

The Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse in Tribal Communities & Available Resources

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Agenda

- Introductions
- How did we get here
- What's going on with animals in our communities now
- Understanding the link & resources needed
- Tools & resources for helping victims

About the Native America Humane Society

The Native America Humane Society works with communities to help them resolve their animal issues. We help people understand that when animals are healthy and well-cared for, the community will flourish. We facilitate long-term plans that are sustainable and locally driven. And we use animal issues as opportunities to develop the next generation of tribal leaders

Programs and Strategic Goals

The NAHS works in three main areas, all which contribute to our vision of a rekindled relationship with animals among tribal nations.

Bridge to Animal Care

Hundreds of tribal nations face a critical gap in the availability of animal care services in their communities.

Our strategies:

- Collaborative partnerships for animal veterinary care services and sheltering of unwanted tribal pets.
- Public, searchable database of animal care service providers for tribal governments.
- Templates for tribal agreements with outside animal care service providers

Community Engagement & Empowerment

The NAHS provides adaptable tools for humane and effective community governance that are responsive to tribal sovereignty.

Our strategies:

- Offer suite of best practices, examples, and choices for drafting or updating animal laws to better meet the needs of tribal communities
- Empower tribes by facilitating Humane Community Development process

Leadership and Healing through Animals

We create opportunities for community members, especially tribal youth, to enrich their lives through careers, businesses, and activities involving animals. We also develop culturally appropriate programs that provide social benefits through animals.

Our strategies:

- Provide opportunities for tribal members especially youth to develop and pursue their interests (whether in veterinary medicine or in related fields)
- Build the Tribal Link Network to share tools and resources for human and animal victims of violence

Available Resources

- Donated pet food and supplies (as available) from Rescue Bank
- Veterinary care clinics with NAHS partners
- Information on grant funding for animal programs
- Training on link between domestic (family) violence and animal abuse for tribal leadership, law enforcement, and social services
- Tribal youth externships
- Humane Community Development Workshop
 - Community-led framework for developing sustainable and humane animal population management programs
- Model animal regulations and codes
- Humane education materials
- Disaster preparation for animals

How Did We Get Here

History of Animals In Tribal Communities

- Each tribe had their own values, traditions, and stories regarding animals
- General Tenets:
 - Creation Stories
 - Clan/Affinity Identities
 - Laws/Customs

Hunting Laws

- Most tribal groups are traditionally omnivorous—hunting was a necessity for survival
- Obligations to animal world called for hunting laws → specific protocols
- Belief system: animals had spirits too
- Tribal hunting laws called for respect for the animal. Contrary to Western hunting
- Ex: Makah whaling traditions and laws
- In many tribal cultures, a child's first "kill" of animal is a significant rite of passage for transition from child into adulthood.
- Western hunting currently viewed as "sport" or dominance/superiority over animals
- Ex: Lac du Flambeau deer hunting protocol and laws
- Two primary European imports: patriarchy and dominion over animals → contrary to most tribal communities' values
- Missionaries and federal agents sought to "civilize" tribal people
- Required tribes to adopt Christianity → changed tribal animal-human relationship to adopting European dominion concept
- Similar to adoption of patriarchy, child abuse and domestic violence in tribal communities

Weaponized Dogs

- DOGS: On Columbus' 2nd voyage, he brought dogs trained to attack Caribbean Indians.
- Significant disruption of relationship between Native people and dogs
- Spanish began selling human body parts at markets for training attack dogs to be used in tribal communities.
- Europeans often used dogs to maim and kill Native people (highly documented in 16th & 17th century)
- Dogs revered and respected in many tribal cultures
- Prior to European arrival, many tribal cultures:
 - Dogs found in many cosmology & creation stories
 - Dogs viewed as a status symbol for wealth
 - Dogs buried with their owners
 - Dogs used as hunters, protectors, companions
- Europeans using dogs as torture and attack devices altered the relationship between dogs and Native people
- U.S. still using weaponized dogs against Native people
 - (Standing Rock, Sept. 3, 2016).

Effects of Colonization of Tribal Communities' Relationships to Animals

- Colonization altered both human-human AND human-animal relationships
- European cultures and values centered on patriarchy
 - Violence and abuse tolerated against women and children
 - Clash with tribal cultures

Current Snapshot

- Native women face the highest rates of sexual and domestic violence
- Native children disproportionately removed from the home
- Highest incarceration rate per population
- Tribal communities face some of the highest rates of:
 - Crime & violence, homelessness, substance use, suicide, mental health and physical health issues, pollution, unemployment
- Animal abuse has become common, including interspecies sexual assault (bestiality)
- Sexual Violence against animals used to threaten and control human victims
- Direct link to bestiality and crimes against humans: crimes against children (including child sexual assault), domestic violence, the making of child or animal pornography
- 38 States have anti-bestiality laws
 - Nearly half of the states require those who were convicted of bestiality to register as sex offenders
- Many tribal codes have also prohibited bestiality (often found in the sex abuse/crimes sections)
 - Ex: Yankton Sioux Tribe Criminal & Juvenile Code
 - Ex: Tulalip Tribal Code
 - Ex: Quilete Tribal Code

