



The Link:

Interpersonal Violence and
Abuse and Animal Safekeeping



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March 1, 2016

Prepared For:

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Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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Funded By:

Community Research & Action Fund
Community Research Unit, University of Regina
Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence
Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

Acknowledgements

The project entitled “The Link: Interpersonal Violence and Abuse and Animal Safekeeping” is the result of the participation, knowledge, and contributions of many people across Saskatchewan.

We acknowledge the host organizations, Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Saskatchewan SPCA) and Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence, for establishing a collaborative partnership to initiate work to begin to address the link between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse in Saskatchewan.

This work builds on *Inside the Cruelty Connection: The Role of Animals in Decision-Making by Domestic Violence Victims in Rural Alberta*, released in 2012 by the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. We thank them for their collaboration and support as we move forward with this work in Saskatchewan.

Funding and research expertise for this project was provided by the Community Research and Action Fund through the Community Research Unit, Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina. These resources enabled our team to establish key groundwork in identifying issues and potential solutions to providing animal safekeeping supports for people who are leaving abusive relationships in Saskatchewan.

This project was led by a team of individuals who provided expertise and facilitated linkages with front line services providers. Our thanks goes to:

- Frances Wach, Saskatchewan SPCA
- Tracy Knutson, STOPS to Violence
- Crystal Giesbrecht, Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS)
- Rod McKendrick, Ministry of Justice, Victim Services
- Naomi Beingessner, Community Research Unit, University of Regina
- Patricia Miller-Schroeder, Women’s and Gender Studies, University of Regina

We thank the animal welfare and human services agencies who participated in the survey and interview processes, and the individuals who shared information, insights, and experience with us. These contributions are instrumental to moving this work forward.

Finally, we are grateful to Melissa Wuerch, PhD Graduate Student with the University of Regina for her work as our student researcher. Her knowledge, skill, understanding, and dedication to improving services for people who experience violence has been invaluable to this process.

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Executive Summary

According to Phil Arkow, Coordinator of the National Link Coalition, “When animals are abused, people are at risk. When people are abused, animals are at risk” (Arkow, 2013). This quote reflects the devastating reality that interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse rarely occur in isolation from one another. Through discussions with human service providers, animal welfare providers, and stakeholders in Saskatchewan, it became apparent that human service organizations and animal welfare agencies need to work together to address this connection. Thus, building on a recent project conducted by the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Crawford & Clarke, 2012), two agencies, Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Saskatchewan SPCA), representing animal welfare, and Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) To Violence, representing human services, created a partnership with the objective of enhancing the understanding of how concern for the safety of animals creates further barriers for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse within rural and urban regions of Saskatchewan. Following the established partnership, a project advisory team was formed, including representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Services, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and the University of Regina.

To gain a deeper understanding and to inform the development of an action plan for next steps in establishing and strengthening services among animal welfare and human service agencies, information was gathered to address two research questions:

1. Is the concern for the safety of companion animals and livestock a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse in Saskatchewan?
2. Are there existing networks and supports in Saskatchewan that provide safekeeping of animals for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse?

The project followed a mixed methods approach, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative portions. The first portion of the project took place between July of 2014 and August of 2015, and involved gathering online quantitative questionnaire responses. Responses were obtained from 39 animal welfare representatives and 56 human service representatives in both urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. Service providers were asked about their experience with working with individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who had concern for animal care and safekeeping.

The second portion of the project took place between October and December of 2015. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with nine participants representing the knowledge and experience of human service and animal welfare providers. Utilizing thematic analysis, a number of important themes emerged. The quotes illustrated throughout the body of this report reflect the devastating barriers that individuals are faced with when seeking refuge from violence and abuse while having concern for animal safety and safekeeping.

As the current sample was not and could not be randomly selected, findings from this project cannot be generalized to the entire population of Saskatchewan; thus, the data presented below does not represent the beliefs and experiences of all human service and animal welfare providers in urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. However, similar experiences and themes arose among human service and animal welfare representatives involved in this project, suggesting that these findings are valid and meaningful.

In response to the first question noted above, the findings indicate that concern for the safety of companion animals and livestock is a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse in urban and rural areas of Saskatchewan. When animal welfare representatives were asked if their agency had been requested to provide or facilitate temporary animal care or safekeeping for individuals leaving abusive relationships, 37.07% indicated experience with this. Of the remaining participants, 18.52% reported that although they had no experience with this, they were interested in learning more about providing support to individuals seeking options for animal safekeeping. When human service representatives were asked about their work experience, 95.92% reported that concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals largely impacts the decision making of individuals leaving abusive situations. In addition, 77.55% of human service participants knew of someone who did not leave an abusive relationship due to concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals. These findings suggest that while the majority of human service providers have firsthand experience with the safety of companion animals and livestock being a barrier to individuals leaving situations of violence and abuse, a discrepancy exists among the experiences of animal welfare and human service providers. This illustrates the need for collaboration among both sectors.

