



## RCDV:CPC NEWS

A DIGITAL NEWSLETTER FROM THE  
RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:  
CHILD PROTECTION AND CUSTODY

### Guest Blog

## Judges Have a Role in Addressing Animal Cruelty and Interpersonal Violence

Martha-Elin Blomquist, Ph.D., Senior Site Manager, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

### The Link

Hundreds of studies[1] in the past four decades have shown there is a clear link between behavior involving violence against animals and interpersonal violence, including domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. To explain this link, researchers offer the “general deviance theory”[2] that suggests animal cruelty is one of several anti-social/deviant behaviors that individuals may engage in throughout their lives. In the family context, abuse of humans and animals are manifestations of an individual’s strategy to use violence or the threat of violence to control another. Abuse of an animal is a red flag that others in the home may not be safe. An individual’s cruelty or threats against an animal or beloved pet in order to intimidate other family members, adults or children, is particularly invidious as it involves inflicting harm on some vulnerable household members to control other vulnerable members. Elders who have caretakers who are abusive or neglectful to animals can be at special risk. If they have an animal companion that is also a service animal, the caretaker’s cruelty or neglect against the pet can have life-threatening consequences. Children who have been abused or witness animal cruelty may also subsequently commit harms against animals. Studies have found that children who abuse animals are “...two to three times more likely to have been abused themselves.”[3] Some children and teens who abuse animals have been found to suffer from the serious emotional and behavioral disorder known as “conduct disorder” which can underlie other anti-social behavior.

[1] Arkow, P. LINK Bibliography: Bibliography of the link between animal abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, and elder abuse. Therapy Animals at <http://animaltherapy.net/animal-abuse-human-violence/link-bibliography>

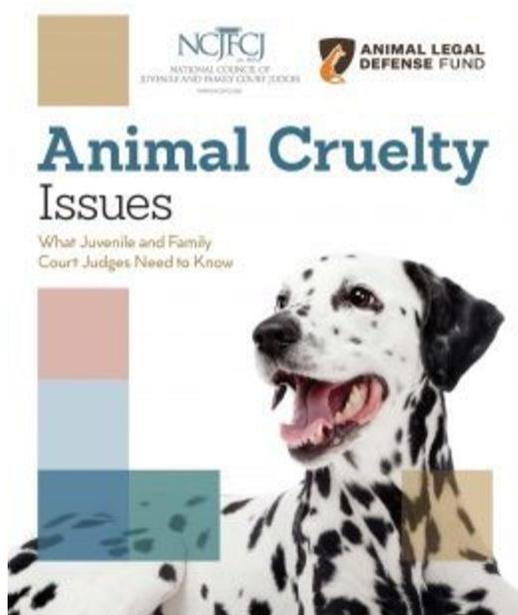
[2] Levitt, L. Patronek, G. & Grisson, T. editors (2016). Animal Maltreatment: Forensic Mental Health Issues and Evaluations, 7, 50.

[3] Lee-Kelland, R. & Finlay, F. (2018). Children who abuse animals: When should you be

concerned about child abuse? A review of the literature. Archives of Disease in Childhood, 103, 8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/archdischild-2018-314751>

[Read the Full Blog!](#)

## Relevant Resources



### RESOLUTION REGARDING ANIMAL CRUELTY AND ITS LINK TO OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE

WHEREAS, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) is an organization committed to upholding the rights of all parties and victims, the safety of all family members, and the safety of the community;

WHEREAS, empirical research demonstrates a direct link<sup>1</sup> between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence including intimate partner abuse,<sup>2</sup> child abuse,<sup>3</sup> and elder abuse;<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, 99% of pet owners consider their animals to be "companions" or "family members";<sup>5</sup>

WHEREAS, animal abuse can be used as a tool to control other members of the household and is therefore inextricably linked to the abuse suffered by human victims;<sup>6</sup>

