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Cruelty to Animals: Changing Psychological, Social, and Legislative Perspectives

2 CHAPTER

Frank R. Ascione and Randall Lockwood

Introduction

During the last half of the twentieth century, many of society's concerns were focused on the quality of our physical environment and the threats to the integrity and health of that environment. As we enter the new millennium, it is becoming clear that societal concerns about the proliferation of violence will constitute another environmental movement, one dealing with the problems that Garbarino (1995) has termed "social toxicity." Research, debate, and discussion about the causes and cures of violence in American society are already part of the discourse of nearly every discipline, from philosophy to criminology to evolutionary biology.

Society is looking for new tools and resources to employ in the efforts to combat violence, identify real or potential perpetrators at an early stage, and define actions that might predict or prevent violent behavior. Closer examination of cruelty to animals within the framework of family and societal violence offers an opportunity to explore violence outside of the traditional nature–nurture debate over the origins of aggression. Cruelty to animals represents an objectively definable behavior that occurs within a societal context. It also represents a good measure of the interaction between the behavior of which an individual is intrinsically capable and the behavior his or her environ-

ment has allowed or encouraged. The fact that the definition of cruelty to animals is so strongly influenced by cultures and subcultures need not be a complication but rather an opportunity to unravel the many influences that can shape violent behavior. Closer analysis of the connections between cruelty to animals and other forms of violence offers new opportunities for the study of violence and the hope for new insights and solutions.

Concern about cruelty to animals has been part of the cultural, ethical, and religious traditions of most societies (Regenstein 1991). Serpell (1999) observes that many historical accounts of the rise of the animal protection movement link the growth of this concern to other social reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These include abolition of slavery, women's suffrage, and the protection of children, the disabled, and the severely mentally ill (see e.g., Turner 1980; Ritvo 1987; Ryder 1989). However, Serpell argues that the exclusion of animals from moral consideration in pre-eighteenth-century Europe was the exception, rather than the rule. Hunter-gatherer and early agrarian societies tended to view animals as fully rational, sentient beings with whom humans were to maintain correct and respectful relationships. Even cultures that made use of domesticated animals for food

(Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Assyria, India) looked upon killing of animals in a nonsacrificial way as the moral equivalent of manslaughter.

As the sacred elements of animal use changed with the expansion of utilization of domestic animals, so did Western views of animal maltreatment. Key to this transformation were the reinterpretations of Biblical statements on animals by Saint Augustine (A.D. 354–430) and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). These denied that animals had the capacity for reason and immortality and advanced the concept that maltreatment of animals was wrong only in the context of its connection to the development of violence against people. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas follows his defense of the exploitation of animals with this observation:

If any passages of Holy Writ seem to forbid us to be cruel to dumb animals, for instance to kill a bird with its young, this is "to remove man's thoughts from being cruel to other men, and lest through being cruel to other animals one becomes cruel to human beings" (Regan and Singer 1976, 59).

Immanuel Kant echoed these same sentiments five hundred years later in his essay "Metaphysical Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue":

Cruelty to animals is contrary to man's duty to himself, because it

deadens in him the feeling of sympathy for their sufferings, and thus a natural tendency that is very useful to morality in relation to other human beings is weakened. (Regan and Singer 1976, 125)

Ironically this view recognizes that cruelty to animals can have serious effects on the perpetrator, effects that can shape how he or she interacts with other people, but at the same time it dismisses as immaterial the direct impact of such maltreatment on the nonhuman victim. We at last seem to be moving toward recognition that cruelty to animals can result in great harm to the victim, the perpetrator, and society as a whole. As Serpell (1999) notes, we are arriving at the realization that the roots of cruelty do not lie in some primitive nature that is to be transcended through enhanced civility, as the Victorians believed, but in the complex consequences of personal experiences within the context of cultures and subcultures.

The Renewal of a Research Emphasis

Most of the attention given to the topic of cruelty to animals within scientific and academic communities during the last two hundred years is contained within a relatively small number of reports (Lockwood and Ascione 1998). A sign of the growing maturity of scholarly attention to theory and research on animal abuse is the recent blossoming of conceptual and review papers on this topic. In developmental psychology Ascione (1993) reviewed the literature on animal abuse from the perspective of developmental psychopathology. He noted the early historical interest in animal abuse in the psychoanalytic and child psychology literatures at the beginning of the twentieth century but also noted the failure of developmental psychologists to attend to the role of pets and other animals in the lives of children. Beirne (1999) has examined the literature on ani-

mal abuse and urged the field of criminology to pay greater attention to this phenomenon both as an object of study in its own right and as a factor related to human violence and crime. This theme also runs through a recent South African article published by Schiff et al. (1999). In an earlier paper, Beirne (1997) highlighted the sexual abuse of animals (bestiality) as a topic virtually ignored in the sociological and criminological fields. Agnew (1998) has provided a thoughtful analysis of the need to integrate animal abuse into criminological theories of crime and deviance. Robin (1999) and Flynn (2000a,b) have contributed valuable conceptual papers encouraging the fields of public health and family relations, respectively, to broaden their research domains to include animal maltreatment as a significant form of violence. Arluke and Lockwood (1997), Lockwood and Ascione (1998), and Ascione et al. (2000) have also called for greater collaborative work among animal welfare, domestic violence, child welfare, and child clinical fields both in terms of research efforts and program (preventive and treatment) development.

These reviews have set the stage for implementing a revitalized research agenda on animal abuse issues for this new century. Rather than simply documenting that animal abuse is a significant problem in its own right and a problem related to human victimization, we can now begin to ask the more difficult questions about factors related to the ontogeny, prevention, and treatment of animal maltreatment and its relation to other mental health problems.

Developmental Aspects of Animal Abuse

The relationship between cruelty to animals and stages of human development can be characterized in at least five ways: *maintenance*, *emergence*, *desistence*, *escalation*, and *absence*.

First, animal abuse may be present at both an early and a later stage, a relation we could call *maintenance*. Second, animal abuse may be absent during an early stage but appear at a later stage, a relation called *emergence*. Third, animal abuse may be present early but may cease to occur later, a relation labeled *desistence* (though this can be supplanted by *escalation*, discussed below). Finally, animal abuse may be *absent* at all developmental stages.

In each of the first four relations, animal abuse is present in some form at some developmental period. These relations are further complicated, however, when we consider that animal abuse may be just one form of antisocial behavior displayed during childhood and adolescence.

