

For more information, to access a directory of resources, or to request a training on how to recognize and address signs of domestic violence, visit [safehavensforpets.org](https://safehavensforpets.org).



## SAFE HAVENS FOR PETS

Safe Havens for Pets is a searchable directory for pets of those experiencing domestic violence and/or homelessness, created and managed by the Animal Welfare Institute (AWI).

→ [safehavensforpets.org](https://safehavensforpets.org)



Animal Welfare Institute

AWI champions the mutually beneficial relationship between people and pets and promotes responsible care of companion animals. We seek strong legal protections for companion animals and develop tools and trainings to help law enforcement, social service providers, and other professionals address the link between animal abuse and interpersonal violence—including resources for domestic violence survivors with companion animals.

→ [awionline.org](https://awionline.org)

DOG: RYAN WALTON; PAWS: RUBY SCHMANK; CAT: ERIC HAN



## Did You Know That Animal Abuse And Domestic Violence Often Occur In The Same Homes?

Domestic Violence: Tips for Veterinary Offices

Veterinary professionals are often the first to recognize signs of abuse, both in animals and their owners. Abused individuals, in fact, may seek help for their pets before seeking help for themselves.

## Recognize

- Lack of proper pet care (malnourished, untreated injuries, etc.)
- Noticeable changes in a pet or client's behavior
- A client's references to financial resources being withheld or controlled by others
- Clients who appear anxious or avoid eye contact
- Clients who hesitate or refuse to communicate when certain people are present
- Repeated injuries (to the pet or client) without clear explanation or in various stages of healing
- Injuries to both sides of the pet or client's body (accidental injuries are more likely to be one-sided)

## Respond

- Offer privacy when asking sensitive questions
- Make it standard practice to ask questions such as:
  - “Do you have any concerns about being able to care for your pet?”
  - “Are you concerned about your safety or that of your pet? What concerns do you have?”
  - “What can we do to support you or your pet?”
- Clearly document injuries and any suspected signs of abuse or neglect
- Know about local domestic violence resources and post information in your offices
- Provide discreet resources or referral cards

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## Make Your Clinic A Safe Space

- Train clinic staff on signs of domestic violence
- Provide staff with scripts or suggested questions to increase their comfort with addressing domestic violence concerns
- Develop internal protocols for addressing and reporting concerns about violence



- Use intake forms to discreetly ask about home life (see suggested questions under “Respond”)
- Post domestic violence resources and reporting policies in staff areas
- Post information on resources and hotline numbers in client restrooms or waiting areas. Scan to request materials from the National DV Hotline:

