

# Understanding Animal Cruelty



A resource book  
for high-school students  
and their teachers

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For more information on animal cruelty and other animal protection issues, write to The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, or call (202) 452-1100. Visit the HSUS on the Web at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

ISBN 0-941246-10-8

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*Plantation Key, Florida. Halloween night. Three young men lure raccoons into the open with dog food and attack them with baseball bats. Two of the animals die. Another raccoon, critically injured, is later euthanized by animal control officers.*

*Loxahatchee, Florida. Shack, a lost pet pit bull, is thrown into a pit with a trained fighting dog. After 15 minutes, the bloody, bruised dog is clearly beaten and removed from the ring. Chained to a fence, Shack dies hours later from his wounds.*

*Fairfield, Iowa. Three teenagers break into Noah's Ark, a sanctuary for abandoned cats. Armed with baseball bats, the boys bludgeon sixteen cats to death and severely wound seven others.*



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*upon whose natural environment he encroaches. This responsibility, we believe, must be shared by all people.*

*It is wrong to kill animals needlessly or for entertainment or to cause animals pain or torment.*

*It is wrong to fail to provide adequate food, shelter, and care for animals for which man has accepted the responsibility.*

In its mission to reduce animal suffering, The HSUS oversees a variety of animal protection programs, including disaster relief and rehabilitation services, investigations, and legislative and consumer advocacy campaigns. Whether we are providing emergency aid to farm animals, encouraging pet owners to spay or neuter their animals, investigating the trade in dog and cat fur, or working to strengthen laws on trapping, cockfighting, or whale hunting, key to all of The HSUS's efforts to prevent animal suffering is public education about animal cruelty and other animal protection issues.



**A**nimal cruelty takes many forms and many victims, but the end result is always the same: animal suffering. And that is the basic theme underlying nearly every issue addressed by The Humane Society of the United



States (HSUS). Read these excerpts from our Statement of Principles and Beliefs:

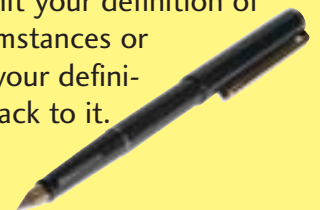
*The primary and motivating concern of The Humane Society*

*of the United States is the prevention of cruelty to all living creatures. We are mindful that man has been uniquely endowed with a sense of moral values. For this reason, we believe he is responsible for the welfare of those animals that he has domesticated and those*

*Understanding Animal Cruelty* will help you become more familiar with the concepts and causes associated with animal cruelty, the connection between animal abuse and human violence, laws that address mistreatment of animals, and ways you can make a difference. As you read this booklet, we encourage you to review the questions and activities that appear throughout. They'll help you think through the issues and suggest ways for you to become meaningfully involved. Should you wish to delve deeper, we've included references to other animal protection materials, books, and Internet sites at the end of this booklet. For more information, please visit us at [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) and [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org).

### Think About It

Before reading any further, write your own definition of animal cruelty. You may wish to provide a few examples of what you perceive as cruel treatment of animals. If you limit your definition of cruelty to particular circumstances or animals, explain why. Set your definition aside; we will come back to it.



# HOW IS ANIMAL CRUELTY DEFINED?

In the broadest sense, **animal cruelty** encompasses a range of behaviors harmful to animals, from neglect to malicious killing. Most cruelty cases investigated by humane officers are acts of unintentional neglect that can be resolved through education. **Intentional cruelty** is abuse by which a person knowingly deprives an animal of food, water, shelter, socialization, or veterinary care or involves maliciously torturing, maiming, mutilating, or killing an animal.

Animal cruelty has also been defined more narrowly, in ways that more specifically and precisely distinguish it from neglect and other forms of animal mistreatment. Dr. Andrew Rowan, senior vice president of The HSUS and the former director of the Center for Animals and Public Policy at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, has developed a **typology**, or classification, that divides the blanket term “animal cruelty” into four distinct definitions: **cruelty, abuse, neglect, and use.**

According to Dr. Rowan’s typology, **cruelty** occurs when a person’s motivation for causing animal suffering is to gain pleasure or satisfaction. Acts of cruelty are deliberate and often *premeditated*, or planned. An example of cruel behavior is setting a cat’s tail on fire for fun.

**Abuse** occurs when someone causes an animal to suffer as a way of achieving **dominance** or a **behavioral response**. That individual does not necessarily enjoy harming animals *for harm’s sake*. Rather, he or she is trying to demonstrate power

over an animal or to control an animal’s actions. An example of animal abuse occurs when an animal trainer whips an elephant to force the animal to perform circus tricks.

**Neglect** occurs when people fail to provide their animals with proper shelter, food, water, attention, grooming, or veterinary care. Cases of neglect are acts of omission rather than commission and do not give satisfaction to the person whose animals are neglected. An example of neglect may be found in the home of someone who “collects” animals. See “When Too Much Is No Good Thing” (right).

**Use** of animals for profit or other personal gain sometimes results in suffering. Raising animals for food is one example of animal



use. People who use animals do not typically experience emotional satisfaction from inflicting harm on them; usually they view the consequences of their harmful behaviors as a “necessary evil.” In fact, it is not uncommon for people who use animals to take steps to minimize animal suffering.

As a general rule, when we use the term “cruelty” in this booklet, we are referring to *intentional* harm caused to an animal for someone’s satisfaction, pleasure, or other psychological need.

## CATEGORIES OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND MOTIVATION ASSOCIATED WITH ANIMAL USE THAT SOMETIMES CAUSES DISTRESS

Type of Action	Actor’s motivation	Animal Suffering	Societal Attitude
Cruelty	Takes satisfaction from suffering	Always	Condemnation
Abuse	Satisfaction derived from dominance or behavioral response	Usually	Condemnation
Neglect	No satisfaction derived	Usually	Condemnation
Use	Justified by claims to personal or societal gains	Sometimes	Approval when attempts are made to minimize suffering

Source: “Cruelty and Abuse to Animals: A Typology,” by Andrew N. Rowan. *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse*, ed. by Frank R. Ascione and Phil Arkow (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999).

## When Too Much Is No Good Thing

Hazel S. professed a deep love for animals, especially cats. In fact, the sixty-one-year-old woman welcomed homeless animals into her tiny, ramshackle home in Starke, Florida. The problem is that Hazel S. soon lost control of her situation. By the time she was investigated, Hazel had **150 cats** in her home. Unable to properly and humanely care for them in a sanitary environment with adequate food and veterinary care, she was ordered by a court to *relinquish*, or give up, all but six cats. The others were in such poor health that they had to be euthanized.

Hazel is known as an animal collector or **hoarder**. Hoarders are people who accumulate large numbers of companion animals, more than they can properly care for. (The vast majority of hoarders—one estimate suggests 76%—are women.) Typically, hoarders acquire dozens or even hundreds of animals over a period of several years before being discovered. Because they are unable to care for so many animals, hoarders inevitably neglect them, keeping them in squalid conditions beyond imagination. Yet, as hard as it is to understand, many animal hoarders feel great concern about their animals. How is that possible?

Experts suggest that animal hoarders suffer from any one of a number of psychological problems. These include **obsessive-compulsive disorder, addiction, zoophilia**, and a need for **power or control**. To learn more about animal hoarders, the harm they cause, suggestions for interventions, and psychological theories that may explain their behavior, see “People Who Hoard Animals,” by Dr. Randy Frost, in the April 2000 issue of *Psychiatric Times* ([www.psychiatrictimes.com](http://www.psychiatrictimes.com)).