In the case of maintenance, animal abuse may be accompanied by other antisocial symptomatology (e.g., fire setting, vandalism) at any developmental periods. In the case of emergence, other antisocial behavior (e.g., bullying children) may precede animal abuse. And in the case of desistence, although animal abuse ceases, it may be supplanted by other antisocial behavior (e.g., the five-year-old who sexually abuses animals becomes a fifteen-year-old who sexually assaults humans). This last condition, in which animal abuse precedes other forms of violence toward people, has sometimes been referred to as the *graduation* or *escalation* hypothesis.

The escalation hypothesis suggests that the presence of cruelty to animals at one developmental period predicts interpersonal violence at a later developmental period. According to this hypothesis, the five-year-old who abuses animals is on the way to becoming an elementary-school bully, aggressive adolescent, and adult violent offender. This type of progression fails to consider the complex associations between childhood and adolescent antisocial behavior and adult violence and criminality. In the following sections, we outline relevant material from the area of developmental psychopathology that suggests the escalation hypothesis may

be more the exception than the rule.

A more general form of the escalation hypothesis is actually codified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition (DSM-IV) (American Psychiatric Association [APA] 1994). The adult personality disorder most closely related to violent behavior is antisocial personality disorder (APD) (code 301.7) and its diagnosis has, as a prerequisite, the presence of conduct disorder (CD) (code 312.8) prior to age fifteen years. The first area of concern listed under the APD diagnostic criteria is “failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest” (APA 1994, 649). Although aggressiveness is also listed as a symptom of APD, there is no specific mention of animal abuse. This contrasts with the diagnostic symptoms for CD, which include cases where a child or adolescent “has been physically cruel to animals” (APA 1994, 90). Physical cruelty to animals, however, is only one of fifteen distinct symptoms listed under the CD classification. To receive a diagnosis of CD, the child or adolescent must display at least three of the fifteen symptoms within the previous twelve months. Therefore, cruelty to animals, alone, is neither necessary nor sufficient for a diagnosis of CD.

Unfortunately, we are not aware of any research that ties the presence of cruelty to animals as a CD symptom to the probability of APD in adults. If a strong form of the escalation hypothesis were viable (i.e., early cruelty to animals always leads to later interpersonal violence) and we located a sufficient sample of APD clients, we would expect many of the clients to have displayed cruelty to animals as part of their CD symptomatology. Furthermore, a prospective study could determine whether children identified as conduct disordered who display cruelty toward animals as part of their symptomatology are more likely to display interpersonally violent behavior in adulthood and are more likely to be classified as APD than are children who do not abuse animals.

However, a few caveats accompany this expectation. First, cruelty to animals has been listed as a CD symptom only since the 1987 version of the DSM. Clinical research and practice prior to 1987 may not include questions about animal abuse. A thirty-year-old with APD who was abusive to animals as a fourteen-year-old might not show up as a positive instance of the escalation hypothesis.

Second, covert cruelty to animals may not come to the attention of parents, who are usually the respondents to symptom checklists/questionnaires about their children’s current behavior and history. Teachers, who may also be asked to complete such checklists and questionnaires, may be unaware of a child’s abuse of animals, since this behavior is unlikely to occur in school environments. In addition, since cruelty to animals has until very recently been classified as a “minor” crime in most jurisdictions, even when discovered it has often been dismissed as trivial or irrelevant. Behaviors that are more overt, such as vandalism, theft, fire setting, and truancy, may be more likely to come to the attention of parents and authorities and to be reported.

Third, there is some evidence that cruelty to animals is one of the earliest CD symptoms to emerge, but its significance may not be noted until additional symptoms (e.g., fire setting, vandalism) begin to accumulate. Frick et al. (1993, 330) noted that parental reports on the emergence of CD symptoms mark 6.5 years as the median age of onset for “hurting animals.” Other potentially criminal behaviors emerge later (e.g., stealing, 7.5 years; setting fires, 8.0 years). Note that these data are based on retrospective parental reports. Frick et al. recommend soliciting information, both retrospective and contemporary, directly from children (that is, self-reports), especially for covert behaviors. We may discover that children’s self-reports regarding the age of onset of cruelty to animals may be earlier than parental reports indicate. Offord et al. (1991) interviewed a large sample (N=1,232) of

nonclinic twelve- to fourteen-year-olds and their parents. The prevalence of cruelty to animals based on parental reports was 1.2 percent for girls, and 2.7 percent for boys, but the rates based on children’s self-reports were 9.1 percent and 10.2 percent, respectively. It is also unclear from Frick et al. (1) how long hurting animals persists over childhood and adolescence, (2) whether hurting animals is displaced by other forms of destructiveness and antisocial behavior, and (3) how often cruelty to animals, given that opportunities for its commission are available, is absent in both CD and APD.

The Prevalence of Cruelty to Animals

The occurrence of cruelty to animals in children referred to mental health services and in nonreferred children has been estimated in two studies by Achenbach and Edelbrock (1981) and Achenbach et al. (1991). Although these were cross-sectional, not longitudinal, studies, both suggest that cruelty to animals is most prevalent among preschoolers and then decreases over childhood to mid-adolescence (age sixteen). This could represent a real developmental decrease but could also be due to overt cruelty becoming covert and, thus, less likely to be captured in parental reports. These studies do suggest that cruelty to animals is more common for boys than for girls and for referred than for nonreferred children (cruelty to animals ranges from 10–30 percent for referred children in contrast to 0–5 percent for nonreferred children). Larzelere et al. (1989) found that cruelty to animals in a nonclinic sample of children from infants to toddlers, according to parental reports, appeared to increase over this developmental period. Cruelty to animals was “sometimes” or “frequently” present for 4 percent of one-year-olds and 8 percent of four-year-olds. It is unclear what anchor, or definition

of “cruelty to animals,” is being used by respondents reporting on these very young children. What these studies also cannot tell us is whether a five-year-old who is cruel to animals will display this behavior at later ages.

Comparing Cruelty to Animals with Other Symptoms of CD

Since cruelty to animals is only one of the fifteen symptoms of CD, it is appropriate to ask how it compares with the other symptoms on its diagnostic value. Spitzer, Davies, and Barkley (1990), as part of a larger study, examined the diagnostic utility of individual CD symptoms using data gathered from psychological and psychiatric facilities at ten different geographic sites. One of the measures of symptom utility they computed was an odds ratio. The odds ratio is calculated by taking the probability of a symptom in children diagnosed with CD and dividing it by the probability of the same symptom in children without CD. For physical cruelty to animals, Spitzer et al. found an odds ratio of 5.07. That is, if we take 5 percent as the prevalence of cruelty in a sample of non-CD children, the prevalence in a sample of CD-diagnosed children would be 25 percent ($5.07 [\text{odds ratio}] = .25/.05$). (The odds ratio for two other symptoms, for comparison, are 11.34 for stealing without confrontation of a victim and 3.14 for physical cruelty to people.) This odds ratio was sufficiently high for Spitzer et al. to recommend that the symptom be retained in future revisions of the DSM. However, if the estimates above are correct, the odds ratio suggests that only one in four (25 percent) CD-diagnosed children might engage in animal abuse. The critical question that remains is what

percentage of this 25 percent persists in displaying cruelty to animals into adolescence and adulthood.

