

ODVN STEERING COMMITTEE ON DV & ANIMAL ABUSE

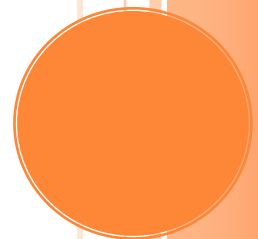
*Summary: 90-day Survey of Domestic Violence
Program Pet Questionnaire*

Ohio Domestic Violence Network Steering Committee on DV
and Animal Abuse through support from the Kenneth A. Scott
Charitable Trust

7/1/2012

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ODVN STEERING COMMITTEE ON DV & ANIMAL ABUSE

Summary: 90-day Survey of Domestic Violence Program Pet Questionnaire

Background

In the spring of 2010, members of the Ohio Domestic Violence Network's Steering Committee on Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse surveyed Ohio domestic violence programs to assess the needs and resources available to victims of domestic violence who are concerned about the safety and well-being of their pets. The results of establish a strong connection between the safety of abuse victims and the safety of their animals, and the results showed a sporadic response to these needs across Ohio. These findings were reported in an executive summary titled: *"In Harm's Way."* This publication served as the foundation for seeking funding from the Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Foundation to expand the field of inquiry by developing awareness and building capacity throughout the State of Ohio.

In 2011 as a result of attending ODVN's five regional meetings of program Executive Directors, ODVN's website was expanded to include information on pet issues in domestic violence situations including a *Domestic Violence Program Guide to Pet Support* offering suggestions and examples of forms.

The Steering Committee of DV and Animal Abuse felt it important to develop some baseline research which heretofore was non-existent in Ohio.

Survey

Six domestic violence programs participated in the voluntary survey. The intent was to ask the following questions to all persons who call or come to the shelter during the 90-day period beginning April 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2012.

The participating domestic violence programs and the Ohio counties they serve represent both urban and rural populations as follows:

My Sister's Place: Athens, Hocking, Vinton

CHOICES: Franklin, Delaware

Domestic Violence Project: Stark

Eve, Inc.: Washington

Family Abuse Center: Miami

YWCA Greater Cincinnati: Adams, Clermont, Brown

The survey consisted of five questions as follows:

1. Do you have animals you consider pets? Yes No
2. Have your pets been harmed or threatened to be harmed as part of the abuse in your current relationship (such as hitting, punching, threatening, etc)? Yes No
If yes, by whom: adult male, male child, adult female, female child, other
3. Have pets in your home been killed or threatened to be killed – now or in the past? Yes No If yes, by whom: please state relationship
4. Do you think your pets may be harmed if you leave now? Yes No
If yes, what do you think might happen to your pets? They will be:
Neglected (such as no food, water, shelter)
Physically abused (hurt in any way)
Abandoned (Put them out to care for themselves/dropped off on a highway)
Killed
Not sure but concerned
Not concerned about pet safety
5. Does the safety of your pets have impact on your decision whether or not to leave? Yes No

Findings

A total of 140 surveys were completed during the survey time frame.

59 (42%) of total respondents currently had pets

81 (58%) of total respondents currently had no pets

49% of respondents with pets indicated their pets had been harmed or threatened to be harmed as part of the abuse in their current relationship:

97% by an adult male; in one case the abuser was an adult female

26% of all respondents indicated their pets had been killed or threatened to be killed now or in the past. Relationship:

27% boyfriend

3% daughter

22% husband

3% adoptive parents

13.5% other adult male

13.5% no response-unknown

8% father or step-father

5% other adult female

5% brother

44% of persons with pets believed their pets may be harmed if they left their home now, out of which:

42% suspected their pets would be neglected

42% believed their pets would be abandoned

38% suspected pets would be physically abused

23% believed their pets would be killed

46% were not sure what would happen but were concerned about pet safety

24% of all respondents and 57% of persons with pets indicated pet safety has or would have an impact on their decision whether or not to leave.

Survey Comments

The following comments were taken from the submitted surveys:

[abuser] “threatened to kill cats, threw them into street.”

“Abuser killed her dog.”

“\$3,500 vet bill following abusive incident.”

“Pet thrown out of a two-story window and died.”

“Cat killed by abuser due to abuse; dog killed due to abuse and 2nd dog given away to fights and died in a dog fight.”

“Had dog a year ago and had to get rid of it, abuser refused to buy dog food.”

“Dog was in cage then kicked across the room; also dog-napped.”

“She once had a cat and abuser would pick it up by its tail and swing it around – she rehomed the cat due to this.”

“Brother threw dog out of house when she was at doctors.”