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### Think About It

- How does your definition of cruelty compare with that given in Dr. Rowan's typology? Is your definition more specific or less so? Do the examples you offer match the motivation and results outlined in his typology?
- Suppose you are investigating a case in which someone has withheld food and water from an animal for several days. How would you go about determining whether this is a case of cruelty, abuse, or neglect according to Dr. Rowan's typology? How might you assess the person's motives for not providing the animal with food and water?

### Questions and Issues for Discussion

Using Dr. Rowan's typology, how would you categorize each of the following situations: as an example of **cruelty, abuse, neglect, or use**?

- A farmer chains a veal calf in a darkened room and feeds him a liquid diet. Restricting the calf's

movement and feeding an iron-deficient diet are standard procedures in veal production.

- A man shares his home with 30 dogs. He cannot afford to provide all of them with adequate veterinary care or food.
- A group of children throws frogs against trees.
- A trainer strikes a dog across the face for not responding to a command.
- A biological supply company euthanizes cats and sells them to high schools for dissection.
- A woman withholds water from her dog for an extended period of time to prevent him from urinating in her home.
- A scientist places a chemical irritant into a rab-



© Farm Sanctuary

bit's eyes to test a household cleaner.

## Explore the Issues

- How does your dictionary define “cruelty,” “abuse,” and “neglect”?
- How have some thinkers influenced Western society's ideas about animal cruelty? Some people to research include Porphyry, St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, Marquis de Sade, Montaigne, Jeremy Bentham, Henry Salt, Andrew Linzey, Thomas Berry, Henry Bergh, George Angell, and Albert Schweitzer. Prepare a paper on your findings. Here are some ideas: Write a report or construct a timeline illustrating how these and other thinkers have influenced society's views on animal cruelty. Write an essay comparing and contrasting two or more individuals' views. Compose an opinion paper supporting or refuting one of these people's beliefs.

Proud of your project? Send it to us! We may publish it in our Web site for teens, [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org). Send your paper, along with your name, age, grade, school, and hometown to [humaneteen@nahee.org](mailto:humaneteen@nahee.org).

## Take Action

Form an animal protection club at your school. For tips and activity suggestions, visit [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org). Click on “Start a Club.” At your first meeting, consider hosting a discussion about various definitions of animal cruelty, including the ones offered in this booklet. Doing so will allow your club members to gain a clearer understanding of some of the causes and motivations behind animal suffering and may help you decide which issues to address as a club.

## Think About It

- Why might it be important for animal protection organizations, law enforcement officials, animal control officers, veterinarians, and others to agree on clear definitions of animal cruelty, abuse, use, and neglect—definitions that include the motivations, or reasons, behind each behavior? Should those definitions prescribe the way different cases are treated by social service agencies and courts of law? Take the case of three individuals, each of whom has caused animals to starve to death: one is classified as a “hoarder”;

the second is found guilty of animal cruelty; the third is the owner of a large-scale egg-laying operation who withheld food from his chickens to speed up egg production, in an accepted farming practice



known as “forced molting.” How, if at all, should the treatment, intervention, and legal repercussions differ for each of these three cases?

- When deciding how to treat different cases, how much consideration should be given to the person's motivations? How much consideration should be given to the number of animals affected and/or to the degree of their suffering? Explain your answers.

## Is Animal Cruelty Widespread?

Visit the homepage of nearly any animal protection or anti-cruelty site and you'll find scores of true animal cruelty reports, much like the ones used to introduce this booklet. Chances are, if you mentioned animal abuse to friends or relatives, they'd share a few cases they have witnessed or heard about. Stories of animal cruelty also abound in newspapers and on TV. Just because so many stories are readily available, however, does not necessarily mean that animal cruelty is on the rise.

So, just how common is animal cruelty? How frequently are intentional acts of abuse



committed? The simplest answer is that we don't know. Few statistics are available on the prevalence of animal cruelty and abuse in our society. One reason is that there is a lack of consensus on what constitutes animal cruelty. Also, there is no centralized reporting system for cruelty cases. The few available studies, however, indicate that neglect

cases vastly outnumber cases involving intentional cruelty or abuse.

### Think About It

Do you think it would be helpful to have statistics on animal cruelty? Why or why not?

### Questions and Issues for Discussion

How could differing definitions of animal cruelty affect how data are collected and interpreted?

### Explore the Issues

You're in charge of the newly formed National Council on Animal Cruelty. Your first assignment is to develop a plan for collecting national animal cruelty statistics. What organizations would you ask to participate, and what methods might they use to obtain statistics? What definition(s) of animal cruelty would you use? How would you report and



publicize your results?

### Take Action

Conduct a schoolwide poll to gain a sense of the prevalence of animal cruelty in your community. Note that it is helpful to clearly define for your poll participants what constitutes animal cruelty. One approach you may wish to take is to use Dr. Rowan's definition of cruelty: *Animal cruelty occurs when someone intentionally causes an animal to suffer for personal pleasure or satisfaction.* Using this definition will eliminate confusion between issues of use and neglect. Here is one sample poll question you may wish to include: Have you ever witnessed an act of animal cruelty? If so, please provide the following details: date, time, place, and a description of the act. Also consider interviewing an animal control officer. Some questions you may wish to ask include: How many animal cruelty cases do you investigate on a yearly basis? What types of situations do you most often see? Do you believe that animal cruelty is on the rise?

## MAKING THE CONNECTION: ANIMAL CRUELTY AND HUMAN VIOLENCE

In his childhood, self-confessed "Boston Strangler" Albert DeSalvo trapped dogs and cats in orange crates and shot arrows through the boxes. Before he was ever charged with the murders of the thirteen women he admitted to killing, DeSalvo himself was killed in prison. He had been serving time on an unrelated rape conviction.

When he was thirteen, Edmund Emil Kemper III decapitated neighborhood cats and put their heads on poles. He also decapitated and cut into small pieces his own pet cat—exactly what he did to his mother in later years. Kemper was convicted in 1973 of the murders of eight women.

As a child, Jeffrey Dahmer impaled frogs, decapitated dogs, and staked cats to trees in his backyard. As an adult, Dahmer became a notorious serial killer. He was sentenced to death for killing, dismembering, and in some cases cannibalizing 17 men and boys.

The connection between animal cruelty and human

violence was first recognized in the 1970s, when the FBI analyzed the life histories of imprisoned serial killers and discovered that many, as children, had killed or tortured animals. Today, animal cruelty is recognized as a sign of serious psychological distress. It often indicates that a person has either experienced violence firsthand or has a greater-than-average likelihood of becoming violent toward people. Not only have experts documented this link in the lives of serial killers but they have also acknowledged that in homes where animal abuse occurs, child abuse or other domestic violence is more likely to occur as well.

In recent years, many studies sought to improve our understanding of these important connections. In 1997, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) and Northeastern University analyzed prosecuted cruelty cases reported to the MSPCA between 1975 and 1996. Their findings included the following:

- Animal abusers were more likely to commit not only acts of violence against people but also property crimes, drug-related crimes, and crimes of public disorder.
- The majority of cruelty cases involved cats or dogs, with dogs being the most common targets.
- Abused animals were usually owned, not strays.
- Animal cruelty suspects were almost always young males; complainants were usually female.
- Minors prosecuted for animal cruelty were more likely to have abused cats; adults prosecuted for animal cruelty were more likely to have abused dogs.
- Animal abuse was as likely to follow other crimes as it was to precede them.

To learn more about this study, visit [www.numag.neu.edu/9709/FTheF997.html](http://www.numag.neu.edu/9709/FTheF997.html) or [www.psyeta.org/sa/sa5.3/Arluke1.html](http://www.psyeta.org/sa/sa5.3/Arluke1.html).