A recent paper published in Australia and New Zealand suggests that this analysis may not be far off the mark. Luk et al. (1999) reanalyzed case data from a sample of children ($N=141$) referred to mental health services with “symptoms suggestive of oppositional defiant/conduct disorder” (p. 30) and a sample of community children ($N=37$). The clinic-referred group was subdivided into two groups. Children in the “no-cruelty-to-animals” (“no CTA”) group ($N=101$) were *not* reported to have been cruel to animals on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL). In contrast, children in the cruelty-to-animals (CTA) group ($N=40$) were reported to be sometimes or often cruel to animals. Thus, 40 of 141, or 28.4 percent, of the clinic-referred children displayed the symptom of animal abuse.

Luk et al. also demonstrated that differentiating the clinic-referred subgroups on the basis of presence of reported animal abuse was related to another measure of childhood problem behaviors which, unlike the CBCL, does not include an item assessing cruelty to animals. Using the Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory, they found that the mean problem and problem severity scores of children in the CTA clinical group significantly ($p<.001$) exceeded the means for the “No CTA” clinical group and the community control group.

The issue of CD symptom utility was also addressed in a study by Frick et al. (1994). Using data gathered from 440 clinic-referred children and adolescents, they examined the utility of proposed DSM-IV CD symptoms in predicting the presence or absence of the disorder. They computed the positive predictive power (PPP) and the negative predictive power (NPP) of each symptom. PPP can be expressed as the proportion of children who display the symptom and who are also diagnosed with the disorder. NPP is the proportion of children who do not display the symptom and are not diagnosed with the disorder. Frick et al.

also computed base rates for each CD symptom, allowing comparison of symptom prevalence in their sample (for example, the following symptoms and the percentage of subjects displaying them were cruel to animals, 12 percent; setting fires, 3 percent; cruel to people, 5 percent; stealing, 34 percent; fighting, 27 percent; lying, 31 percent). The PPP for cruelty to animals was .82, indicating that 82 percent of the children displaying cruelty to animals received a CD diagnosis (the comparable PPPs were 1.0 for setting fires, .83 for cruelty to people, .65 for stealing, .64 for fighting, and .54 for lying). The NPP for cruelty to animals was .22, indicating that 22 percent of the children not displaying the symptom did not receive a CD diagnosis. As the authors note, “although the presence of the symptom was highly indicative of the disorder, the disorder was often present without the symptom” (*ibid.*, 533).

Usually CD is diagnosed only if symptoms have been present within the previous twelve months. One child may have had one severe episode of animal abuse within the previous twelve months but no previous episodes. Another child may have been severely abusive toward animals in the five years prior to and including the year he or she was evaluated. Current diagnostic criteria would not be sensitive to the quantitative, as well as qualitative, differences likely to exist between these two children’s behavioral history. This is a critical issue, since Loeber et al. (1993), for example, found that cruelty to animals only differentiated a sample of children with oppositional defiant disorder from CD children when information about cruelty to animals was aggregated over a three-year period. Assessing whether animal abuse is a chronic or acute problem thus appears essential in making predictions about future behavior.

Checklist Assessments of Animal Abuse

While the rather lengthy and time-consuming psychiatric assessments of child psychopathology based on the DSM-IV are useful (e.g., the Diagnostic Interview Scale for Children, the Diagnostic Interview Scale for Adolescents), questionnaires and checklists are more often used to assess childhood behavior and psychological problems. One of the most common is the previously cited CBCL, developed by Achenbach et al. (1991). Cruelty to animals is assessed through parental responses to one item (out of 112 items related to behaviors ranging from “acts too young for his/her age” to “worries”). Using a time frame of the previous six months, the respondent rates his or her child as “cruel to animals” using the following choices: “not true (as far as you know),” “somewhat or sometimes true,” or “very true or often true.” For the specific study of animal abuse, this instrument leaves much to be desired. First, “cruel to animals” is undefined, and different parents may use different definitions of cruelty when rating their children. Second, the response format suggests that parents may use either frequency of cruelty, severity of cruelty, or both in rating their child. Third, the “not true” choice acknowledges that parents may not be aware of such cruelty and suggests that obtaining children’s self-reports may be critical for potentially covert behaviors like animal abuse (the youth self-report form of the CBCL, unfortunately, does not include an item on cruelty to animals). Fourth, the time period of six months precludes assessing cruelty to animals that may have occurred prior to this time. In defense of the CBCL, it must be stated that a focus on assessing animal abuse was never one of the purposes for which it was designed. The CBCL’s value lies in its economical assessment of a broad range of internalizing and externalizing problems.

The Interview for Antisocial Behavior (IAB) developed by Kazdin and Esveldt-Dawson (1986) assesses primarily externalizing problems and also includes “being cruel to animals” among a total of thirty items reflective of antisocial behavior, a number of which are reflective of current CD symptomatology. The IAB can be administered as a parental report or as a self-report. The response format includes ratings of the severity of each problem (1=none at all, 5=very much) as well as its duration or chronicity (1=present six months or less, 3=always present). The IAB thus provides more detail about cruelty to animals but respondents’ interpretations of “cruel” may still vary. It should be noted that Kazdin and Esveldt-Dawson found that the “cruel to animals” item correlated .46 ($p < .001$) with the total IAB score and differentiated a sample of CD and non-CD children $F(1,256) = 8.44$, ($p < .01$).

This excursion into the symptomatology of CD reinforces the point that cruelty to animals is but one piece of the puzzle relating childhood antisocial behavior to adult violence and criminality. Since this piece has not received extensive research attention, it is understandable that animal welfare organizations have emphasized high-profile cases where animal abuse appears related to interpersonal violence. For example, in interviews with executed serial killer Arthur Gary Bishop, Mike Carter (personal communication, March 23, 1998) discovered that Bishop was so distressed by the abduction, torture, and murder of his first child victim that he was pursuing ways of “de-escalating.” Bishop’s “solution” was to acquire nearly fifty puppies from animal shelters and pet shops, take them home, and torture and kill them. Instead of reducing his need for violence, Bishop found that he so enjoyed the tortured cries of the animals, that the animal abuse helped motivate him to abduct, torture, and kill more children. Cases such as these, where animal abuse seems directly tied to interpersonal violence, abound in the literature on serial homicide (Ressler and Schact-

man 1992). Animal abuse may desensitize a perpetrator. It may represent a form of rehearsal for the abuse of humans and, if undetected, embolden the perpetrator to believe he can escape both the authorities and the consequences of his acts. Most, if not all, serial killers very likely were conduct-disordered as children and adolescents, but thankfully, only a minuscule proportion of conduct-disordered children are likely to develop into such offenders. As noted by a colleague who works with juvenile fire setters (Marcel Chappuis, personal communication, March 23, 1998), every adult arsonist he has encountered has had a childhood history of fire setting, yet very few fire setting children progress to adult arson.

