—exacerbated by weather and inaccessible roads—can create barriers to reaching services and support. Rural people may face protracted response times for emergency services (McKay, 2019; Ruddell & O’Connor, 2022) and upon leaving a violent situation, they may encounter minimal housing options and limited DV services (Maki, 2019). IPV in rural communities is further complicated by a lack (or perceived lack) of anonymity or confidentiality; patriarchal cultures and values; firearm ownership; and responsibilities for farm operations (Doherty & Hornosty, 2008). Responsibility for animals, including large animals such as horses, sheep, and cattle, create an additional barrier for some rural survivors. Research on IPV in rural areas has shown that responsibility and care for livestock, financial investment in animals, and concern for animals’ safety create complex barriers for many rural women experiencing IPV (Crawford & Bohac Clarke, 2012; Doherty & Hornosty, 2008; Giesbrecht, 2022a,b; Wuerch et al., 2020).

Addressing the Link: Law, Policy, and Services

The majority of US states allow for the inclusion of companion animals in DV protection orders; Maine was the first state to pass such legislation in 2006 (Animal Welfare Institute, 2022). There are two ways that companion animals may be included in protection orders—when abuse or threats toward animals form the basis for requesting a protection order and with a “stay

away and/or pet custody” provision (Animal Welfare Institute, 2022). In jurisdictions without specific legislation pertaining to the protection of companion animals, they may be included in conditions of temporary orders (e.g., temporary restraining orders, emergency protection orders, or emergency intervention orders). Recognizing the human-animal bond and the prevalence of co-occurring violence against humans and animals, there are an increasing number of laws recognizing violence against an animal as part of the pattern of DV/IPV. For example, in Kentucky, Bill KY HB319—which was signed into law in 2022—includes VAAC in the definition of DV if violence against the animal is used as coercive conduct.

Co-sheltering—i.e., sheltering survivors and their companion animals together—is an important service for human and animal victims/survivors. Sheltering Animals & Families Together® (SAF-T) offers guidance for DV shelters on how to shelter companion animals along with their families, as well as a listing of pet-friendly DV shelters in the US and around the world (Phillips, 2020; saftprogram.org). In Canada, the Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), PATHS, and STOPS to Violence (2021) collaborated on a viability report to provide guidance for DV shelters that wish to shelter humans and companion animals together, and the BC Society of Transition Houses (2022) developed a toolkit for DV shelters including sample policies and forms. Other options for the temporary safekeeping of companion animals in situations where DV is occurring include offsite boarding at animal welfare organizations (such as Humane Societies or SPCAs), veterinarians’ offices, kennels, or with foster families.

Recently, the Canadian Standing Committee on the Status of Women (2022) put forth two recommendations pertaining to DV/IPV and animals: “That the Government of Canada review programs dedicated to providing care for the pets of survivors of [IPV], to: ensure

education for all stakeholders like police services and shelters to ensure they have the information they need to refer women to services that can foster their pets when they leave an abusive relationship; and explore funding for the care of companion pets and shelter of survivors of abuse when they leave an abusive relationship” (p. 6).

Conclusion

Research has demonstrated the prevalence of co-occurring IPV and VAAC. We know that VAAC is an indicator of risk to humans; likewise, when children and adults are being abused, animals in the home are also at risk. Care for companion animals creates barriers for survivors to safely leave relationships where they are experiencing IPV. Recent research, legislation, and expansion of services, including animal safekeeping programs and co-sheltering at DV shelters, indicate increasing awareness of the importance of the human-animal bond and the risk for both human and animal family members when DV/IPV is occurring.

References

- Adams, C. J. (1994). Adams, C. J. (1994). Bringing peace home: A feminist philosophical perspective on the abuse of women, children, and pet animals. *Hypatia*, 9(2), 63-84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1994.tb00433.x>
- Adams, C.J. (1995). Woman-battering and harm to animals. In C.J. Adams and J. Donovan (Eds.), *Animals & Women: Feminist Theoretical Explanations* (pp. 55-84). Duke University Press.
- Ali, P. A., Dhingra, K., & McGarry, J. (2016). A literature review of intimate partner violence and its classifications. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 31, 16-25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2016.06.008>
- Allen, M., Gallagher, B., & Jones, B. (2006). Domestic violence and the abuse of pets: Researching the link and its implications in Ireland. *Practice: Social Work in Action*, 18(3), 167-181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09503150600904060>
- American Pet Products Association (2022). *Pet Industry Market Size, Trends & Ownership Statistics*. https://www.americanpetproducts.org/press_industrytrends.asp
- American Veterinary Medical Association (n.d.). *U.S. Pet Ownership Statistics*. <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/reports-statistics/us-pet-ownership-statistics>
- Animal Welfare Institute (2022). *Including Pets in Protection Orders: A State-by-State Guide*. <https://awionline.org/content/including-pets-protection-orders>
- Arkow, P. (2013). *The Link: How You Can Use it to Inform Your Work*. <http://nationallinkcoalition.org/faqs/what-is-the-link>
- Arkow, P. (2015). Recognizing and responding to cases of suspected animal cruelty, abuse, and

