

PAWS for PREVENTION

A newsletter on domestic violence for veterinarians and their staff

Why Us? Why Now?



You might be wondering what role animal care workers

have to do with domestic violence prevention. The answer is simple. **When animals are abused, people are at risk; when people are abused, animals are at risk.**

Over the past 30 years, researchers and professionals in a variety of human services and animal welfare disciplines have established significant correlations between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse and other forms of violence.

Mistreating animals is no longer seen as an isolated incident that can be ignored: it is often an indicator or predictor crime and a “red flag” warning sign that other family members in the household may not be safe.

Why Now?

Now is a better time than ever to work together on the big social problems that plague our community. Technology has made connecting and communicating easier, our collaborations are working, and we’re feeling bold. Yet we can’t do it alone. We need you as partners in our quest to reduce violence in Longmont. Become part of the solution by getting involved.

Welcome

to our first quarterly newsletter written with you and your staff in mind. We know you are incredibly busy and don’t have time to read “one more thing.” We also know that you face situations every week that make you uneasy.

Was that abuse? Is something going on in that household? Should I call? What if it’s nothing? If they are seeking treatment shouldn’t I assume positive intent? Does my responsibility really go beyond the pet to the whole family?



While we can’t answer these questions, we can offer tools to make some of the answers to those questions a little easier. Our goal is to provide tips that make it simple to **recognize** abuse in the home, **respond** in a way that improves positive outcomes, and **refer** victims to local agencies that are skilled at assisting families in crisis. Thanks for reading.



A Little About Us.....

Longmont Ending Violence Initiative (LEVI) is a collaboration of over 25 agencies in Boulder County working to reduce domestic violence. LEVI started as an awareness project designed to enlist the entire community in recognizing and responding to domestic violence.

LEVI has an office in the Safety and Justice Building where we provide referrals and easy access to local resources for victims and their families. We also plan and coordinate prevention/education campaigns, conduct professional trainings, and create public information materials for the community. LEVI would love to talk with you about training, providing materials, or hearing your ideas on how we can work together. All of our services are FREE, just call.

MAD FACTS

71% of abused women reported their abuser hurt, killed or threatened their pets to control them

You Can Help. We ALL Can.

Recognize

Respond

Refer

Domestic Abusers use Pets as Power

Many abusers use the family pet as a control mechanism by threatening or inflicting cruelty on the animal. Nearly one in four battered women has reported that their concern for their pet's welfare has prevented them from leaving an unhealthy relationship.



Abusers can also use this kind of control to demonstrate power

over their partner or child. Common types of violence include shooting, beating, drowning, burning, and bone breaking. Abusers also use animal violence as a way to try to get back at or harm their partners for leaving. Abusers believe that once their partner realizes their animal is being abused, they will be more likely to return home, fearing for the animal's safety.

A study done by the LaCrosse Wisconsin Community Coalition Against Domestic Violence found that 86% of abused women reported having pets. Of those, 80% of them experienced partner violence toward their pet. Additionally, 74% of battered women in shelters had pets, and 71% of them reported that their abusers threatened to harm or kill the pet to manipulate them.

REPORT OR NOT?

If Social Services receives three calls about a particular household, they automatically investigate. Maybe what you observe doesn't meet the criteria for a report, but combined with other reports it paints a more complete picture of what is happening. Remember, it's not your job to investigate. Collect basic information to complete the report and let someone else take it from there. Reports can be made to the Longmont Police or Boulder County Social Services. Find their contact info below.

Respond

When faced with an abusive situation in your office, the important thing is to remain calm. Here are some other "first responder" tips.

- Ask about the abuse in a way that feels anonymous. "Because violence is so common in many people's lives, we ask **all** our clients about it."
- If you suspect abuse try to safely separate the victim and abuser so you can talk to the victim.
- Tell the victim that you are worried for their safety, that the abuse is not their fault, and it's NOT okay.
- Offer them information on local resources. Help them make the call.
- Let them know if they seek a restraining order, their pet(s) would also be covered.
- Remind them that the **Longmont Humane Society** offers free shelter for up to six weeks for animals of domestic violence victims staying in the local battered persons shelter. Pets will be well taken care of, and will not be adopted out.

Refer

EMERGENCY	911
Safe Shelter of St. Vrain Valley	303.772.4422
(24 hour crisis line, shelter & counseling)	
LEVI (non-emergency referrals/resources)	303.774.4534
Longmont Humane Society	303.772.1232
Longmont Police Animal Control	303.651.8500
Dept. of Social Services	303.441.1000
Longmont Humane Society	303.772.1232

Recognize

It's not always physical

When most people think about domestic violence, they immediately think of bruises. Physical abuse is often part of the equation but the primary mechanism at play in domestic violence is gaining power and control over another person. There are many ways that an abuser demonstrates power and control over the family. One way is by threatening, harming or killing the family pet. The following are some other warning signs of an abusive relationship:

- Verbal Abuse— *put downs*
- Isolation—*limiting activities, friendships*
- Threats
- Physical Abuse
- Extreme Jealousy
- Financial Control—*not letting them work, have access to money*
- Harassment/Stalking
- Mood Swings
- Alcohol Abuse
- Sexual Violence
- Intimidation
- Destruction of Property—*breaking phone/possessions, punching walls*

Helpful E-Links

- [LEVI](#)
- [Safe Shelter of St. Vrain](#)
- [Colorado Link Project](#)
- [National Link Coalition](#)
- [ASPCA](#)



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Colorado is a mandatory reporting state for suspected child maltreatment or animal cruelty. All Veterinarians, animal control and animal care workers are legally bound to report. Protect yourself, make the call.