(Arluke A. and C. Luke, 1997. "Physical cruelty toward animals in Massachusetts, 1975-1996." *Society & Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Relations*. 5:3.)

In 2001, The HSUS published a national study of high-profile animal cruelty cases in the U.S. Their study found that 92% of intentional animal cruelty was committed by males. Twenty percent of those cases were committed by people 18 or younger. To read this study in its entirety, see [www.hsus.org/ace/13843](http://www.hsus.org/ace/13843).

### Think About It

- Which of the findings from the MSPCA or HSUS studies surprise you? Which don't? Explain.
- Why do you suppose pets (more often than stray animals) were the targets of animal cruelty?

### Questions and Issues for Discussion

- Throughout this booklet, research is cited to substantiate claims about the connection between animal cruelty and human violence. Do you think it is important for animal protection groups to cite published research when educating the public about this link? Why or why not?
- Should animal protection organizations fund research studies that explore the link between animal abuse and human violence? What about government agencies or other groups? Explain your answers.

- Many animal protection organizations emphasize the seriousness of animal cruelty by pointing out its relationship to human violence. Why might they do that? Do you think this minimizes the importance of animal cruelty as an issue by itself? Why or why not?

### Explore the Issues

- Choose two animal protection organizations to research. (Many such organizations, listed at the end of this book, publish information on the subject of animal cruelty.) Compare their findings with those of the MSPCA's study. Are the findings similar? Do any of them conflict?

- Why does the FBI take the connection between animal cruelty and violent crime seriously? Find out in "Deadly Serious: An FBI Perspective on Animal Cruelty," The HSUS's interview with FBI supervisory special agent Alan Brantley. To order your free copy of this fascinating article, call 1-888-213-0956 or e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org).



### Understanding the Risks

Based on the FBI's finding that many serial killers tortured and killed animals before murdering humans, people commonly assume that anyone who hurts an animal gradually progresses to human victims. This theory, however, has never been substantiated by research, and experts caution against relying on the so-called **graduation assumption**. One good reason is that not all children who deliberately hurt animals grow up to harm people. (In fact, only the smallest fraction of people who are cruel to animals become serial killers or mass murderers.) Think of it this way: People who are cruel to animals do not necessarily graduate to human victims *because* they have harmed animals; no "cause-and-effect" relationship has been proven. What research currently tells us is that people who are violent in general are likely to be violent to all creatures, both humans and nonhuman animals.

When these individuals are children, they may choose animals as objects of their cruelty because animals are easier, more vulnerable victims. As they get older, their selection of potential victims may—or may not—expand to include humans.

Still, there are many warning signals that indicate whether an animal abuser's violent patterns will continue and potentially involve humans. Dr. Randall Lockwood, HSUS Vice President for Research and Educational Outreach, is an expert on the animal cruelty/human violence connection. He is frequently called upon to assist law enforcement and court officers to evaluate whether an animal abuser is at risk of committing violence against others in the future. Dr. Lockwood has compiled a list of **32 risk factors** based on studies of animal cruelty acts reported by violent offenders, studies of animal abuse committed in association with domestic and/or child abuse, criteria used in threat assessment by the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, and general characteristics of habitual violent offenders. Dr. Lockwood notes that the presence of five of these aggravating factors is cause for serious concern; more than ten can indicate a high potential that the offender has been or will be involved in acts of violence against people. Following are some of those determining factors.

- **Number of victims; severity of injury; repetition of injuries on individual victims.** Several animals killed or injured in the same instance suggests a greater potential for uncontrolled violence. Also, perpetrators who have inflicted multiple blows, stab wounds, or other injuries on a victim have a higher risk for future violence.

- **Victim vulnerability.** Violence against particularly small, harmless, or nonthreatening animals indicates that perpetrators gain a sense of power and control through violence against those least likely to retaliate.

- **Act was premeditated; act involved overcoming obstacles to initiate or complete the abuse; victim was bound or otherwise physically incapacitated.** Long-term planning of violent acts suggests the possibility of psychopathic thought processes. Abuse that includes binding, securing with tape, confining to a box, or otherwise rendering an animal incapable of escape is suggestive of a

higher degree of intentional, premeditated violence.

- **Intimacy of infliction of injury.** Abuse that involves direct physical contact or restraint and obvious opportunity to witness the victim's response (e.g., beating, strangling, crushing, stabbing) may be a more serious indicator than actions that are more remote (e.g., shooting, poisoning, hitting with a car).

- **Absence of economic motive.** Suggests that the act itself was sufficiently rewarding to the perpetrator.

- **Animal victim was sexually assaulted or mutilated in genital areas, or perpetrator indicated sexual arousal as a consequence of the abuse.**

Many serial rapists and sexual homicide perpetrators report sexual arousal through violent dominance of animals, and so eroticization of violence toward animals should be considered a warning sign for more generalized violence.

- **Perpetrator documented the act of animal abuse through photos, video, or diary entries; perpetrator returned at least once to the scene of the abuse to relive the experience.** The memorialization or documentation of cruelty indicates that acts of violence are a continuing source of pleasure for the perpetrator and may indicate the likelihood of reenactment, repetition, or escalation of violence to reach the same rewarding emotional state.

- **Animal victim was posed or otherwise displayed.** This indicates the use of violence to gain feelings of power and domination or to alarm or intimidate others and should be considered a serious warning sign of potential for escalated or repeated violence.

### Explore the Issues

*"I made my first kill today. It was a loved one...I'll never forget the howl she made. It sounded almost human...I'll never forget the sound of her bones breaking under my might. I hit her so hard I knocked the fur off her neck...It was true beauty."*

This journal entry was written by Luke Woodham, then 16. Along with a friend, he beat his pet dog, doused her with gasoline, and set her on fire. Six months later, Woodham stabbed his mother to

death and went on a shooting spree at his Pearl, Mississippi, high school, killing two students and injuring seven others.

Like serial killers, **mass murderers**—such as notorious school shooters Kip Kinkel, Dylan Klebold, Eric Harris, Andrew Golden, and Michael Carneal—are often reported to have histories of animal cruelty. (Mass murderers differ from serial killers in that they kill their victims over a comparatively short time, usually within hours; victims are often selected at random or from a group of “scapegoats.” Serial killers typically kill one person at a time, extending their murders over months or even years. They often prefer to stalk and murder people who share similar physical characteristics.)

Investigate a mass murder in recent history in which the murderer had a personal history of animal cruelty. Compare the circumstances and motivations behind that person’s treatment of animals with Lockwood’s risk factors above. Which risk factors, if any, did the perpetrator exhibit? Were those risk factors observed or noted by anyone before the person murdered people?

### [Why Are People Cruel to Animals?](#)

When determining whether or not someone who harms animals is a potential threat to society, it is crucial to identify the person’s **motivation**. People who cause animals to suffer through neglect or use (for example, a boy who forgets to feed his dog or a farmer who confines pigs in factory farms) are *not* more likely than others to commit violent crimes in the future.

Animal cruelty, like any other form of violence, is often committed by people who feel powerless, unnoticed, and under the control of others. Animal abusers tend to *objectify* their victims (that is, to think of them as “things”) and disregard their feelings. In addition, researchers have identified the following nine **motives for animal cruelty**:

- to control the animal, eliminating presumably undesirable characteristics;
- to retaliate against a presumed wrong by the animal;
- to satisfy a prejudice against a species or breed;
- to instill violent tendencies in the animal to cause it to attack others;

## Scruffy’s Story

Dr. Lockwood developed his list of risk factors in response to an animal cruelty case that occurred in Kansas City, Kansas. On June 27, 1997, four young men aged 17 to 21 tortured and killed a dog named Scruffy. They choked the tiny Yorkshire terrier, tied him in a trash bag, and set the bag on fire. When that didn’t kill the dog, the men attempted to decapitate Scruffy with a shovel and finally ended up beating the dog to death. To make matters worse, they had videotaped their horrific acts and made copies of the video as entertainment to share with their friends. Details about Scruffy’s story and the perpetrators’ convictions may readily be found online; simply enter “Scruffy” into any search engine.