We know of only one recent study that has attempted to address directly the relationships among a history of animal abuse, physical punitiveness by parents, and adult criminality, differentiating violent and nonviolent offending. Miller and Knutson (1997) referred to research by Widom (1989), based on archival data, showing positive associations between experiences of child maltreatment and adult criminality and violent offending. But Miller and Knutson raised concerns about the failure of archival records to capture actual histories of abuse (due to under-reporting and the fact that only a minority of incidents may come to the attention of authorities). Using self-reports, Miller and Knutson reportedly failed to find a substantial association between past experiences of animal abuse and physical punitiveness ($r = .13$, $p < .05$) and noted that past experiences of animal abuse did not differentiate among the four groups of offenders they had classified (homicide, violent, sex, and other offense). They did find that the violent offender group scored higher on the physical punitiveness measure than did the other three groups.

Miller and Knutson’s incarcerated sample ($N = 314$) was predominantly male (84 percent). After 15 participants were dropped due to incomplete data, 71 percent of the remaining 299 participants reported some

experience with cruelty to animals. However, "cruelty to animals" needs to be elaborated upon. Miller and Knutson used an adaptation of Boat's (1999) Animal-related Trauma Inventory to assess experiences with cruelty to animals. Seven types of cruelty to animals listed in this qualitative inventory were used to create a composite measure yielding a quantitative summary score. A major problem with this composite measure is that some of the items may reflect a respondent's antagonism toward animals while others may be neutral or suggest a strong affectional attachment to animals. According to the seven types of cruelty to animals, the respondent (1) saw an animal killed, (2) killed a pet, (3) killed a stray, (4) was forced to hurt an animal, (5) hurt an animal, (6) saw others hurt an animal, or (7) was controlled by a threat to hurt or kill an animal.

Composite scores could range from 0 to 46, but it is apparent that this quantitative rating masks the complexity of "exposure to animal abuse." The methodology makes no clear distinction between the perpetration of cruelty to animals and exposure to such acts performed by others, either incidentally or as a specific threat to coerce the subject. For example, an individual could receive a high score for responding positively only to items 1, 4, 6, and 7, which involve either witnessing others' cruelty to animals, being forced to abuse animals, or being coerced by threatened animal abuse. Another individual might receive a similarly high score by responding positively only to items 2, 3, and 5, which involve participant animal abuse or killing. Assessing the internal consistency of this composite scale would have been useful. Low internal consistency might suggest that single items or groups of items may be measuring different constructs. High internal consistency would substantiate that witnessing and perpetrating animal abuse form a single construct. In other qualitative research, Ascione et al. (1997) specifically separated observation of animal abuse performed by others

from respondents' own cruelty toward animals. Such a separation would have been useful in the Miller and Knutson research.

Although Miller and Knutson conclude that their data were "not consistent with the hypothesis that exposure to cruelty to animals is importantly related to antisocial behavior or child maltreatment" (1997, 59), they themselves urge caution about interpretation of their findings. First, they note that base rates of some exposure to cruelty to animals were quite high in this incarcerated sample (i.e., 71 percent reported some exposure). This was also the case in a second study they conducted with 308 undergraduates in which 68.9 percent of males and 33 percent of females reported some exposure to cruelty to animals (this gender difference was statistically significant). Second, Miller and Knutson note that the distribution of scores on the composite measure of exposure to cruelty to animals was positively skewed (i.e., most respondents scored in the low range) and leptokurtic (i.e., more sharply peaked than bell shaped). Since these characteristics indicate a restricted range of scores, correlational analyses were less likely to yield significant results.

Although there are methodological difficulties with the Miller and Knutson study, the study does suggest the value of using more than a single-item assessment of experience with animal abuse. It would be valuable to have an assessment instrument that was both efficient (e.g., checklist or structured questionnaire) and targeted at both performing acts of animal abuse and witnessing such acts performed by others. Although Ascione et al. (1997) assessed both performing and witnessing animal abuse, the instrument they developed is a lengthy interview protocol that may diminish its attractiveness in nonresearch applications.

One model that could be used to develop an animal abuse assessment instrument is the approach that has been taken to assess juvenile fire setting. Fire setting shares many features with animal abuse: both are CD

symptoms; both may show developmental changes and display the relations of maintenance, emergence, and desistence; both may share etiological factors; both are often performed covertly; and both may be early sentinels for later psychological problems.

The U.S. Department of Justice funded the production of the Salt Lake Area Juvenile Firesetter/Arson Control and Prevention Program (1992). The program is based on a typology of juvenile fire setters that may be relevant to developing a typology of children who abuse animals (Marcel Chappuis, personal communication, March 23, 1998). The typology of juvenile fire setters is as follows:

Normal curiosity fire setters: These children have a mean age of five years (range three to seven years) and often share the characteristics of poor parental supervision, a lack of fire education, and no fear of fire.

"Plea-for-help" fire setters: These children have a mean age of nine years (range seven to thirteen years); their fire setting is often symptomatic of more deep-seated psychological disturbance. These individuals usually have had adequate fire education.

Delinquent fire setters: These individuals have a mean age of fourteen years (range thirteen years to adulthood); their fire setting may be one of a host of adolescent-onset antisocial behaviors, including gang-related activities.

The Salt Lake program has developed a series of assessment scales that are geared to each age group of fire setters and that can be administered to the child's parent/guardian and to the child. In addition to questions about fire education and the fire setting incident(s), questions about general behavior problems (similar to those on the CBCL) are included. It is noteworthy that among these questions is an item about cruelty to animals (there is also a direct question about whether the fire setting incident involved the burning of an animal). Responses to these assessments are then used to direct the selection of an intervention strategy. Children who fall into the normal curiosity group are often enrolled in a fire education pro-

gram, and attempts may also be made to educate parents about fire safety and the need for supervising young children. Children who fall into the other two groups are referred to mental health services, since fire departments are not prepared to deal with the psychological problems these young people may present.