What's Going on with Animals in Our Communities Now

- Misunderstanding of animal needs
- Lack of respect for animals
 - Abandonment
 - Cruelty
- No access to veterinary care
 - Neglect
 - Disease

Current Status of Animals in Tribal Communities

- Most prevalent issues:
 - Animal abuse
 - Overpopulation
 - Feral/wild
 - Pack animals (increased maulings and disease)
- Altered relationship to animals
 - Less adherence to traditional values regarding animals

Abuse and Mistreatment

- Big Issues: neglect, domestic violence including companion animals, dog fighting
- Many tribes already have animal abuse codes and DNR codes, but most of them do not address tribal cultural values
 - Many tribal codes do not protect animals as DV victims
 - One of the biggest obstacles preventing the improvement of these laws is difficulty developing priorities due to lack of information
- Typically low-level misdemeanors

Overpopulation

- Overpopulation primarily due to two factors:
 - Allowing or unable to control reproduction among companion animals;
 - Companion animals that are relinquished by their owners
- Many tribal communities lack access to spay and neuter services.

Understanding the Link

- THE LINK: studies have repeatedly shown that there is a link between domestic violence and animal abuse
 - Domestic abusers often target pets/companion animals to control and threaten human victims
 - Victims will often delay leaving their abusers for fear of their animal's safety or lack of resources to bring their animal with them.
 - Approximately 48%
- Among the patterns of perpetrators that commit violent acts against their partners and/or family is the incidence of animal maltreatment and abuse (harming, killing, or threatening them)
- Abusers threaten, injure, and at times kill pets in order to control their victims and to create an environment of fear and dominance
- Victims will often stay in abusive situations for fear of leaving their pets
- 2015 NAHS Study confirmed that the Link is prevalent in tribal communities as well
 - (1) animals belonging to victims are frequently abused to control victims; and
 - (2) tribal domestic violence shelters currently lack resources to keep victims and their companion animals together.
- Four themes emerged in survey: Overpopulation, Lack of tribal community resources, lack of code enforcement, and lack of awareness

Understanding the Link in Indian Country

- Native America Humane Society, Tribal Link
 - [Www.nativeamericahumane.org/triballink.html](http://www.nativeamericahumane.org/triballink.html)
- Sarah Deer & Liz Murphy, "Animals May Take Pity on Us: Using Traditional Tribal Beliefs to Address Animal Abuse and Family Violence Within Tribal Nations" (2017)
 - [Open.mitchellhamline.edu/mhlr/vol43/iss4/1/](http://open.mitchellhamline.edu/mhlr/vol43/iss4/1/)

Requires Multi-Prong Approach

- Awareness and education
- Population management including spay/neuter
- Good pet guardianship through wellness clinics
- Youth programming and community leadership
- Facilitating partnerships with outside providers
- Advocating for reformed animal laws

Resources Needed

- Shelters that accommodate pets
 - Redrover Program (to be discussed further)
 - Grants to provide shelter assistance
- Temporary Foster Homes
 - Individual foster homes
 - Veterinary Hospitals as fosters
 - Reduced costs
- Spay/Neuter Services & other veterinary needs
 - Alliances with local veterinarians
 - Alliances with local veterinary college(s)
 - Example: University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine
- Travel Resources
 - Agreements with local transportation services
 - Geographic barriers in Indian Country

Necessary to Help Native Victims

- Understand challenges unique to tribal communities and Native peoples
 - Historical Trauma
 - Geographic barriers
 - Economic barriers, poverty
 - Political and jurisdictional barriers
- Trauma Informed Response + Cultural Competence
 - Understand Historical Trauma
 - Cultural Competency: makes victims/survivors feel more accepted and comfortable

Tribal Legislation

- Statutes could include penalties that require convicted abusers to attend cultural courses with community leaders, community service, and/or therapy
- Require the convicted abuser to be banned from owning or housing any animal within the community, subject to higher penalties if violated. This could require routine home visits from tribal police, animal control, or community advocates.
- Require the convicted abuser pay for the animal's veterinary medical costs, kenneling fees, or foster fees of their animal victims.
- Consider amending, re-writing, or creating domestic violence and sexual violence legislation that explicitly includes companion animals and livestock as protected parties (civil and criminal).
- Courts could include companion animals or livestock on orders of protection, in conditions of release, and any other orders or injunctions imposed by the court.
- Courts could also impose post-conviction requirements that are focused more towards rehabilitation, such as cultural courses or therapy.
- Consider allocating more financial resources towards expanding their community's domestic violence or sexual assault shelter space in order to accommodate companion animals.
- Convicted offenders be required to pay for any veterinary medical costs, foster or kenneling fees of their victim's companion animal.
- Provide incentives for community members to become foster homes (tailored to each community's needs).
- Rob Roy Smith, "At a Complex Crossroads: Animal Law in Indian Country" (2007)
 - [Www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/lralvol14_1_109.pdf](http://www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/lralvol14_1_109.pdf)

Questions?