- neglect: What the veterinarian needs to know. *Veterinary Medicine: Research and Reports*, 6, 349- 259. <https://doi.org/10.2147/VMRR.S87198>
- Arluke, A., Levin, J., Luke, C., & Ascione, F.R. (1999). The relationship of animal abuse to violence and other forms of antisocial behavior. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 14(9), 963-975. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626099014009004>
- Ascione, F. R. (1998). Battered women's reports of their partner's and their children's cruelty to animals. *Journal of Emotional Abuse*, 1(1), 119-133. https://doi.org/10.1300/J135v01n01_06
- Ascione, F. R., Weber, C. V., & Wood, D. S. (1997). The abuse of animals and domestic violence: A national survey of shelters for women who are battered. *Society & Animals*, 5(3), 205-218. <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853097X00132>
- Ascione, F. R., Weber, C. V., Thompson, T. M., Heath, J., Maruyama, M., & Hayashi, K. (2007). Battered pets and domestic violence: Animal abuse reported by women experiencing intimate violence and by nonabused women. *Violence Against Women*, 13(4), 354-373. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801207299201>
- Baciadonna, L., Cornero, F. M., Emery, N. J., & Clayton, N. S. (2021). Convergent evolution of complex cognition: Insights from the field of avian cognition into the study of self-awareness. *Learning and Behavior*, 49(1), 9–22. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13420-020-00434-5>
- Barrett, B. J., Fitzgerald, A., Peirone, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2018). Help-seeking among abused women with pets: Evidence from a Canadian sample. *Violence and Victims*, 33(4), 604- 626. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-17-00072>
- Barrett, B. J., Fitzgerald, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2020). Animal maltreatment as a

- risk marker of more frequent and severe forms of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(23- 24), 5131-5156.
- <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517719542>
- BC Society of Transition Houses. (2022). *Sheltering Pets and People: A Toolkit for Women's Transition House and Support Programs*. <https://bcsth.ca/publication/sheltering-pets-and-people/>
- Carlisle-Frank, P., Frank, J. M., & Nielsen, L. (2004). Selective battering of the family pet. *Anthrozoös*, 17(1), 26-42. <https://doi.org/10.2752/089279304786991864>
- Carlisle-Frank, P., & Frank, J. M. (2006). Owners, guardians, and owner-guardians: Differing relationships with pets. *Anthrozoös*, 19(3), 225-242.
- <https://doi.org/10.2752/089279306785415574>
- Canadian Animal Health Institute. (2021, February 15). *2020 Canadian pet population figures released*. <https://cahi-icsa.ca/news/2020-canadian-pet-population-figures-released>
- Canadian Violence Link Coalition (2022). *What is the Violence Link?* Humane Canada.
- <https://humanecanada.ca/violence-link>
- Collins, E. A., Cody, A. M., McDonald, S. E., Nicotera, N., Ascione, F. R., & Williams, J. H. (2018). A template analysis of intimate partner violence survivors' experiences of animal maltreatment: Implications for safety planning and intervention. *Violence Against Women*, 24(4), 452-476. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801217697266>
- Conroy, S. (2021). Section 3: Police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada, 2019. In S. Conroy (Ed.) *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2019* (pp. 29- 42). Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00001-eng.pdf>

Cotter, A. (2021). *Intimate partner violence in Canada, 2018: An overview*. (Statistics Canada

Catalogue no. 85-002-X.) [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.pdf)

[x/2021001/article/00003-eng.pdf](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.pdf)

Crawford, D., & Bohac Clarke, V. (2012). *Inside the Cruelty Connection: The Role of Animals in Decision-Making by Domestic Violence Victims in Rural Alberta*. Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>

Doherty, D., & Hornosty, J. (2008). *Exploring the Links: Firearms, Family Violence and Animal Abuse in Rural Communities*. The Canada Firearms Centre, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Public Safety Canada.