It might be possible to develop a similar typology for children who present with the problem of animal abuse. Although there is not a great deal of empirical information to rely on, the study by Ascione et al. (1997) suggests the varied motivations that may underlie child and adolescent animal abuse. Together with the extensive experience of animal control and animal welfare professionals, one could develop a typology mirroring that for juvenile fire setters. A sketch of such a typology might approximate the following:

Exploratory/curiosity-based animal abuse: Children in this category would likely be of preschool or early elementary school age, poorly supervised, and lacking training on the physical care and humane treatment of a variety of animals, especially family pets and/or stray animals and wildlife in the neighborhood. Humane education interventions are likely to be sufficient to produce desistance of animal abuse in these children. It should be noted that age alone should not be the determining factor in including children in this category. For example, CD symptoms may have an early developmental onset and, as noted earlier, cruelty to animals is one of the earliest CD symptoms to be noted by caretakers.

Pathognomonic animal abuse: Children in this category are more likely to be older (though, as noted above, not necessarily) than children in the exploratory/curious group. Rather than a lack of education about the humane treatment of animals, psychological malfunction varying in severity may be the root of these children's animal abuse. For example, childhood animal abuse may be abuse-reactive behavior tied to childhood histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse,

and exposure to domestic violence.

Delinquent animal abuse: Youth in this category are most likely to be adolescents whose animal abuse may be but one of a number of antisocial activities. In some cases, the animal abuse may be a component of gang/cult-related activities (e.g., initiation rites) or less formal group violence and destructiveness. The associated use of alcohol and other substances may be implicated with these youth.

A study by Arluke et al. (1999) makes clear the connection between animal abuse and a variety of criminal activities that affect human welfare. Using records from the MSPCA, they located 153 individuals who had been prosecuted for cruelty to animals (abusers) and a comparison group of 153 individuals, residing in the same neighborhoods, with no record of animal abuse (nonabusers). They then checked the state's criminal records for all of these individuals, noting four categories of criminal offense. Abusers were more likely to have been arrested for violent (37 percent), property-related (44 percent), drug-related (37 percent), and public disorder (37 percent) offenses than were nonabusers (7 percent, 11 percent, 11 percent, and 12 percent, respectively). The difference between abusers' and nonabusers' percentages was significant ($p < .0001$) for all four types of offenses.

Information in a recent U.S. Department of Justice report (Office of Justice Programs 1998) ties animal abuse to other criminal activity. Sampling 625 women and 168 men who were victims of stalking, the results of the survey noted that 9 percent of the women and 6 percent of the men reported that stalkers had killed or threatened to kill family pets (ibid., 13). These estimates of pet abuse should be viewed as lower limits since it can be assumed that not all participants were pet owners. This provides another example of animals endangered by human interpersonal threats and violence.

Clearly, more detailed research is needed to understand how exposure to or perpetration of cruelty to animals may interact with other physio-

logical, developmental, and social forces to influence the potential for antisocial and/or violent juvenile and adult behaviors. Athens (1992) provides one holistic approach to understanding this process that may help clarify some of the dynamics in extreme cases. He divides the process of development of violent dangerous criminal behavior into several stages. The first of these, which Athens terms "brutalization," is the result of a combination of experiences, including being the victim of physical or sexual abuse, being a witness to extreme violence against others, and "violent coaching" (i.e., being encouraged to respond violently to real or perceived threats). This process then engenders the later stages, which are characterized by the routine use of violence and acceptance of one's violent notoriety. Although Athens does not specifically focus on cruelty to animals as part of this process, it is often a potential feature of the process at several stages, especially in the initial "brutalization" stage.

Research with Nonclinical, Noncriminal Samples

Research on the relation between animal abuse and forms of human victimization in nonclinical samples is also beginning to emerge. Flynn (1999a) surveyed 267 university students (68.4 percent were women) about their personal history of abusing animals and then asked them if they endorsed the use of corporal punishment in child rearing and if they condoned a husband slapping his wife. Of the men, 34.5 percent admitted to at least one incident of animal abuse perpetrated during childhood; for the women that figure was 9.3 percent. Flynn found that participants who had abused animals had more favorable attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment in child rearing. Those abusing animals were more likely to

approve of a husband slapping his wife (15.6 percent) than were those who did not report abusing animals in childhood (5.4 percent).

In a parallel study, Flynn (1999b) examined the relation between perpetrating animal abuse and being a victim of parental corporal punishment. Participants were those studied in Flynn (1999a). He found that the frequency of being spanked by fathers was positively related to the participants' perpetrating animal abuse, but this relation only held for men in the sample. As noted by Flynn, "Nearly 60 percent of male respondents who were physically punished as teens by their fathers perpetrated animal abuse, compared with 23 percent who were not hit as teens by their fathers" (977).

These two studies by Flynn clearly bring the issue of animal abuse into the sociological research realm of family violence. The studies also illustrate that animal abuse–family violence associations are not limited to clinical samples or samples of adjudicated animal abuse–family violence offenders.

Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

The last three decades of the twentieth century also witnessed a dramatic refocusing of attention on the problem of domestic violence. The publication of books, monographs, articles, and government studies provided needed depth to our understanding of intimate violence in families. Once again companion animals did not escape the terror present in some homes. Most of the information available about pet abuse in families experiencing domestic violence took the form of anecdotal reports, often used to illustrate the callous violence perpetrated by some batterers. In addition, Ascione et al. (1997) found that the majority of domestic violence shelters may not ask women about their experiences with pet abuse. However, it was not until 1998 that

the first empirical study appeared whose specific aim was to assess the prevalence and forms of animal abuse in the context of human domestic violence.

Ascione (1998) enlisted the aid of a domestic violence shelter to interview thirty-eight women who had recently entered the shelter to escape violence. The women were asked about pet ownership, whether their pets had been threatened or harmed by the batterer, and the possible effects of pet abuse on women's decision making about leaving batterers. Twenty-two of the 38 women had children, and the women were asked if their children had abused animals.

Parallel to national data on pet ownership in American families with children, 74 percent of the women interviewed by Ascione reported owning a pet or having owned one in the past twelve months. Threats or actual harm to pets was reported by 71 percent of these women, and 57 percent reported that their pets had been hurt or killed by their adult partner. Thirty-two percent of women with children reported that one of their children had hurt or killed pets.

One of the other disturbing findings of this study was that 18 percent of women reported that they had delayed entering the shelter out of concern for their pets' welfare. The level of animal abuse in these homes was unexpected, as was the discovery that pet welfare was a significant issue for some women in their decision to leave batterers.

