

## Know the Connections

According to a 2003 Report by the Humane Society of the United States, in a single sample of domestic violence shelters in the United States, 91% of adult victims of domestic violence and 73% of their children mentioned incidences of pet abuse occurring in their homes.

Many domestic violence victims delay seeking shelter because they don't want to leave their pet(s) behind.

In 88% of cases of physical child abuse, an animal has also been abused.

### What is Josie's Fund?

In 2004, the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition established a new fund that recognized that pets are impacted by domestic and sexual violence along with other family members.

Josie's Fund works to raise awareness about the connections between domestic violence, sexual violence, and animal abuse. It is also used to support survivors and their companion animals who are seeking safety and services through Nebraska's domestic violence/sexual assault programs.

To donate to Josie's Fund,\* send your donation to:

Nebraska Domestic Violence  
Sexual Assault Coalition  
245 S. 84th Street, Suite 200  
Lincoln, NE 68510

\*Designate that the donation go to Josie's Fund.

## Help is Available

Nebraska's coalition of domestic violence and sexual assault agencies provide access to safety and shelter across the state.  
To locate the program nearest you, visit [www.ndvsac.org](http://www.ndvsac.org).

Or call:

1-877-215-0167

Línea de Crisis en Nebraska

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

National Sexual Assault Hotline

1-866-331-9474

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline



# Pets Are Victims Too!

## Understanding the Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse



Nebraska Domestic Violence  
Sexual Assault Coalition  
402-476-6256  
[www.ndvsac.org](http://www.ndvsac.org)

*“I know it’s not safe for me to stay, but if I leave, I’m afraid that he will take his anger out on my pets and I can’t stand the thought of that.”* Domestic Violence Survivor

Intentionally hurting an animal is unthinkable to most of us. Unfortunately, for persons who abuse their partner and children, this is not the case. If a child or intimate partner is being abused, it is possible that any animal living in that home has also been hurt, mutilated or killed. Abusers often use the threat or reality of harming or killing pets as a means of power and control over the entire family.

Domestic violence/sexual assault programs around the state often assist victims who fear for the safety of their pets as a result of the violence in their homes. They are able to assist people in developing a safety plan for their pets (see checklist below) and in some cases programs can provide financial assistance for the pet’s safety through resources such as Josie’s Fund.

## A Checklist for Pet Safety Planning

### Questions to ask yourself...

- Do you worry about your pet’s safety?
- Has your partner threatened to harm or actually harmed your pet?
- Does concern for your pet’s safety keep you from leaving or seeking shelter?

### If you are staying at home...

- Keep emergency provisions (food, medicine) for your pet if the abuser withholds money from you.
- Keep the phone number of the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary clinic.
- Establish ownership of your pet by creating a paper trail (e.g. obtain a pet license, have your pet’s veterinarian records put in your name).

### If you are planning to leave...

- Obtain the name of a safe emergency shelter for your pet.
- Pack a bag for your pet that includes the pet’s food, medicine, documents of ownership, leash, carrier, toys & bedding.

### If you have left...

- Keep the pet inside as much as possible and don’t leave it outside alone.
- Pick a safe route and time to walk your pet and don’t exercise or walk your pet alone.
- Explain your situation to your veterinarian and make sure they understand the importance of keeping your information confidential. If necessary, change veterinarians.

## How do batterers use and abuse pets?

- Kicking, hitting or throwing an animal
- Killing or maiming a pet to make a victim comply or to retaliate for a victim leaving
- Threatening to take a pet away to make the family keep the violence a secret
- Refusing or impeding someone from assisting an animal after it has been injured
- Pets mysteriously dying or disappearing

## Why do batterers threaten, abuse or kill family pets?

- Isolate the victim and children
- Eliminate competition for attention
- Force the family to keep the violence a secret
- Teach submission
- Perpetuate the context of terror
- Punish victim for leaving, prevent the victim from leaving, or coerce them to return
- Degrade the victim

Source: Humane Society of the United States.