Faver, C. A., & Strand, E. B. (2003). To leave or to stay? Battered women's concern for vulnerable pets. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18(12), 1367-1377.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260503258028>

Fitzgerald, A. J. (2007). "They gave me a reason to live": The protective effects of companion animals on the suicidality of abused women. *Humanity & Society*, 31(4), 355-378.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/016059760703100405>

Fitzgerald, A. J., Barrett, B. J., & Gray, A. (2021). The Co-occurrence of animal abuse and intimate partner violence among a nationally representative sample: Evidence of "The Link" in the general population. *Violence and Victims*, 36(6), 770–792.

<https://doi.org/10.1891/VV-D-19-00047>

Fitzgerald, A. J., Barrett, B. J., Gray, A., & Cheung, C. H. (2022). The connection between

- animal abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse in intimate relationships: Evidence from a nationally representative sample of the general public. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(5-6), 2331-2353. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520939197>
- Fitzgerald, A., Barrett, B., Shwom, R., Stevenson, R., & Chernyak, E. (2016). Development of the partner's treatment of animals scale. *Anthrozoös*, 29(4), 611-625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08927936.2016.1228760>
- Fitzgerald, A. J., Barrett, B. J., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2019). Animal maltreatment in the context of intimate partner violence: A manifestation of power and control? *Violence Against Women*, 25(15). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801218824993>
- Flynn, C. P. (2000). Woman's best friend: Pet abuse and the role of companion animals in the lives of battered women. *Violence Against Women*, 6(2), 162-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778010022181778>
- Giesbrecht, C. J. (2022a). Animal safekeeping in situations of intimate partner violence: Experiences of human service and animal welfare professionals. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(17-18), 16931-16960. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211025037>
- Giesbrecht, C. J. (2022b). Intimate partner violence, animal maltreatment, and concern for animal safekeeping: A survey of survivors who owned pets and livestock. *Violence Against Women*, 28(10), 2334-2358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012211034215>
- Hardesty, J. L., Khaw, L., Ridgway, M. D., Weber, C., & Miles, T. (2013). Coercive control and abused women's decisions about their pets when seeking shelter. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(13), 2617-2639. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513487994>
- Hawkins, R. D., McDonald, S. E., O'Connor, K., Matijczak, A., Ascione, F. R., & Williams, J.

- H. (2019). Exposure to intimate partner violence and internalizing symptoms: The moderating effects of positive relationships with pets and animal cruelty exposure. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 98, 1- 13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104166>
- Hill Collins, P. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142>
- Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Meehan, J. C., Herron, K., Rehman, U., & Stuart, G. L. (2000). Testing The Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) batterer typology. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical psychology*, 68(6), 1000-1019. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.68.6.1000>
- Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI) (2022). What is the Human Animal Bond? <https://habri.org/about/>
- Johnson, M. P. (2006). Conflict and control: Gender symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 12(11), 1003- 1018. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801206293328>
- Kay, N. (2008). *Speaking for Spot*. Trafalgar Square Books.
- Krienert, J. L., Walsh, J. A., Matthews, K., & McConkey, K. (2012). Examining the nexus between domestic violence and animal abuse in a national sample of service providers. *Violence and Victims*, 27(2), 280-295. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.27.2.280>
- Lindsay, S. M. (2022). The “problem” of multispecies families: Speciesism in emergency intimate partner violence (IPV) shelters. *Social Sciences*, 11(6), 1- 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11060242>
- Lockwood, R., & Arkow, P. (2016). Animal abuse and interpersonal violence: The cruelty connection and its implications for veterinary pathology. *Veterinary Pathology*, 53(5), 910-918. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0300985815626575>