That these findings were not idiosyncratic to the particular sample of women studied was confirmed in a replication conducted by Flynn (2000b). He interviewed forty-three women, all of whom owned pets, who had entered a shelter in South Carolina for battered women. Flynn found that 46.5 percent of these women reported that their pets had been threatened or harmed. Although only two women reported that their children had also abused pets, women whose pets had been abused were more than twice as likely to report that their children had also been

abused (33.3 percent) than women whose pets had not been abused (15.8 percent).

Flynn also found that 40 percent of women whose pets had been abused had delayed seeking shelter out of concern for their pets' welfare and safety. In five of these eight cases, the delays exceeded two months. These findings support those of Ascione (1998) and confirm that worrying about their pets is a significant obstacle for women who are trying to leave batterers. It is encouraging that programs designed to remove this obstacle, by sheltering pets for women who are battered, are becoming more common (Ascione et al. 2000). These programs represent an innovative form of collaboration among domestic violence, animal welfare, and veterinary medical professionals, as well as members of the lay community, to address a human and animal safety and health problem.

Assessing animal abuse in the context of domestic violence is likely to become more systematic as other forms of overlap (e.g., that between child abuse and domestic violence) are more carefully examined. Flynn's study (2000a) hints that the time is ripe for a larger-scale study examining the confluence of animal abuse, child maltreatment, and domestic violence.

Cruelty to Animals and Elder Abuse and Neglect

In the last decade, reports of cruelty to animals within the context of elder abuse and neglect have also begun to emerge (Rosen 1995; National Committee for Prevention of Elder Abuse 1997; Cooke-Daniels 1999). Such connections can parallel those seen in domestic violence. They can also take the form of economic exploitation of the elderly through threats of harm to or denial of care for pets of the elderly. All forms of elder abuse tend to be under-reported, and very

little empirical data have been gathered on cruelty to animals in this context, but professionals in both adult protective services and animal protection have begun to address this connection through training and community collaboration. Growing attention also is being given to the suffering of animals and people that can result from the hoarding of large numbers of animals by individuals, often older women (Lockwood 1994; Patronek 1999). This form of cruelty to animals has received little attention in the psychiatric literature but is increasingly being recognized as a serious concern for both human and animal welfare agencies (Frost 2000).

Societal Concerns and Responses to Cruelty to Animals

In addition to an increase in attention to cruelty to animals from the scientific community in the last decade, the general public has expressed growing concern about the issue, both for its effects on animals and its implications for human safety. A December 1996 survey of 1,008 American households conducted by Penn and Schoen for The Humane Society of

the United States (HSUS) found that 42 percent of respondents believed cruelty to animals to be moderately to extremely serious as a problem in this country, compared with 61 percent responding in this way to environmental issues and 78 percent to child abuse. Of those surveyed, 71 percent supported making animal abuse a felony, and 81 percent felt that the enforcement of cruelty-to-animals laws should be strengthened. Respondents were equally divided about the primary reason for their concern. About one-third said the main reason to take cruelty to animals seriously was that intentional harm to animals was simply wrong, while an equal number said that their main concern was that such cruelty was predictive or indicative of other forms of violence against people.

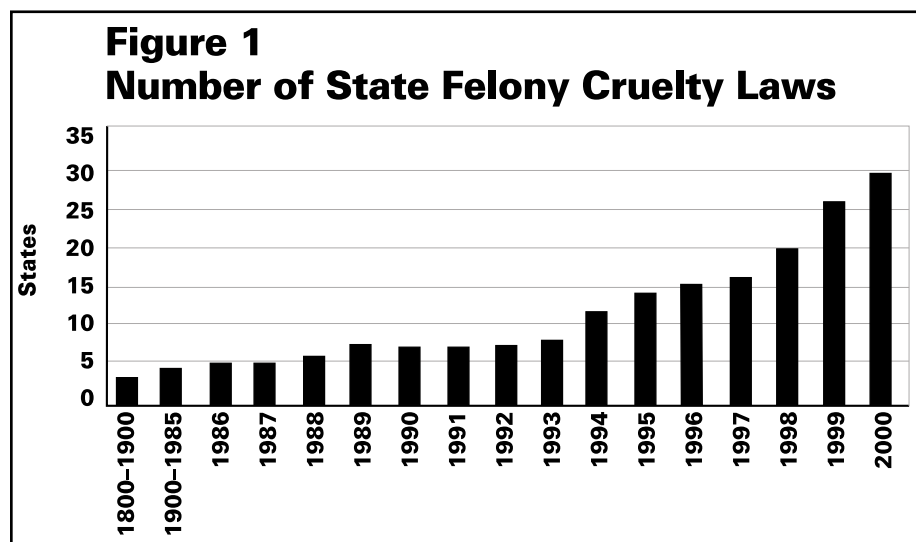
Another measure of the widespread interest in and concern about cruelty to animals is the growing media attention devoted to high-profile cases. The March 2000 killing of a woman's dog by an individual who pulled the dog, Leo, from the woman's car and threw him into traffic attracted international coverage and offers of rewards that exceeded \$110,000 (Kalfrin 2000). The story of the killing of more than a dozen cats in an Iowa animal shelter by three teenagers drew more mail to *People* magazine than any other story except the death of the Princess of Wales (Jewel and Sandler 1997). Similarly, the 1998 torture/

killing of a dog by four teenagers served as the centerpiece of an hour-long British Broadcast Corporation/Arts and Entertainment Network documentary, *The Cruelty Connection*, which aired in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

Legislative and Law Enforcement Responses to Cruelty to Animals

Society's response to cruelty to animals is also reflected in the laws that are enacted to respond to the problem and in the level of enforcement of those laws. As of July 2000, thirty-one states had enacted felony-level provisions within their cruelty to animals codes, a dramatic rise from less than a decade ago (see Figure 1). This is in addition to the forty-three states that treat dogfighting as a felony offense and thirteen in which cockfighting is a felony. Such provisions reflect both societal pressure to respond to cruelty to animals and legislative willingness to accommodate this demand. While animal neglect continues to be a misdemeanor crime, most of these laws recognize extreme forms of malicious animal abuse or torture as crimes that transcend the simple destruction of property and fall in the ranks of violent crimes whose perpetrators need special attention.

Severe, intentional animal abuse has increasingly been viewed as symptomatic of mental disorder. State laws have reflected this viewpoint in requiring or recommending psychological assessment and treatment for those convicted under these laws. Since 1998 California has required such assessment in all cruelty-to-animals convictions. Colorado law requires assessment and recommends treatment; New Mexico mandates counseling in cases of animal abuse by juve-



niles and recommends it for adult offenders. In the last decade, more than a dozen other states have added counseling and treatment as a sentencing option within their cruelty-to-animals codes.