NAHS

info@nativeamericahumane.org

www.facebook.com/nativeamericahumane

Tools & Resources

Shelters that accommodate pets and their humans can be hard to find!

- Becoming more common, but as of July 2018, only an estimated 3% of shelters accommodate pets
- A lot of factors for a shelter to consider:
 - Funding (food, medical costs, supplies, fencing), allergies of other residents, cleaning, and liability

Safe Havens Mapping Project

Interactive map in which you can search by state, zip code and distance by miles

List managed by Animal Welfare Institute

awionline.org/safe-havens

A Safe Place for Pets

Managed by redrover

Search by state, county, "map it", & phone numbers

www.safeplaceforpets.org

Sheltering Animals and Families Together

www.alliephillips.com/saf-tprogram/saf-t-shelters

Funding is the biggest barrier for shelters in providing accommodations for pets.

PAWS Act (Bi-partisan, passed December 20, 2018)

Among other items, it directs the Department of Agriculture to award grants for shelter and housing assistance and support services for domestic violence victims with pets

petsandwomensafety.com

Redrover Program

One of the biggest funding programs for shelters

Helps shelters and organizations obtain grant funding to keep animals safe

Build on site

Funding for off-site shelter services

Additional Resources for Shelters Seeking Grants (General)

Rural Health Information Hub

www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/violence-and-abuse/funding

Federal Funding (grants)

- Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)
 - Services for Rural Victims, Transitional Housing
- Family Violence Prevention & Services Act (FVPSA)

[Additional Safety Planning for Pets](#)

National Link Coalition, Safety Planning (2013)

18 pages of detailed information

www.nationallinkcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/DV-safetyplanningcompilation.pdf

Allie Phillips, Safety Planning Brochure (2018)

www.alliephillips.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Safety-Planning-Brochure-2018-4.jpeg?X10201

Animal Welfare Institute Resources for Shelters, Victims & Workers

Safety Planning

Intake Questions

Signs of Animal Abuse for Child Protection Workers

Including Pets in Protection Orders

www.awionline.org/content/companion-animals

[Information for Organizations Looking to Establish Safe Havens for Pets](#)

Humane Society of the United States, Starting a Safe Havens for Animals Program

23 pages

www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/2004-safe-havens-animal-program.pdf

Sheltering Families and Animals Together Program

58 pages

www.alliephillips.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/SAF-T-Start-Up-Manual-2015.pdf?X10201

[Additional Resources for Victims](#)

Starelief & Pet Assistance

safeplace for Pets (free and temporary foster care), Food pantry, funding for routine & emergency medical care

Based in Stamford, CT

www.starelief.org

Pets of the Homeless

Search for homeless shelters allowing pets, free clinics, emergency veterinary care

Can search by city and state

www.petsofthehomeless.org

People with Pets

National directory/search database for pet friendly apartments, homes & hotels

www.peoplewithpets.com

Pets Welcome

National directory/search database for pet friendly hotel lodging

www.petswelcome.com

National Center Against Domestic Violence

List of organizations helping victims & hotlines
www.ncadv.org/resources

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

www.niwrc.org

PACT for Animals

Assistance for finding temporary foster homes
www.pactforanimals.org

Displaced Paws

Matching service site to help those seeking foster homes and those wanting to foster
www.displacedpaws.org

Legal

Animal Legal Defense Fund

Advocacy, litigation, legislation
www.aldf.org

Animal Legal and Historical Center

Codes/statutes, proposed legislation, law reviews
www.animallaw.info

Animal Welfare Institute

Tailored to Wisconsin
www.awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/AWI-CA-WI-PPO-Manual-012015.pdf

Veterinary Services

Best Friends

Maintains comprehensive list of financial assistance for veterinary care
www.bestfriends.org/resources/financial-aid-pets

Brown Dog Foundation

Assistance in medications
<http://www.browndogfoundation.org/>

The Mosby Foundation

Assists critically injured, abused or neglected dogs
www.themosbyfoundation.org

Onyx and Breezy Foundation

Spay and neuter, food, medicine and supplies assistance
www.onyxandbreezy.org

Humane Society of the United States

Comprehensive list of non-profit organizations by state that help provide veterinary services/financial assistance

www.humanesociety.org/resources/are-you-having-trouble-affording-your-pet

VCA Pet Food Pantry

32 locations (18 states)

www.vcacharities.org/programs/pet-food-pantry

Traveling Resources

The Milligan Foundation

Assistance in purchasing bus, train and plane tickets for victims of domestic violence

www.themilliganfoundation.org

Angel Flight West

Non-profit that arranges free, non-emergency transportation within the 13 Western States for adults and children with serious medical issues/compelling needs, including domestic violence relocation

www.angelflightwest.org