

**Animal abuse is domestic violence.
Domestic abuse and animal abuse
often are related.**

For many being battered, pets are a source of comfort providing strong emotional support. By threatening to hurt or kill the family pet, abusive partners manipulate, intimidate, and terrorize their victims.

Fearing for the safety of their pets, but with nowhere to take them, many battered partners and children end up staying in abusive situations.

Veterinarians and practice staff have the potential to play a lifesaving role in the prevention of and response to domestic violence and animal abuse.

You only need to ask.



Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society

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**For many people being battered,
pets are a source of comfort
and emotional support.**

**Do you know
a pet in an abusive
environment?**

**Did you know
domestic violence
includes animal abuse?**

What every pet owner
and pet lover should know.

*Vets caring for pets and their people.
Domestic violence hurts the whole family.*



The Facts

Victims of domestic violence often sacrifice their own safety to protect their pets.

- Approximately 70% of battered women report that abusers hurt, killed or threatened their pets to control them and their children.
- Approximately 30% of women in shelters reported emergency veterinary care was needed for their pet due to abuse.
- More than 40% of domestic violence victims stay in abusive situations out of fear of what would happen to their pets if they left.
- Roughly half of children from households with domestic violence had protected pets by directly intervening to keep their pets from being harmed by an abuser.
- The number of annual domestic violence cases recorded in Buffalo City Court jumped 46% over the past decade, from 2,272 in 2008 to 3,312 in 2018 according to court records.
- Nearly one million animals are abused or killed by domestic violence annually.
- Children who abuse animals may have been abused themselves.
- Young people who perpetrate or witness animal cruelty are more likely to commit other violent acts.



Warning signs

If you see or hear about pet abuse, take it seriously.

- Animals with long-term, untreated injuries or medical conditions.
- Animals with repeated injuries not logically explained.
- Animals with injuries attributed to unknown causes. Accidental injuries are frequently admitted to while intentional injuries are blamed on unknown causes.
- People who repeatedly bring “new” puppies or kittens home.

Plan of Action

If you are a victim of domestic violence a plan of action will help you escape.

- Make a safety plan for you and your pet. (Many agencies can assist.)
- Find a place for you and your pet to stay that your abuser does not know about.
- Collect emergency supplies in case the abuser is withholding money.
- Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail. This includes your name on veterinary records and your pet’s license and microchip registration.
- Pack a bag for your pet that includes food, medications, owner documentation, and leash.
- If you are obtaining a Temporary Order of Protection, include your pets.
- Contact your veterinarian for help for your pets.

You are not alone.

Abuse doesn’t discriminate by age, gender, race, economic or social status, or sexual orientation. Abuse is never the victim’s fault and help is available. 24/7/365.

No one should have to make the choice to leave their pets behind during a crisis. Domestic violence victims are already under stress and having to be separated from the pet makes the situation worse. They need the comfort and security of their companion animal to help them cope and move forward with their lives.

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The Niagara Frontier Veterinary Society is partnering with Crisis Services and the SPCA to assist victims of domestic violence, their children and pets break their bondage and begin lives free from abuse.

Resources:

ERIE COUNTY

- **Erie County Domestic Violence Helpline**
716-862-HELP (862-4357) 24 Hour Hotline
- **For Shelter**
716-884-6000 (operated by Haven House)
- **Crisis Services’ Hotline 24/7**
716-834-3131
Provides non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Erie County District Attorney’s Office Domestic Violence Bureau**
716-858-4630
Provides non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Erie County Sheriff’s Office Domestic Violence Hotline***
716-858-7999
Provides non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Family Justice Center of Erie County, Inc.***
716-558-SAFE (7233)
Provides non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Haven House-Child & Family Services, Inc.***
716-884-6002
Provides both residential and non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo, Inc.***
716-481-8867
Provides non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Erie County SPCA**
716-875-7360 business hours, 716-449-0363 after hours

NIAGARA COUNTY

- **Family & Children’s Services of Niagara, Inc.***
716-285-6984
Provides both residential and non-residential domestic violence services.
- **YWCA of Niagara Frontier—Alternatives to Domestic Violence***
716-433-6716
Provides both residential and non-residential domestic violence services.
- **Niagara County SPCA**
716-731-4368

VETERINARY INFORMATION

- **AVMA.org**
- **National Link Coalition – nationallinkcoalition.org**

No one should make the choice to leave their companion animal behind during a crisis.