Although the need for assessment and treatment for cruelty-to-animals offenders is increasingly recognized, the small number of such referrals in the past has prevented the development and evaluation of appropriate assessment and treatment protocols. Several assessment tools and treatment approaches have been suggested (Boat 1999; Jory and Randour 1999; Lewchanin and Zimmerman 2000; Zimmerman and Lewchanin 2000). Existing mandated treatment protocols for juvenile or adult sex offenders or batterers may be appropriate for only a small segment of animal abusers and are clearly not appropriate for convicted offenders in cases involving extreme neglect or hoarding.

In states where assessment and/or treatment of cruelty-to-animals offenders is mandated, particularly California, judges and prosecutors have begun to seek out mental-health-care providers who have knowledge of the dynamics of cruelty to animals. To meet this need, in 1999 the Mental Research Institute (MRI) and The HSUS began providing training in this area for such professionals and made lists of professionals with an interest in taking on such cases available to the appropriate court authorities (Loar 2000).

As laws dealing with animal abuse have been strengthened over the last decade, law enforcement officials have given greater attention to such cases. There is, as yet, no established national system for tracking the incidence of and law enforcement response to crimes against animals, so we can offer no quantitative assessment of the number of cruelty-to-animals cases being charged. However, there are several indicators of growing interest in the connections between cruelty to animals and its association with other forms of violence. This link has been addressed in several recent law review articles and

texts (Davidson 1998; LaCroix 1998; Lockwood 1999; Frasch et al. 2000). It has also been reviewed in material provided to all chiefs of police (Lockwood 1989) as well as material used in the training of newly appointed juvenile prosecutors (American Prosecutors Research Institute 1999).

Recent trends in the juvenile justice system resonate well with growing recognition of cruelty to animals as an early warning sign of the potential for criminal or antisocial behavior. The model increasingly applied in the case of young or first-time offenders is that of "balanced and restorative justice," or BARJ (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1998). The BARJ model attempts to steer away from conventional interventions that are purely punitive. Programs based on this model seek simultaneously to address the needs of the victim, hold perpetrators accountable for their actions, and address the gaps in the competencies of the perpetrator that may have contributed to the offense. The model also emphasizes making use of a variety of community resources to respond to each of these requirements. This approach is consistent with the growing use of animal-oriented programs targeting youthful offenders or those at risk of becoming violent perpetrators. Structured experiences with animals, such as learning humane dog-training techniques, are being incorporated into a variety of programs designed to enhance empathy and build nonviolent competencies (Duel 2000). Such programs have not, as yet, been evaluated for their long-term effectiveness compared with other traditional approaches (e.g., "boot camp"), but they provide unique opportunities to incorporate humane values into broader programs for violence prevention.

Cruelty to Animals and Human Violence: Future Needs and Directions

There are many unanswered and unasked questions in the study of cruelty to animals and other violence, as well as obstacles that need to be overcome in the search for answers. We hope that the coming years will see increased attention in the following five areas.

1. The Ecology of Violence against Animals

Because cruelty to animals has traditionally been seen as a minor crime, basic quantitative information as to the nature and extent of serious cruelty to animals has been limited. Good criminological analysis can begin with a solid "victimology," or reporting of exactly what has been done to animals and by whom. Vermeulen and Odendaal (1993) and Arluke et al. (1999) have provided important first steps in remedying this gap. Further progress will depend on standardized reporting and tracking of cruelty-to-animals cases around the country. Many key questions remain.

What is the true incidence and prevalence of various forms of animal abuse and neglect?

How does this victimology vary for different kinds of animals (e.g., by species, as well as other factors, such as owned versus stray, wild versus tame versus domestic)?

What are the demographic attributes of the offenders and the frequency and severity of their acts?

How do these demographics (age, sex, culture, residence, family size and structure, and criminal history) interact with victimology? For example, how closely do the actions of female offenders resemble those of the far more prevalent male offenders?

How does the victimology and

offender profile of intentional abuse differ from that of neglect or passive abuse or abandonment or hoarding? Are these differences relevant in predicting the likelihood of future involvement in violence?

What are the trends in cruelty-to-animals cases (frequency, severity, chronicity, offender demographics) within specific reporting areas? Are such cases becoming more frequent, more severe, or more likely to involve younger perpetrators?

What is the extent of overlap with records of other known violent offenses, particularly interpersonal violence, including child abuse, domestic violence and elder abuse?

What is the outcome of animal-abuse and -neglect cases that are reported and enter the criminal justice system? What proportion are dealt with through education, diversion, or other alternative mechanisms? Are cases handled differently by the juvenile court system and by the adult courts? Does the inaccessibility of juvenile court records prevent the effective assessment of the predictive value of tracking cruelty to animals?

2. The Developmental Dynamics of Cruelty to Animals and Human Violence

If we are to use the connections between cruelty to animals and other forms of violence in a meaningful way to predict and/or intervene in the progression of violence, we need a much clearer picture of the place of animal abuse in the patterns and progression of violence. Most of our understanding of this connection has come from retrospective analysis of individuals or families in which serious human violence has already taken place. Far more attention is needed to identify normal versus pathological pathways involving participation in or witnessing the mistreatment of animals. Future study may address a range of questions.

What are the underlying dynamics of the victimology? The killing of a dog may have different significance if it is

the killer's own dog, a parent's or sibling's dog, a stray dog, a newborn puppy, or an aggressive animal that has bitten the perpetrator. The incident may have different significance if the offender is alone or in a group; is a six-year-old, a twelve-year-old, or an adult; or if it is the first, third, or twentieth such incident.

What critical incidents may be related to the earliest expressions of violence? What is the influence of the response of parents, peers, and siblings to these events?

What is the trajectory of the development of interpersonal violence that incorporates cruelty to animals? How often is animal abuse truly predictive of escalation? If violence has already progressed to serious or lethal levels, how often do offenders "regress" to violence against animals?

How important are frequency, severity, and persistence of cruelty to animals as indicators of cruelty that represent a true potential for progression rather than a stage of experimentation with power and control?

What factors are present when cruelty to animals stops altogether or does not escalate to other forms of violence? If we recognize that many individuals might engage in some acts of intentional animal abuse without progressing to other antisocial acts, it becomes essential to identify the sources of stability and resilience (internal, familial, or societal) that have prevented such a progression. These sources include parental response to early cruelty; intervention by school, social service, or law enforcement authorities; and mental-health interventions.

What physiological, neuropsychological correlates of cruelty to animals might exist that relate to other possible correlates of antisocial behavior (such as thrill-seeking or low responsiveness to stressful situations)?

What is the role of external influences (drugs, alcohol) in the initiation of violent incidents against animals and others?

What is the role of exposure to media and video-game violence against animals and others in promoting imitation

of or desensitization to such violence?

How does the real or symbolic sexual role of animals influence the form of abuse that might be perpetrated? How prevalent is the direct sexual abuse of animals among violent offenders?

3. Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

Animal abuse that takes place in the context of domestic violence presents several compelling opportunities for research. One would evaluate the animal sheltering programs being developed for women who have left their homes to seek shelter. Another would replicate research on battered women's experiences with animal abuse but would include assessment of the batterers' reports. A third would assess the animal-abuse experiences of women who are battered but who have not decided or been able to leave their batterer.

Programs are proliferating to shelter the pets of battered women who have left home to seek safety elsewhere. In the limited experience with such programs, little attention seems to be given to collecting data on their implementation, use, and evaluation. A standard protocol would not only be useful for the programs already established but could also assist in the planning and development of new programs.

Such a protocol should include basic questions:

What types and numbers of animals are being boarded?

What is the condition of animals brought to the shelter? Was the animal directly threatened? Was the animal actually abused? If so, how and by whom?

Was the purpose of boarding the animal explained to the children (if applicable)? Did the woman leave home in order to live with others (friends, relatives), was she entering a shelter for battered women, or was she remaining at home but obtaining a protective order against her partner?

What was the length of time the animal was boarded? What was the disposition of the case?

Did the batterer make contact with

the animal shelter while the animal was boarded? If so, what was the nature of the contact? Did the batterer try to retrieve the animal while it was at the shelter? If so, how was this handled?

Did the woman ask to visit the animal while it was being sheltered? If so, how was this arranged? How often did it occur?

Research on domestic violence has begun to focus on characteristics of batterers, especially as a method for developing typologies of batterers. These efforts are often directed at matching “types” of batterers with “types” of interventions. Most of our information about animal abuse in domestic violence situations has been derived from victims’ (women’s) reports. It is important to assess the batterers’ perceptions of animal abuse as well. One approach would replicate two studies of women who are battered (Ascione 1998 and Flynn 2000b) with the addition of interviews with the batterers. Another study would interview both partners to assess, for example, the concordance (or lack thereof) of their reports on incidents (frequency, severity) of animal abuse. Questions about motivations for and judgments of seriousness of animal abuse could be included. If the animal abuse occurred in the presence of children, the batterer could be asked about his perception of the effects of such witnessing on his children’s welfare.

Most of the research on domestic violence has studied women in shelters for battered women. Less is known, however, about women who remain with their batterer and women who are in the process of deciding whether to stay or leave. This latter group would be a logical audience for information campaigns about animal sheltering options and information about the significance of animal abuse as an indicator of danger (and as a potential symptom of children’s psychological disturbance). The following issues need to be assessed:

How many and what types of pets are involved currently and in the past?

Were these pets the woman’s, the partner’s, mainly the children’s, or truly family pets?

What factors have influenced the woman’s decision to stay or leave (e.g., personal welfare, children’s welfare, economic issues, religious reasons, animal welfare)?

Has the woman ever told her partner she was thinking of leaving? His reaction? Has she ever made an attempt to leave that was aborted? Why? Has she ever called a women’s shelter or domestic violence (DV) crisis line? Why?

Has she, the children, or others ever called police to report a DV incident? What was the outcome?

Have the children ever tried to protect her? A sibling? A pet?

If she did leave (but did not enter a shelter) what factor(s) prompted this?

What is her knowledge of the partner’s history (as child, adolescent, and adult prior to this relationship) of animal abuse?

Have other adults (e.g., partner’s friends) ever been involved in her abuse?

4. Social-Service Responses to Cruelty to Animals

Humane organizations have made significant inroads in alerting social-service agencies to regard cruelty to animals as a form of family violence that can be both indicative and predictive of other violence. Although only California formally includes animal control officers and state humane officers among mandated reporters of child abuse, many other communities are providing for the cross-training of animal-abuse and child-abuse investigators or are including humane society representatives in local coalitions against violence. To maximize the effectiveness of these bridges between animal- and human-welfare advocates, we need more information about these cooperative efforts.

How frequently are child-, elder-, or domestic-abuse reports filed by humane officers? What proportion are validated, and how does this compare

with frequency of filing by other mandated reporters?

If few reports are being made by well-trained reporters, what are the obstacles to such reporting?

5. Prevention and Intervention/Treatment

The core assumption of many of the efforts against violence is that earlier detection of predispositions for violence will give the best opportunity for meaningful intervention. However, the lack of any standardized programs for assessment and intervention has left this concept untested.

What types of cruelty-to-animals offenses constitute the most significant warnings that intervention is needed?

Is it more cost-effective or productive to target at-risk groups at a young age rather than active offenders?

Which interventions are most effective in deterring violent behavior (e.g., pairing offenders or high-risk individuals with nonviolent or humane mentors, formal instruction in nonviolent skills or humane attitudes)?

How important are opportunities for undoing harm or being confronted by victims in structuring effective interventions?

How important is it for animals to be involved in prevention and intervention programs? Can nurturing and other prosocial skills be taught in other ways (such as gardening projects) (Rathmann 1999)?

When is the use of animals in therapy inadvisable? Are there patterns of violent history that should not be addressed through animal-assisted therapy or animal-assisted activities?

What are the best short- and long-term attitudinal and behavioral measures of successful intervention in dealing with animal-abusing populations?

Looking Out for Our Future

Answers to these questions will require the cooperation of individuals and agencies from many different disciplines. They will also require a truly prospective approach, identifying indi-

viduals who are involved in cruelty to animals at the earliest possible age or stage and tracking the influences that prevent or promote the escalation to other forms of violent behavior. Cruelty to animals must be taken seriously as a problem in its own right, independent of what it may tell us about the potential for human harm.

Violence makes victims of us all. All segments of the community that deal with health and safety, kindness and cruelty, people and animals, must constantly find ways to build the connections that will make it possible to end this victimization.

Understanding our complex relationships with animals is already starting to provide us with an impressive range of new resources that aid our efforts against violence, cruelty, and victimization. The programs and policies being put into action are already saving animal and human lives. Incorporating our understanding of these relationships into our understanding of violence in a sense unites our concerns for the damage to our physical and psychological environment. By seeing ourselves as a part of nature and not apart from it, we can gain personal strength and satisfaction. By seeing ourselves as connected to families and communities and not controlled by them, we can reduce the need for violence.

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