- Lucia, S., & Killias, M. (2011). Is animal cruelty a marker of interpersonal violence and delinquency? Results of a Swiss national self-report study. *Psychology of Violence, 1*(2), 93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022986>
- Maki, K. (2019). *More Than a Bed: A National Profile of VAW Shelters and Transition Houses*. Women's Shelters Canada. <https://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/More-Than-a-Bed-Final-Report.pdf>
- Mandel, D., & Wright, C. (2019). Building on the Greenbook: A perpetrator pattern-based approach to improve child welfare's response to domestic violence. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal 70*(4), 119-135. <https://doi-org.libproxy.uregina.ca/10.1111/jfcj.12155>
- McDonald, S. E., Collins, E. A., Maternick, A., Nicotera, N., Graham-Bermann, S., Ascione, F. R., & Williams, J. H. (2019). Intimate partner violence survivors' reports of their children's exposure to companion animal maltreatment: A qualitative study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 34*(13), 2627-2652. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516689775>
- McKay, J. (2019). *Study on Crime in Rural Areas of Canada: Report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security*. House of Commons, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/SECU/Reports/RP10493887/securp33/securp33-e.pdf>
- Mickovic, S. (2022). Fur-Ever Homes after Divorce: The Future of Pet Custody. *Animal Law, 28*(1), 47-62.
- Niolon, P. H., Kearns, M., Dills, J., Rambo, K., Irving, S., Armstead, T., & Gilbert, L. (2017). *Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices*. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control,

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/ipv-technicalpackages.pdf>

Office of the Chief Coroner for Ontario (2019). *Domestic Violence Death Review Committee 2018 Annual Report*.

<https://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca/english/Deathinvestigations/OfficeChiefCoroner/Publicationsandreports/DVDRC2018Report.html>

Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) (2018).

Information for survivors. <https://pathssk.org/about-abuse/information-for-survivors/>

Pence, E., & Paymar, M. (1993). *Education Groups for Men Who Batter*. Springer.

Phillips, A. (2020). *Sheltering Animals and Families Together (SAF-T) Start-Up Manual* (3rd Ed.). <https://saftprogram.org/>

Ruddell, R., & O'Connor, C. (2022). What do the rural folks think? Perceptions of police performance. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 16(1), 107-121.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/policing/paab063>

Saskatchewan SPCA, Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), & STOPS to Violence (2021). *Pet Friendly Shelter Viability Report*.

<https://www.violencelink.ca/resources>

Society & Animals (2022). *Instructions for Authors*.

https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/SOAN.pdf

Simmons, C. A., & Lehmann, P. (2007). Exploring the link between pet abuse and controlling behaviors in violent relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 22(9), 1211-1222.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260507303734>

Standing Committee on the Status of Women (2022). *Towards a Violence-Free Canada:*

Addressing and Eliminating Intimate Partner and Family Violence.

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/FEWO/report-4>

Stevenson, R. (2018). *Men's Voices: Masculinities, Companion Animals, and Intimate Relationships*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Windsor.]

<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/7573>

Stevenson, R., Fitzgerald, A., & Barrett, B. J. (2018). Keeping pets safe in the context of intimate partner violence: Insights from domestic violence shelter staff in Canada. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 33(2), 236-252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109917747613>

Stevenson, R., Fitzgerald, A., & Verbora, A. (2023). Examining animal abuse through a sociological lens: An expanding and evolving theoretical field (pp. 433- 474). In C. L. Reyes & M. P. Brewster (Eds.) *Animal cruelty: A multidisciplinary approach to understanding* (3rd ed.). Carolina Academic Press.

Trentham, C. E., Hensley, C., & Policastro, C. (2018). Recurrent childhood animal cruelty and its link to recurrent adult interpersonal violence. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62(8), 2345-2356.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X1772017>

Taylor, N., & Fraser, H. (2019). *Companion Animals and Domestic Violence: Rescuing Me, Rescuing You*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04125-0>

Taylor, N., Fraser, H., & Riggs, D. W. (2019). Domestic violence and companion animals in the context of LGBT people's relationships. *Sexualities*, 22(5-6), 821-836.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716681476>

Volant, A. M., Johnson, J. A., Gullone, E., & Coleman, G. J. (2008). The relationship between

domestic violence and animal abuse: An Australian study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(9), 1277-1295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260508314309>

Walton-Moss, B. J., Manganello, J., Frye, V., & Campbell, J. C. (2005). Risk factors for intimate partner violence and associated injury among urban women. *Journal of Community Health*, 30(5), 377-389. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-005-5518-x>

Wright, J. P., Tibbetts, S. G., & Daigle, L. E. (2015). *Criminals in the making: Criminality across the life course* (2nd Ed.). SAGE.

Wuerch, M. A., Giesbrecht, C. J., Price, J. A. B., Knutson, T., & Wach, F. (2020). Examining the relationship between intimate partner violence and concern for animal care and safekeeping. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(9-10), 1866-1887. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517700618>