

Information for **VETERINARIANS**

Understanding the link between **animal abuse** and **domestic violence**, and how to help.



Animal abuse in the home is a strong indicator that abuse of an intimate partner and/or child is also occurring. Domestic abusers often use the threat of, or actual harm to, an animal to exercise power and control over other family members. Many victims of domestic violence do not leave their abuser for fear of what might happen to their pets.

CONNECTING

animal
abuse

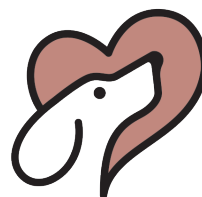
domestic
violence

MORE INFORMATION

For additional resources - including a compilation of relevant articles and information about reporting suspected animal abuse - visit our website at:
saavprogram.org/veterinarians

Sheltering Animals of Abuse Victims is a volunteer-based nonprofit organization dedicated to ending the cycle of abuse within families. Since 2001, SAAV has been playing a unique role in this fight by recognizing animals as vital family members and arranging for their safe harbor at a time of critical need – when a domestic abuse victim seeks refuge from an abuser. SAAV also raises awareness nationwide about the link between domestic violence and animal cruelty.

www.saavprogram.org



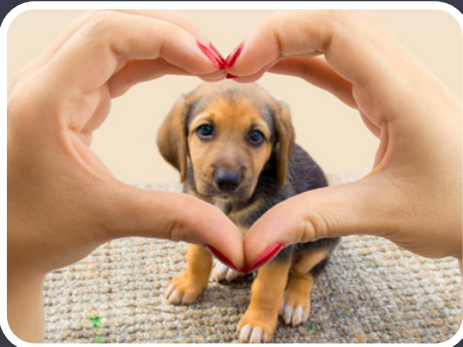
S A A V

SHELTERING ANIMALS
OF ABUSE VICTIMS

SERVICES AVAILABLE

If you suspect a client may be a victim of domestic abuse who is in need of assistance for an animal, please share that SAAV provides the following services in Dane County, Wisconsin:

- **SAAV Shelter.** For a period of up to 90 days, SAAV provides temporary, confidential shelter for the pets of domestic abuse victims who are receiving services from Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) at the time of application to SAAV. All intake for SAAV Shelter occurs through the DAIS 24-hour helpline via phone at 1-800-747-4045, or 608-251-4445, or via text (608) 420-4638.
- **SAAV Grants.** SAAV provides animal care grants to support domestic abuse victims who are currently receiving services from a Dane County domestic abuse agency or organization. To apply, visit: www.saavprogram.org/grants



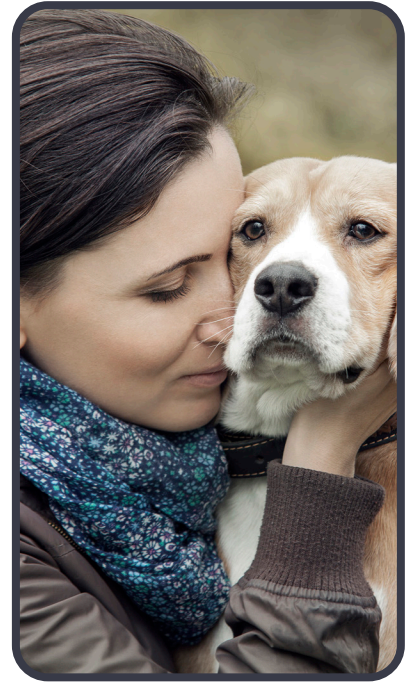
This brochure is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For more information about the connection between animal abuse and domestic violence and what you can do, visit www.saavprogram.org/veterinarians

WARNING SIGNS

A common indicator that a client who is presenting an animal for veterinary care may also be a victim of domestic violence is the client's fear that their partner will find out treatment was sought for the animal.

Other **RED FLAGS** may include:

- Client reluctance to give a full history
- Delay in seeking medical attention
- Clients who repeatedly bring in "new" animals
- Unexplained or "accidental" injuries that don't match the explanation given
- A partner who withholds funds to provide veterinary care for the animals



STATISTICS

- A 2012 study found that 59% of domestic abuse victims delayed leaving out of fear of leaving pets behind with their abuser.
- In a study of domestic violence shelters across the country, 85% of shelter directors encountered cases in which victims disclosed animal abuse.
- In a study of victims in several northeastern states, 48% of respondents reported that animal abuse had occurred "often" during the past 12 months, and another 30% reported that the abuse occurred "almost always."
- Adding screening questions about animal cruelty on a crisis line decreased domestic violence homicides by 80%.

HOW TO HELP

- Share information at your clinic about SAAV and resources provided for domestic abuse victims with pets, or have it on hand for when it's needed.
- Learn about domestic violence programs and resources available in your community.
- If domestic abuse is suspected, delicately open a dialogue with the victim/client in a private space where the victim/client is separated from the abuser.
- Report suspected animal abuse to your local humane officer, law enforcement, or animal care and control agencies.
- Consider providing pro bono veterinary services to animals affected by abuse.
- Invite a speaker from SAAV to your veterinary clinic to share information about the link and our services with veterinarians, veterinary technicians and staff.