- to enhance one’s own aggressiveness, impressing others with one’s capacity for violence;
- to shock people for amusement;
- to retaliate against another person, getting revenge by harming that person’s animals;
- as a way of dealing with hostility toward a person; “displacement” is common in violent families, where physically abused children abuse animals to “get even” for the beatings;
- nonspecific **sadism**, without any particular provocation, to derive pleasure from causing suffering.

(Kellert, S.R., and A.R. Felthous. 1985. “Childhood cruelty toward animals among criminals and noncriminals.” *Human Relations*. 38:1113-29.)

## Think About It

- Many, if not most, animal abusers exhibit more than a single motivation. Which of the motivations above might you ascribe to a man who abuses his girlfriend’s dog? A serial killer who decapitates cats? A gang member who trains his pit bull terrier for dogfights by teaching him to attack stray cats? A teenager, driving with his friends, who runs over a raccoon on purpose? A woman who shoots squirrels who raid her bird feeders?
- Anthropologist Margaret Mead once wrote, “One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it.” What do you think she meant?

## Questions and Issues for Discussion

- Do you think people who deliberately harm or kill insects are necessarily more likely to hurt people? Why or why not?



- Why might parents, law enforcement officials, and psychologists react with more concern when abuse is directed toward a family pet than, say, a wild mammal or an insect? Do you agree with that reaction? Why or why not?



- A school psychologist once asked a humane officer, "What's the difference if a boy shoots a deer or shoots a dog?"

How would you answer this question? What do you think the two acts might tell us about the boy involved?



## Explore the Issues

Rates of violence, particularly animal cruelty, are highest among males. Experts suggest a wide variety of reasons for this disproportion, including genetic factors, biological differences between men and women, abnormal hormone levels, and socialization that encourages men to be more aggressive and less sensitive than women. Write a research paper exploring the possible reasons most violence is committed by men. You may wish to focus on a specific subject, such as serial murders, child abuse, or animal cruelty. One book that will prove invaluable to your report is *The Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*, by James Garbarino, Ph.D. (New York: The Free Press, 1999).

## Take Action

- Ask your school librarian to order books that explore the connection between animal cruelty and human violence. (The list at the end of this booklet is a good starting point.)
- Write an article for your school newspaper that highlights some facts about the animal cruelty/human violence link. In your article, include references to Web sites that offer more information on

the subject. You can also point students to the downloadable version of *Understanding Animal Cruelty* at [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org).

## Family Violence and the Family Pet

While the role of animal cruelty in the lives of serial killers and other mass murderers has attracted much media attention, more and more attention is being paid to its role in family violence, including child abuse. Numerous studies indicate that in homes where animal abuse is taking place, child and spouse abuse are likely occurring as well. Consider the following statistics:

- A study of New Jersey families with a history of physical abuse of children found that in 88% of pet-owning families at least one person had abused an animal.

(DeViney, E., J. Dickert, and R. Lockwood. 1983. "The care of pets within child abusing families." *International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems*. 4:321-29.)

- A study by the Royal SPCA in Great Britain found that 83% of families with a history of animal abuse had also been identified by social service agencies as being at risk for child abuse or neglect.

(Hutton, J.S. 1981. "Animal abuse as a diagnostic approach in social work: A pilot study." In A.H. Katcher, and A.M. Beck, eds., *New perspectives on our lives with companion animals*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.)

- Seventy-one percent of battered women in a Utah safehouse reported that their partners had either threatened, harmed, or killed their companion animals.

(Ascione, F.R. 1998. "Battered women's reports of their partners' and their children's cruelty to animals." *Journal of Emotional Abuse* 1(1):119-33.)

- In a survey of 50 shelters for battered women, 85% of shelters reported that their clients reveal incidents of pet abuse at home. Sixty-three percent of shelters surveyed reported that children in their facilities talked about incidents of pet abuse in the family.

(Ascione, F.R., C.V. Weber, and D.S. Wood. 1997. "The abuse of animals and domestic violence: A national survey of shelters for women who are battered." *Society and Animals*. 5(3):205-18.)

- Sixty-two percent of battered women report that their children have witnessed animal abuse.

(Ascione et al. 1997.)

## Think About It

In the last survey cited, 83% of shelters indicated that they have observed the coexistence of domestic violence and pet abuse, but only 27% included questions relating to pet abuse in their intake interviews. (An intake interview is the initial gathering of information by social workers to determine how best to help women entering shel-

ter.) Do you think that gap is problematic? Why or why not?

### Questions and Issues for Discussion

In April 1999, Leonard Kritz killed his wife's pets. His wife, Stacy, testified that he stabbed or cut the heads off of the eight animals—birds, snakes, and a chinchilla—"as part of a punishment" and to teach her "the importance of life."

Unfortunately, cases like this one are not uncommon. Some abusive adults may harm pets at home as a way of intimidating or controlling their spouses or children ("If you don't do what I say, this could happen to you") or keep them from leaving the abusive situation ("I'll kill your pet if you leave"). The Utah safehouse study found that 20% of battered women delayed leaving an abusive situation for fear that their pet would be harmed. What might be some solutions to that problem?

### Explore the Issues

- Contact your nearest women's shelter and request an interview with the shelter director or a caseworker. Questions to ask include: Do the women seeking refuge at your shelter report animal cruelty in their homes? Do you record data on pet ownership and animal cruelty among your clients? If so, do you find such data useful, and how? If not, what might be some reasons that you don't record

such data? Does your shelter or a nearby animal shelter offer temporary homes to pets of battered women? How can teens help children, adults, and animals who are victims of domestic violence?

- To learn about several programs that provide a safe haven for pets of domestic violence victims, read "Forgotten Victims of Domestic Violence," by Vicki Stevens. The short article is posted online at [www.ddal.org/AGFall00part2.html](http://www.ddal.org/AGFall00part2.html).

### Take Action

Organize a schoolwide collection for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. Contact your local women's shelter to see if they accept such donations and what items they find most useful. Typically, shelters appreciate donations of clean clothing and coats in good condition; new or lightly used toys or children's books; and personal care items, such as toothbrushes, combs, soaps, and other toiletries.

**To report domestic violence, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE 7233; 1-800-787-3224 (TDD).**

**To report child abuse, call the National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD; 1-800-2-A-CHILD (TDD).**

**To report sexual abuse, call the Rape, Abuse, Incest Network at 1-800-656-HOPE.**

## When Children Hurt Animals

Ask any pet-owning parent of a toddler: Kids and animals can be a challenging combination. After all, children are infinitely curious and naturally attracted to those amazing furry critters who walk, move, play, and communicate in their own ways. Even more fascinating to some children is how animals respond to them: *What will the cat do if I pet her gently? Will the dog jump if I throw my ball at him? If I pull the cat's tail, he makes a funny sound.* Such innocent exploration can easily be guided and corrected by loving, attentive adults.

Still, some children persist in harming or tormenting animals well past the age of curious exploration. Such behavior is seen more often in boys than in girls and may appear as early as age four. Children who persist in mistreating animals typically have low self-esteem and few friends. They tend to do poorly in school and may also engage in vandalism, truancy, and other antisocial behaviors.

