

Resources to Contact

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.ncadv.org
303-839-1852

National Network to End Domestic Violence
www.nnedv.org
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

AARDVARC
Statewide/county list of advocates
and support contacts
www.aardvarc.org/dv/states/gadv.shtml

Georgia Legal Services Program
Provides access to justice for Georgians
with low incomes
www.glsr.org
404-206-5175

Georgia Legal Professionals for Animals
Updated state animal cruelty laws
www.georgialpa.org/legislation

Humane Society of Georgia, Inc.
Information about animal cruelty and laws
www.humaneassociationofgeorgia.org/
animal_cruelty.htm

Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.gcadv.org
Crisis line: 1-800-33-HAVEN (4-2836)

Ahimsa House
Helping Georgia victims find
safe haven for their pets
www.ahimsahouse.org
404-452-6248

Project Safe
Athens shelter for victims of domestic violence
www.project-safe.org
706-543-3331



Vets for Pets and People is a grant-supported program of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. Our primary mission is to educate veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals and the general public about the link between domestic violence and animal abuse.

Working with Project Safe, an Athens area domestic violence shelter, and a network of volunteers, we also provide temporary foster care to pets whose owners have sought shelter from domestic violence.



www.vet.uga.edu/vetsforpetsandpeople/

What's missing from your patient's history?

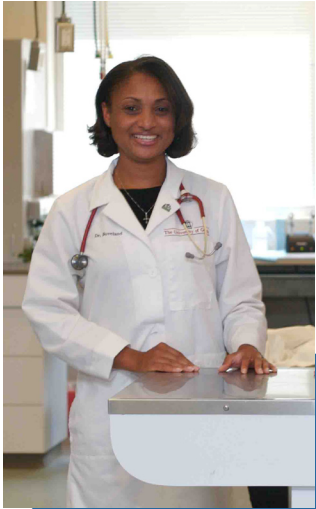


What every veterinarian should know



Vets for Pets and People
Protecting the **Entire** Family
From Domestic Violence

Animal Abuse is Domestic Violence



For many battered women, pets are sources of comfort providing strong emotional support: 98% of Americans consider pets to be companions or members of the family.

[American Veterinary Medical Association (2003): U.S. Pet Ownership & Demographics Sourcebook. Schaumburg, IL: AVMA.]

Get the Facts

Domestic violence targets the whole family. Abusers often use animal abuse as a means to further terrorize and emotionally harm their human victims. Victims of domestic violence often sacrifice their own safety to protect their pets. References: Ascione, Weber & Wood, 1997 *Society & Animals*, unless otherwise noted.

- **71 to 85% of women** entering shelters reported that their partner had threatened, injured, or killed the family pet.
- **More than 25% of victims** report that concern for their pets had affected their decisions about staying or leaving.
— McIntosh, 2001 *The Latham Letter*.
- **50% of children** surveyed had protected pets, in some cases by directly intervening to keep their pets from being harmed.
- **74% of women** owned pets in the last 12 months before entering a shelter. **68%** owned more than one pet.
— Ascione, 1998 *Journal of Emotional Abuse*.
- **31.7% of sheltered women** reported emergency veterinary care for their pets; **71%** reported their pets received vaccinations.

Know your professional obligation

“The AVMA recognizes that veterinarians may observe cases of animal abuse or neglect as defined by federal or state laws or local ordinances. When these situations cannot be resolved through education, the AVMA considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to appropriate authorities.”

Know the laws related to animal abuse in Georgia

Animal cruelty can be a felony charge if a person knowingly and maliciously causes death or physical harm to an animal by rendering a part of the animal’s body useless or by seriously disfiguring the animal.

Call your municipal or county police department or county sheriff’s department, and the animal control office.

Veterinarians and veterinary technicians in the state of Georgia have civil lawsuit immunity for good faith reporting of animal cruelty.

In the Exam Room

- Compare the animal’s injuries with the history given by the owner.
- Ask about the owner’s experiences with disciplining and housebreaking.
- Listen to the children’s responses to questions about their pet.
- Ask about other pets and their condition.
- Observe the interaction of family members.

Warning Signs

- Animals with chronic untreated injuries or medical conditions.
- Clients who use the services of several veterinarians.
- Repeat clients who repeatedly bring “new” puppies.
- Injuries attributed to unknown causes (accidental injuries are frequently admitted while intentional injuries are blamed on unknown causes).

How to Help

- Let clients know you are aware of the link between domestic violence and animal abuse.
- Provide brochures regarding local services for victims of domestic violence.
- On your client information forms, ask your client if their pets are safe at home.
- Support your community by providing refuge for the animals belonging to victims of domestic violence.

What Can We Do As Veterinarians?