WHEREAS, federal law and many state laws acknowledge that there is a link between animal abuse and domestic violence by including companion animals in protection order enforcement laws,<sup>7,8</sup> or by requiring cross-reporting between animal control and child welfare departments;<sup>9</sup>

WHEREAS, studies show that a child's or teenager's abuse of animals could be a sign that the individual has been abused<sup>10</sup> or that intervention is necessary to prevent that individual from harming others;<sup>11</sup>

WHEREAS, 43% of school shooters between 1988 and 2012 had histories of abusing animals and the majority of those histories included hands-on violence against household pets, such as dogs or cats;<sup>12</sup> and

WHEREAS, more than 35% of adult protective services workers report that their clients have talked about their pets being threatened, injured, killed, or denied care by a caregiver.<sup>13</sup>

#### NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The NCJFCJ recognizes that animal cruelty is a crime of violence and may be indicative of past or future violent acts.

The NCJFCJ recognizes that in the context of juvenile and family court cases including cases of domestic violence, because of the demonstrated link to the safety of human beings at the hands of the animal abuser, when animals are subjected to cruelty, the court should consider the welfare of such abused animals in reaching its decisions.

## What's New at RCDV:CPC?

Now More than Ever: Faith Community Collaborations with Child Welfare Systems - A Cross-Disciplinary Discussion of the Safe Havens Model

Thursday, August 20, 2020, 10:00 a.m. PT / 1:00 p.m. ET (90 minutes)

The Resource Center on Domestic Violence:



Child Protection and Custody (RCDV: CPC) is pleased to announce a new webinar focusing on the intersection of child welfare and domestic violence and looking at how faith communities can be a collaborative partner in system response. This webinar will discuss faith as part of cultural responsiveness and cultural humility, including the child welfare system's response to and support of their clients. It will examine collaborative practices for child welfare and faith-based systems, particularly where domestic violence is a factor within a family.

**Presenters:**

- Rev. Dr. Anne Marie Hunter, Director, Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse
- Alyson Morse Katzman, Associate Director, Safe Havens Interfaith Partnership Against Domestic Violence and Elder Abuse
- Kelly Ranasinghe, JD, Managing Partner, Henderson and Ranasinghe, LLP

[Click Here to Register!](#)

## Addressing the Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Welfare-Related Issues: Spotlight on the Empowered Families Kansas Project

This snapshot, written by the Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence for the RCDV: CPC, highlights one strategy of its four-year Empowered Family Kansas demonstration project, its child welfare project. The project developed and implemented training curricula and resources for over 1,450 child welfare and domestic violence professionals around the state on how to respond to families experiencing dual forms of violence. Evaluation data for all trainings across five common outcome measures showed an increase over the pre-test mean.



**Snapshot**  
**Addressing the Co-Occurrence of Domestic Violence and Child Welfare-Related Issues**  
Spotlight on the Empowered Families Kansas Project

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCADV) began the Empowered Families Kansas project in 2015. Empowered Families Kansas is a 4-year demonstration project implemented under the AFV Family and Youth Services Bureau, Family Violence Prevention and Services Act funding grant. Empowered Families to Abused Parents and Their Children (E-SAPV), KCADV focuses on three strategies to build evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for children and youth exposed to domestic violence and their non-abusing parents or caregivers. This article focuses on one strategy of Empowered Families Kansas – the child welfare project. The child welfare project aims to improve the response to Kansas child welfare professionals to the needs of children and their non-abusing parents or caregivers when domestic violence and child abuse co-occur.

The importance of an ongoing needs assessment throughout the project (there is no end to the successful foundation of training and collaboration for child welfare professionals on domestic violence related to child welfare issues. A significant component of the needs assessment was a survey disseminated to child welfare professionals to learn where the strategies to create collaborative methods between domestic violence programs and the child welfare system. This survey informed the development of best practice responses through training and technical assistance needed to address the themes present with child welfare. Further, training sessions were completed with child welfare administrators, domestic violence advocates, and with non-abusing parents regarding the child welfare system.