Research shows that children who abuse animals are likely experiencing or witnessing violence in their own homes. Abused children often "act out" their own experiences on pets or release their fear and frustration by harming animals. For those reasons—and because purposely harming animals is, quite simply,



wrong—experts strongly recommend that any acts of animal cruelty by children be taken seriously. Early identification and intervention may help these children break the cycle of violence.

Childhood cruelty to animals can also be a sign of **conduct disorder**. The American Psychiatric Association lists animal cruelty as a symptom of this serious psychological condition, which is defined as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms or rules are violated. Learn more about conduct disorder at [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org) and [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org).

## ANIMAL CRUELTY AND THE LAW

Common sense tells most of us that causing animals to suffer needlessly is morally wrong. But is it legal? What rights do animals have to be protected from harm? Can—or should—people be punished for acts of animal cruelty? If so, how? In this section, we will examine the relationship between animal cruelty and animal protection.

### The History of Anti-Cruelty Laws

Historically, animals have been considered property without legal rights. In 1641, however, the first-ever legislation to protect animals from cruel treatment was passed in Colonial America. In their legal code, “The Body of Liberties,” the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony forbade cruelty to animals. Read the following excerpts from “The Body of Liberties”:

#### OFF THE BRUITE CREATURE

92. No man shall exercise any Tirranny or Crueltie towards any brute Creature which are usuallie kept for man's use.

93. If any man shall have occasion to leade or drive Cattel from place to place that is far of, so that they

*be weary, or hungry, or fall sick, or lambe, It shall be lawful to rest or refresh them, for a competent time, in any open place that is not Corne, meadow, or inclosed for some peculiar use.*

### Think About It

What animals do you think were protected under Liberty 92?

In 1828, the New York state legislature enacted our country's first animal anti-cruelty law. The law states, “...every person who shall maliciously kill, maim, or wound any horse, ox, or other cattle, or sheep, belonging to another, or shall maliciously and cruelly beat or torture any such animal, whether belonging to himself or another, shall, upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor.” Massachusetts, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and other states followed suit with similar laws. These laws were important indicators of a changing sentiment toward animals. Although they protected only horses, cattle, and sheep, the laws established that animals were not mere property but rather living beings who deserved protection from inhumane owners.

### When Were the First Animal Anti-Cruelty Laws Enacted?

1641—Massachusetts Bay Colony “The Body of Liberties”	1858—Tennessee	1880—Mississippi, Ohio
1828—New York	1859—Washington	1881—North Carolina, South Carolina
1835—Massachusetts	1860—Pennsylvania	1883—Alabama, Maine
1838—Connecticut, Wisconsin	1861—Nevada	1884—Hawaii
1842—New Hampshire	1864—Idaho, Oregon	1887—South Dakota
1845—Missouri	1867—New Jersey	1889—Florida
1848—Virginia	1868—California, West Virginia	1890—Maryland
1851—Minnesota	1869—Illinois	1891—North Dakota
1852—Kentucky	1871—District of Columbia, Michigan, Montana	1893—Oklahoma
1854—Vermont	1872—Colorado	1895—Wyoming
1856—Texas	1873—Delaware, Indiana, Nebraska	1898—Utah
1857—Rhode Island	1875—Georgia	1913—Alaska, Arizona
	1879—Arkansas, Louisiana	1921—Virgin Islands

Source: *Animals and Their Legal Rights: A Survey of American Laws from 1641 to 1990* (Washington, DC: Animal Welfare Institute, 1990).

## Think About It

- Beginning with New York's passage of its first animal cruelty law, the timeline on page 11 spans almost a century. Why, do you suppose, were anti-cruelty laws passed at different times in different states?
- In 1866, Henry Bergh arrived on the scene. The founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Bergh wrote a ten-section "Act for the more effectual prevention of cruelty to animals," passed in New York in 1867. The Act, which extended protection to "any living creature," addressed not only animal abuse and neglect but also abandonment, animal fighting, baiting, and transportation. It set legal precedence and served as an example for many states' current anti-cruelty laws.

### How Are Animals Protected Under Today's Laws?

Currently, all 50 states have anti-cruelty laws. It should be noted that the laws do not necessarily adhere to the definition of cruelty that we set forth earlier. Rather, anti-cruelty laws differ greatly from state to state, affording animals a varying range of protection. Basically, state laws protect most domestic animals from neglect, stating that they are entitled to food, water, and shelter. They also acknowledge that animals should not be abandoned, poisoned, or treated cruelly. However, most state anti-cruelty laws do not extend protection to farm animals, wildlife, or animals used in research. And although some laws clearly identify what constitutes animal cruelty, others leave that decision up to judges and law enforcement officials.

## Think About It

What would be the advantages of anti-cruelty laws that clearly define punishable offenses? What could be the disadvantages?

### Questions and Issues for Discussion

- Read the following excerpted provisions from Ohio's anti-cruelty laws:  

(A) No person shall...keep animals other than cattle, poultry or fowl, swine, sheep, or goats in an enclosure without wholesome exercise and change of air...



How does this law pertain to animals raised on farms? Why do you suppose the law was written this way?

- Should animals raised for food be protected under state anti-cruelty laws? Why or why not? What do you think some of the difficulties would be in passing and enforcing such laws?



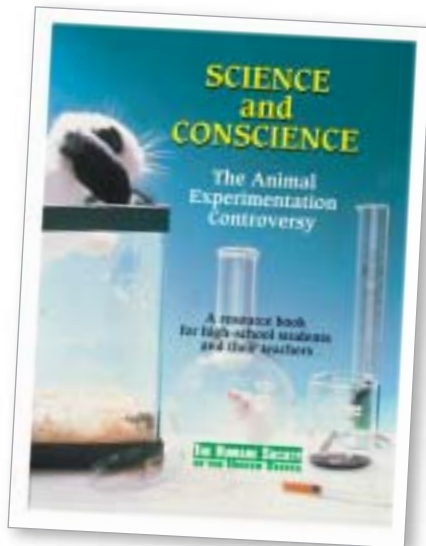
### Explore the Issues

- Investigate and write a paper about your state's anti-cruelty laws. How does your state define cruelty, and how does this definition compare to the one in the typology on page 2? What specific acts, if any, are punishable? What actions are exempted? Do your state anti-cruelty laws protect wild animals or those raised on farms? For information, you may wish to visit [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org) and [www.animal-law.org](http://www.animal-law.org). You can also gather information about laws by visiting your state's official homepage. Type your state's abbreviation into [www.state.\(state abbreviation\).us](http://www.state.(state abbreviation).us). Click on "Government," "Legislation," or "Laws" to search for your state's anti-cruelty statutes.
- Choose a state (other than your home state) to research. Develop a **hypothesis** about that state's anti-cruelty laws based on what you know about its "animal culture." For example, is that state a major farming state, or does it have a concentration of puppy mills? Does that state have greyhound or horse racing tracks or a strong rodeo heritage? Does it provide progressive accommodations or services for pets, such as leash-free zones in parks or low-cost spay/neuter clinics? In your hypothesis, explain what you expect to find out about that state's anti-cruelty laws and why. Then research that state's anti-cruelty laws to determine whether your hypothesis holds up. If it doesn't, can you

suggest why?

- In 1874, Etta Wheeler, a church social worker, learned that nine-year-old Mary Ellen Wilson was severely abused and neglected by the couple to whom she was apprenticed. Wheeler appealed to the ASPCA for help on the basis that Mary Ellen was at least a member of the animal kingdom. The ASPCA was successful in removing Mary Ellen from the abusive home and placing her in a new home. Shortly after the famous “Mary Ellen” case—as it has come to be known—was resolved, Henry Bergh helped found the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Using the Internet, research the Mary Ellen case. You may also wish to read *Out of the Darkness: The Story of Mary Ellen Wilson* by Stephen Lazoritz and Eric A. Shelman (Lake Forest, CA: Dolphin Moon Publishing, 1998). Write a paper exploring the significance of this case to the formation of organizations that seek to prevent child abuse. Describe some current relationships, if any, between child protection and animal welfare organizations.

- Interestingly, Henry Bergh’s “Act for the more effectual prevention of cruelty to animals” clearly exempts scientific experimentation on animals: *Nothing in this act contained shall be construed to prohibit or interfere with any properly conducted scientific experiments or investigations.* Write a paper that explores the relationship between animal experimentation and federal anti-cruelty laws. In your research, you may wish to read



The HSUS’s *Science and Conscience: The Animal Experimentation Controversy*, a resource book for high-school students and their teachers. Major topics include the history of and current trends in animal experimentation, the use of animals in education, biomedical research, and product testing, and the development of laws, alternatives, and other initiatives to improve stan-

dards for animal care and scientific research alike. You can view and download the booklet at

[www.humane-](http://www.humane-teen.org)

[teen.org](http://www.humane-teen.org). Click on “Science and Conscience” under “Get Into the Issues.” To purchase a copy of *Science and Conscience*, send \$3 to NAHEE, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423-0362. You may also order online at [www.nahee.org/publications.asp](http://www.nahee.org/publications.asp).



### Take Action

Visit the “Legislation” section of The HSUS’s Web site, [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org), to learn more about current legislation affecting animals. This section is loaded with up-to-date information about pending federal bills, ballot measures relating to animal protection, and the latest state legislative updates. You can also find out how your state legislators voted on various animal protection issues.

### [Animal Cruelty: How Serious a Crime?](#)

Our legal system divides criminal activity into two classifications: **misdemeanors** and **felonies**. Misdemeanors are minor criminal offenses, which usually carry lighter sentences and fines. Felonies, which include murder and burglary, are serious criminal offenses that may result in imprisonment and heavier fines.

Thanks to the legislative efforts of groups such as The HSUS and the ASPCA and the well-documented evidence linking animal cruelty with human violence, more than 30 states now classify animal cruelty as a felony. It should be noted, however, that specific felony provisions and definitions of “animal cruelty” vary from state to state. For example, some states consider animal cruelty a felony only in cases involving a dog, cat, or other companion animal. While most state laws apply to a first offense, in several states animal cruelty is not treated as a felony until the perpetrator’s second or third offense. Maximum fines vary from \$150,000 in Arizona to \$5,000 in Connecticut; three states have extremely low penalties of \$500 or less. Maximum prison time ranges from ten years in Louisiana to just 90 days in Ohio. In the 19 states where animal



## You Be the Judge

Read the following case. Pretending that you are a prosecutor or judge, what sentence, if any, would you give the perpetrator? Explain your reasoning.

*Pomona, California. People call the police after hearing their neighbor's five-month-old puppy yelping. When police officers arrive, they find the puppy dead. His legs, back, and skull are fractured in 14 places. Further investigation reveals that the puppy's owner, a 40-year-old man, had beaten the puppy with a stick for digging holes in the backyard. Family members explain that this man has a history of violence, including domestic abuse and rape charges.*

The above story is true, and the perpetrator was sentenced to three months in prison. How does his real-life sentence compare to the one you recommended?

water, or shelter.

Because the Twenty-Eight Hour Law was passed before trucks became the most common means of transporting

animals, whether it applies to animals transported in trucks is unclear. The Twenty-Eight Hour Law does not apply to poultry.

### • The Humane Slaughter Act

Passed in 1958 and expanded in 1978, the Humane Slaughter Act requires that federally inspected slaughterhouses handle and slaughter animals humanely. One of the most important provisions of this act states that livestock must be *stunned* (rendered insensible to pain) prior to being hoisted, shackled, and slaughtered. Other regulations require that livestock at slaughterhouses have adequate access to feed and water, and, if kept in pens overnight, have enough room to lie down. The Humane Slaughter Act does not apply to poultry.

### • The Animal Welfare Act

Passed in 1966 and amended several times since, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) is a set of laws that



govern the treatment of animals in research, testing, experimentation, exhibition, and entertainment. Among other things, the AWA requires that private and state-owned research and testing facilities meet minimum standards for animal care, including requirements for handling, feeding, housing, sanitation, and shelter from extreme weather.

The AWA does not extend protection to birds, mice, rats, or farm animals (animals used or intended as food or fiber). The AWA also prohibits sponsoring or exhibiting animals in fighting ventures (e.g., dogfighting) and the transport of animals across state lines for such purposes. Review the AWA in its entirety at [www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/usdaleg1.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/awic/legislat/usdaleg1.htm).

### Problems with Federal Laws

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the government agency responsible for developing and enforcing the federal animal protection laws discussed above, has come under attack for weak enforcement of those laws. Animal protection organizations point out that there are simply not enough inspectors or funds to investigate cases of alleged animal abuse. When violations are observed, they may be lightly punished or not reported at all.

### Think About It

Should the Twenty-Eight Hour Law and/or Humane Slaughter Act be amended to extend protection to poultry? Why or why not? What might be some obstacles to changing either law?



## Questions and Issues for Discussion

- Go back to your original definition of animal cruelty. Did your definition address issues of pain and distress experienced by farm animals? Animals used in research? Circus animals? If not, why do you think you omitted those categories of animals?

- Many state laws exempt certain activities from coming under regulations relating to animal cruelty. Some have exemptions for hunting, trapping, fishing, rodeo, use of animals in research, pest control, and common farming practices. What kinds of activities, if any, do you think should not be covered by laws against cruelty to animals?



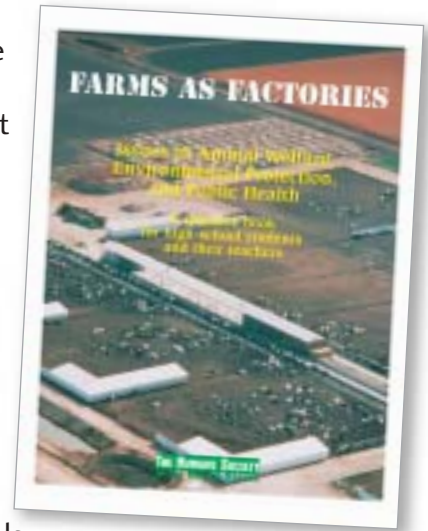
© T. Heneghan/Weststock

- Some states have “three strikes” laws that require that anyone convicted of three felony level crimes be sentenced to life imprisonment on their third offense. This means that a conviction for felony level cruelty to animals could be the third strike that sends a person to prison for life. Do you think such a crime should carry this possible penalty?

## Explore the Issues

Each year in the U.S., more than 9 billion animals are raised and killed for food. Most of them are

found in *factory farms*, large-scale farming operations where great numbers of animals are kept in the smallest possible space to maximize profit. Many animal protection organizations are concerned about this use of animals



for profit, as it often results in inhumane treatment of farm animals. Educate yourself about the problems associated with modern methods of farming at [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org). Click on “Farms as Factories” under “Get Into the Issues.”

## Take Action

The HSUS and The Fund for Animals have created the Humane Activist Network, a nationwide network of people who strive to protect animals. Join the Humane Activist Network (it’s free!) online at [www.hsus.org/ace/13277](http://www.hsus.org/ace/13277). By joining, you will receive HUMANElines, a weekly e-mail action alert with up-to-date information on pending federal and state legislation that affects animals, and *Humane Activist*, a bimonthly grassroots newsletter that offers ideas on how you can make a difference for animals in your community and nationwide.

# BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

In light of the strong evidence linking animal cruelty and human violence, The HSUS and FBI, among many other groups, continue to urge law enforcement officers, humane investigators, and social service agencies to work together in an organized way to address cruelty, abuse, and neglect. The key to a successful team approach is **cross-reporting**, whereby animal protection and human service professionals inform one another about cases they are investigating. By ensuring that all violent acts against people and animals are identified and dealt

with promptly and appropriately, cross-reporting can significantly help prevent human and animal suffering.

Researchers Phil Arkow, chair of the Latham Foundation’s Child and Animal Abuse Prevention Project, and Dr. Frank Ascione, professor of psychology at Utah State University, have compiled a list of recommendations for agencies that can help break the cycle of abuse. Here are some of the measures they recommend:

- In their intake interviews, child protective services agencies and shelters for battered women should ask clients about the number of animals in the household, family histories of animal abuse, and the current welfare of animals in the home.

- Professionals involved in anti-violence efforts should participate in **cross-training** programs. Cross-training programs promote interaction and cross-reporting among legislators, judges, humane investigators, social workers, school administrators, and others by teaching them about the animal cruelty/human violence connection.

- Animal shelters and domestic violence agencies should partner to develop “safe haven” programs—emergency housing for the pets of domestic violence victims.

- When possible, victims of child abuse or domestic violence should be given opportunities to participate in therapeutic and rehabilitative programs involving animals. Positive interaction with animals in a supervised environment may not only reduce the chance of victims “acting out” their own experiences on animals, but studies also show it may help people heal emotionally, physically, and psychologically.

- Cases of animal abuse should be documented and tracked systematically through the criminal justice



process. When people are convicted of animal cruelty, the nature of the crime and consequent punishment, if any, should remain on their permanent records and be easily accessed by law enforcement officials.

Source: *Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse*, ed. by Frank R. Ascione and Phil Arkow (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999).

## A Winning Combination

Lieutenant Sherry Schlueter heads up the Abuse and Neglect Investigation Unit of the Broward County, Florida, Sheriff’s Department. As lieutenant, she oversees a team of agents who investigate violence against animals, children, the

elderly, and the disabled. Schlueter’s law enforcement agency is considered an excellent example of cross-reporting in action. To learn more, visit the Broward County Sheriff’s Department homepage at [www.sheriff.org](http://www.sheriff.org).

## Think About It

- In its 1999 Animal Welfare Position Statement, the American Veterinary Medical Association states that it “recognizes that veterinarians may have occasion to observe cases of cruelty to animals, animal abuse, or animal neglect as defined by state law or local ordinances. When these observations occur, the AVMA considers it the responsibility of the veterinarian to report such cases to the appropriate authorities. Such disclosures may be necessary to protect the health and welfare of animals and people.” In addition, laws in four states require veterinarians to report suspected cases of animal cruelty. Why do you think some veterinarians might object to that requirement? What would be some ways of addressing their concerns?

- In Colorado, veterinarians are required to report suspected child abuse and in Illinois they are mandated to report suspected abuse of the elderly. Do you think veterinarians should be required to report suspected family violence? Why or why not?

## Questions and Issues for Discussion

What might be the benefits of cross-reporting in the following situations?

- While visiting a pregnant teenager in a low-income apartment complex, a social worker observes her kicking her dog for having an “accident” in the home.
- Investigating a reported case of animal cruelty, an animal control officer finds emaciated, filthy, and ill horses and pigs. During the course of their conversation, the animals’ owner mentions that he has sole custody of two small children.
- Responding to a domestic violence call, a police officer observes a number of thin, unkempt cats on the premises. When she reaches her hand out to one, the cat hisses and darts away.

Read over the recommendations of Arkow and Ascione. Can you think of any other ways that agencies can work together to recognize and stop violence?

## Explore the Issues

Around the country, hundreds of therapeutic and rehabilitative programs aim to reduce violence.

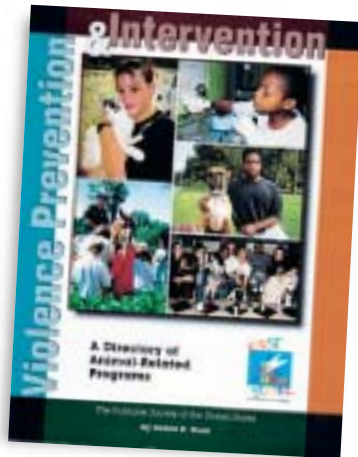


Courtesy of Colorado Boys Ranch

Many of these programs reduce violence and increase empathy and compassion by strengthening the

**human-animal bond.** Explore the Internet to learn about any such programs in your community; you or your animal protection club may be able to volunteer your time. (Each month, at [www.hsus.org/firststrike/programs](http://www.hsus.org/firststrike/programs), The HSUS highlights an

animal-assisted therapy program.) You may also be interested in ordering *Violence Prevention and Intervention: A Directory of Animal-Related Programs*. This 82-page book is a guide to programs around the country that teach conflict resolution, coping skills, and



compassion by exploring the unique bond between people and animals. To order, send \$8 (plus \$3 shipping and handling) to The HSUS, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

## Take Action

- To make cross-reporting a reality in more communities, more people need to know about the connection between animal cruelty and human violence. The HSUS's First Strike Campaign is designed to raise public awareness of this connection and to teach police officers, humane educators, social workers, and others how they can help break the cycle of abuse. You can spread the word

with The HSUS's First Strike packet, which comes with fact sheets, suggestions for community action, and an 18-page guide you can give to social workers and animal-care professionals. Also included are ad slicks for you to copy and put up at school. To order your free packet, write to The HSUS, First Strike Campaign, e-mail [firststrike@hsus.org](mailto:firststrike@hsus.org), or call toll-free (888) 213-0956.

- Educate your teachers and peers by hosting a seminar at school, using materials and information from [www.hsus.org/firststrike](http://www.hsus.org/firststrike) and the First Strike campaign kit. Consider inviting someone from your local humane society or police force to speak at the event. You may also wish to show the First Strike video, which provides an overview of the animal-



cruelty/human violence connection and explains the role of humane societies and community coalitions in combating such violence. The video is eight minutes long and costs \$6 plus \$3 shipping and handling. To order, contact The HSUS.

- Are you and your family ready, willing, and able to open your hearts and home to animals in need of temporary homes? Some animal shelters coordinate fostering services for companion animals whose owners are temporarily unable to care for them. Such owners may include battered women entering shelters or military personnel unexpectedly called to duty. Contact your local animal shelter to find out what fostering is all about and whether you and your family can lend a hand.



## [What to Do If You Suspect Animal Cruelty](#)

Mistreatment of animals is a concern, because it is wrong to cause another living creature unnecessary

pain or suffering. Intentional cruelty is particularly disturbing because of what it signals about the person inflicting it: He or she needs help. People who are cruel to animals may well have suffered (or be suffering from) violence themselves, or they may behave violently toward other people. For all of those reasons, it is extremely important that you report any animal cruelty you hear of, witness, or suspect. Here's how.

**1) Get the facts.** Write down the date, time, location, and any details you can remember, including descriptions of the people or animals involved. If someone else also witnessed the act, ask for that person's name and contact information in case officials need more witnesses. Photographs and videotapes are also helpful, if it is possible (and safe) for you to take them.

**2) Get help.** Don't handle something as serious as animal cruelty alone. Ask your parents, school counselor, a teacher, or any other adult you trust to help you report your case.



**3) Get on the phone.**

Contact your local humane society, animal shelter, sheriff's department, or animal control officer. You can find this information in your telephone directory.

Be sure to provide all the information you have gathered. Be aware that your complaint will be taken more seriously if you are willing to provide your name and contact information. However, if you are reporting a friend, neighbor, or family member and feel uncomfortable giving your name, you may make complaints anonymously. It is better to make an anonymous report than none at all.

**4) Get the law on your side.** Contact your local police and social services departments. Again, provide the information you have gathered and let them know that you have notified your humane society as well. This will help encourage cross-reporting.

**Think About It**

Why might some people be reluctant to report

animal cruelty? Under what circumstances, if any, might you be reluctant to report animal cruelty? Why?

**Questions and Issues for Discussion**

An increasing number of Internet sites promote animal abuse and *bestiality*, animal sexual abuse. Do you think that those kinds of sites should be allowed? Why or why not? How does our constitutional right to freedom of speech figure into your opinion, if at all?

**Explore the Issues**

- One of the goals of The HSUS First Strike Campaign is to strengthen laws against all forms of animal cruelty, including animal sexual abuse. How do current federal and state laws address animal sexual abuse? How does your state treat animal sexual abuse, if at all? For a free packet on animal sexual abuse, write to The HSUS.

**Take Action**

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper outlining the steps people should take to report animal abuse in their community. (You may wish to clarify that children and teenagers should seek an adult's help when they witness or hear of animal cruelty.)

- If you discover an Internet site that promotes animal abuse, ask the service provider that hosts the site to remove it immediately. You can find the address of the site's provider at [www.networksolutions.com](http://www.networksolutions.com).



- If you've reported a case of animal cruelty or developed a public awareness campaign about animal cruelty issues, contact us. We may be interested in featuring you and your efforts on HumaneTeen, our Web site for teenagers. Visit [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org), write to HumaneTeen, P.O. Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423, e-mail [humane-teen@nahee.org](mailto:humane-teen@nahee.org), or call (860) 434-8666.

## The Courage to Speak Up

When Lennie Bowe was a high-school junior, she discovered that four boys in her circle of friends had tortured and killed a stray cat. A little investigative work on Lennie's part revealed that the boys threw the cat into the air, beat her with a board and shovel, jumped up and down on her, and drove over her to make sure she was dead. An animal lover with pets of her own, Lennie was extremely upset. She knew that the boys were wrong for causing an animal to suffer, and she was also aware that such cruelty is linked to potential violence against humans. Still, these boys were casual friends of hers. After agonizing over what to do, Lennie turned to her mother for help. Together, the two set off a chain of events that resulted in criminal charges being filed against the boys and a national petition to make animal cruelty a felony in the state of Virginia.

Unfortunately, Lennie faced some painful consequences for speaking up. Many of her friends abandoned her, believing that she was wrong for "telling" on the boys. She received hate mail and nasty phone calls. And, along with some of their friends, the boys harassed Lennie at school. Still, Lennie refused to back down.

What's more, the courageous teen insists that she would do it again if she had to. Read all about Lennie Bowe's story at [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org); click on "Teens Helping Animals."

If you, like Lennie, learn secondhand about an act of animal cruelty, please do not dismiss it. Talk to an adult about the situation and try to get the facts. Your quick action may save lives. The classic example: When Luke Woodham ("Explore the Issues," p. 7) killed his dog with a friend, a neighbor witnessed the act but remained silent. Six months later, Woodham murdered his mother and two high-school students.



Courtesy of L. Bowe

## RESOURCES

### E-MAIL

**I-CAAN.** The Inter-Campus Animal Advocacy Network is a free e-mail listserv linking college and high-school students who want to help animals. To subscribe, send the message **subscribe icaan** to [waste@waste.org](mailto:waste@waste.org). Once you're signed up, you can post messages by sending them to [icaan@waste.org](mailto:icaan@waste.org).

**HUMANElines.** This free, weekly e-mail alert keeps you posted on significant events affecting animals. To subscribe, send the message **subscribe hsus-action** to [subscribehsus-action@lists.hsus.org](mailto:subscribehsus-action@lists.hsus.org).

**HumaneTeen Network.** A free online network that provides members with e-mail updates on the latest animal and environmental issues. To join the network, go to [www.humaneteen.org](http://www.humaneteen.org), click on "Join the Network," enter your e-mail address, and hit "Join List."

### INTERNET SITES

**American Humane Association,** [www.americanhumane.org](http://www.americanhumane.org).

**American Psychiatric Association,** [www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org).

**American Psychological Association,** [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org).

**American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,** [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org).

**AnimalConcerns.org,** <http://animal/concerns.netforchange.com>.

**Animal Welfare Institute,** [www.awi.org](http://www.awi.org).

**Center for Respect of Life and the Environment,** [www.crlc.org](http://www.crlc.org).

**Doris Day Animal Foundation,** [www.ddal.org](http://www.ddal.org).

**Farm Sanctuary,** [www.farmsanctuary.org](http://www.farmsanctuary.org).

**The Forum on Religion and Ecology,** <http://divweb.harvard.edu/cswr/ecology>.

**The Humane Society of the United States,** [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org).

**The Latham Foundation,** [www.Latham.org](http://www.Latham.org).

**Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,** [www.msPCA.org](http://www.msPCA.org).

**National Center on Elder Abuse,** [www.elderabusecenter.org](http://www.elderabusecenter.org)

**National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information,** [www.calib.com/nccanch](http://www.calib.com/nccanch).

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence,** [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org).

**People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals**, [www.peta-online.org](http://www.peta-online.org).

**Psychologists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals**, [www.psyeta.org](http://www.psyeta.org).

### BOOKS & JOURNALS

*Animals and Their Legal Rights*, (Washington, DC: Animal Welfare Institute, 1990).

*Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse: Linking the Circles of Compassion for Prevention and Intervention*, edited by Frank R. Ascione and Phil Arkow (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1999).

*Clinical Assessment of Juvenile Animal Cruelty*, by Shari Lewchanin, Psy.D., and Ellen Zimmerman, L.C.S.W. (Brunswick, ME: Biddle Publishing Company, 2000).

*Community Intervention in Juvenile Animal Cruelty*, by Shari Lewchanin, Psy.D., and Ellen Zimmerman, L.C.S.W. (Brunswick, ME: Biddle Publishing Company, 2000).

*Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence: Readings in Research and Application*, edited by Randall Lockwood and Frank R. Ascione (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1998).

*Society and Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Relations*, available online at [www.psyeta.org/sa](http://www.psyeta.org/sa).

*Why the Wild Things Are*, by Gail Melson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

## Stop Animal Cruelty at Its Roots— Teach Kindness to Kids in Your Community

From greyhound racing and circuses to puppy mills, dogfighting, and mistreatment of companion animals, animal suffering is all too common in our society. Yet so many of the causes of animal abuse can be reduced through **humane education** that teaches children how to make better choices for animals. You or your animal protection club can reach elementary-school kids through NAHEE's Adopt-a-Classroom program. When you adopt a class, each child in that classroom receives his or her own copy of *KIND* (Kids In Nature's Defense) *News*, an award-winning newspaper for kids from kindergarten through grade 6. It features articles, puzzles, projects, and celebrity interviews that teach children compassion and respect for people, animals, and the environment.

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To learn more or to order online, please visit [www.nahee.org](http://www.nahee.org). To view samples of *KIND News*, go to [www.kindnews.org](http://www.kindnews.org) and click "About *KIND News*."



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ISBN 0-941246-10-8



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