Needs assessment findings, child welfare research, and collaborative partnerships with child welfare agencies informed the development and implementation of training curricula and resources for child welfare professionals on how to respond to families experiencing domestic violence. Project training began in the fall of 2017, with opportunities including in-person training, webinars, conference workshops and peer-to-peer activities with topics including safety planning with survivors and their children, strategies and skills to address domestic violence in child welfare and building collaborative partnerships between child welfare professionals and domestic violence advocates.

Significant training and resources developed under this project include the 4th edition of the Domestic Violence Manual for Child Welfare Professionals (Child Welfare Guide) and the new skills-based training Strategy and Skills to Address Domestic Violence in Child Welfare that is conducted throughout the state of Kansas. This training and resource provide child welfare professionals the strategies and skills necessary to effectively identify domestic violence in child welfare cases, as well as how to apply appropriate interventions for families experiencing domestic violence. A success of this implementation of the case training is the high attendance by child welfare professionals, which resulted in additional opportunities for training to be added to accommodate for the demand. Over the four-year period of this project, over 1,450 child welfare and domestic violence professionals have been trained to date, and over 1,500 copies of the child welfare manual have

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Upcoming Training Opportunity

## What Judges Need to Know about Animal Cruelty, Child Abuse, and Juvenile Offending: A Two-Part Webinar Series



# ANIMAL LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

**Monday, August 3, 2020, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. PST**

### **Part I: Animal Cruelty and Child Abuse**

*Webinar Faculty:* The Honorable John Romero, Jr., Children's Court, Albuquerque NM, and Diane Balkin, JD, Animal Legal Defense Fund

**Monday, August 10, 2020, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. PST**

### **Part II: Animal Cruelty and Juvenile Offending**

*Webinar Faculty:* The Honorable H. Lee Chitwood, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Pulaski VA, Dr. Barbara Boat, University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, and Jamie Contreras, JD, Animal Legal Defense Fund

Through their authority to issue protection and restraining orders, to remove children from abusive homes, and to order youthful offenders into treatment or secure placement, judges use the power of the courts to respond to cruelty and abuse, to protect victims, and to prevent future harm. Judges also have the opportunity to take measures to safeguard the wellbeing of an overlooked member of the household and the community – pets and animals. To do this effectively, they need to understand the links between behavior involving violence against animals and interpersonal violence. NCJFCJ is offering a two-part webinar series to provide judges with practical information and resources for understanding the link and for addressing animal cruelty when it arises in the context of child abuse and neglect cases and juvenile offending cases. Judges, attorneys, and a psychologist with experience handling these cases are featured speakers in the webinars. While primarily oriented to judicial officers, the webinar series is open to all interested stakeholders. Participants may register to attend the series or may select to attend just one of the webinars.

[Click Here to Register!](#)

## About Us.

**RCDV:CPC**  
Resource Center on Domestic Violence:  
Child Protection and Custody

The RCDV: CPC is a project of the Family Violence and Domestic Relations Program of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

The RCDV: CPC provides assistance to professionals working with survivors, including judicial officers, court personnel, social workers, custody evaluators, mediators, guardians ad litem, and advocates

working in the child custody and/ or child protection systems. Professionals are encouraged to seek training and technical assistance to assist with their individual case(s), increased community competence in these critical areas, or systems changes related to domestic violence, child custody, and protection.

Please use the RCDV: CPC toll-free number 1-800-52-PEACE (1-800-527-3223) and speak to an RCDV: CPC staff member or send a question via email to [info@rcdvcpc.org](mailto:info@rcdvcpc.org). For more information on the RCDV: CPC and resources we offer, please see our website [www.rcdvcpc.org](http://www.rcdvcpc.org).

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For training and technical assistance, call 1-800-52-PEACE (1-800-527-3223) or email [info@rcdvcpc.org](mailto:info@rcdvcpc.org).