Service providers who participated in the qualitative interviews identified several issues and challenges regarding interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping, and how this greatly affects the lives and decision making of individuals. Service providers discussed that animals are often used as a method of control to prevent individuals from leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse. Stories were told regarding the exertion of control over victims and children through threats to harm or kill animals. In addition to animals being used as a method of control, service providers discussed that options for animal care and safekeeping are difficult to access, and because of this, individuals may delay leaving abusive situations. Fear regarding the negative repercussions of leaving animals behind may prevent individuals from seeking safety for themselves and their animals. In these situations, victims will often put themselves in danger in order to ensure that their animals are being properly taken care of. Other challenges discussed included the short-term nature of animal care and the lack of financial resources, as well as the lack of awareness about services available. The discussion of rural regions brought to light unique challenges, including concerns with confidentiality and the issue of people's livelihood being dependent on larger animals. Furthermore, individuals and children fleeing situations of violence and abuse are often attached emotionally to their animals, and these animals provide emotional support and enhance coping in situations filled with stress, turmoil, and uncertainty.

In response to the second question regarding existing networks and supports in Saskatchewan that provide safekeeping of animals for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse, a valid and reliable conclusion can be made based on the knowledge and experience of service providers. While there are some existing services and programs available that provide safekeeping options for animals and livestock when individuals are leaving situations of violence and abuse, these programs contain several challenges and limitations that may delay or prevent individuals from seeking safety when faced with the overwhelming concern for animal care and safety. Among the animal welfare representatives who participated in the present study, 76.92% reported no current collaboration or partnership among their agency and domestic violence services. When asked if there is adequate access to animal safekeeping supports to assist individuals in successfully leaving abusive relationships, 73.08% held the opinion that there was not adequate access to supports in their area. Participants were asked about promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse, with 40.0% indicating awareness of current programming, including PetSafe Keeping Program (Calgary Humane Society), Safe Places Program (Regina Humane Society), and an emergency shelter (offered through the Saskatoon SPCA).

Among the human service representatives who participated in the present study, 53.33% reported no collaboration among their agency with animal welfare organizations. When asked if there is adequate access to animal safekeeping supports to assist individuals in successfully leaving abusive relationships, 58.33% held the opinion that there is not adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in their area. Participants were asked about promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse, with 45.0% indicating awareness of current services, such as PetSafe Keeping Program (Calgary Humane Society), Swift Current SPCA, Safe Places Program (Regina Humane Society), animal kennels or rescue shelters to aid in finding animal foster homes, and Noah's Animal House based in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In the qualitative interviews, participants discussed a noticeable gap in the lack of awareness regarding current resources, services, and programs within the community that are available for animal care and safekeeping in situations involving interpersonal violence and abuse. Service providers suggested that more education, awareness, and programs are needed, in addition to establishing partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations. Participants suggested developing and implementing more program options that offer financially realistic and appropriate resources. Finding creative ways to increase the amount of space, foster families, and volunteer capacity was noted. The importance of interagency collaboration and thinking outside the box may lead to positive change.

Based on the information gathered, a list of recommendations was created:

- ❖ Develop education and training workshops regarding the connection between interpersonal violence and abuse and concern for animal safekeeping for human service organizations, animal welfare agencies, and the general public.

- ❖ Establish partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations to better provide services.
- ❖ Provide information about services available for both animal welfare and human service providers in urban and rural areas.
- ❖ Train service providers in supporting individuals to plan for animal safekeeping when leaving situations of violence and abuse.
- ❖ Create a list of resources and services for animal care and safekeeping currently offered within Saskatchewan (e.g., develop a resource book, provincial registry).
- ❖ Among domestic violence services, ensure that the intake process involves asking whether or not animal abuse is occurring/has occurred within the home.
- ❖ Formulate policies among animal welfare and human service organizations, to ensure a clear understanding of what each sector is responsible for. Establishing guidelines will remove ambiguity that may arise when working in collaboration.
- ❖ Generate specific and focused action plans for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who are concerned about animal care and safekeeping, in both urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan.

In summary, this report offers important knowledge regarding the barriers for individuals leaving situations involving interpersonal violence and abuse, who have concern for animal care and safekeeping. The information gathered throughout this project offers increased knowledge and insight, and has instilled hope that much can be done to assist individuals leaving situations of violence and abuse to ensure the safety of both humans and animals. A collaborative spirit among animal welfare agencies and human service organizations is imperative, which will lead to positive change within the community at large.

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

According to Phil Arkow, Coordinator of the National Link Coalition, “When animals are abused, people are at risk. When people are abused, animals are at risk” (Arkow, 2013). This quote reflects the devastating reality that interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse rarely occur in isolation from one another. Perpetrators of violence, in addition to subjecting violence and abuse on their human victim, will sometimes neglect, harm, or kill companion animals or livestock as a method of control or revenge. For instance, 71% of individuals seeking refuge from domestic violence and entering a safe shelter report that their perpetrator exerted abuse on a family pet, through such methods as threat, injury, or murder (Ascione, Weber, & Wood, 1997). Through discussions with human service providers, animal welfare providers, and stakeholders in Saskatchewan, it became apparent that human service organizations and animal welfare agencies need to work together to address these two intersecting issues.

Building on a recent project conducted by the Alberta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Crawford & Clarke, 2012), Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Saskatchewan SPCA), representing animal welfare, and Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) To Violence, representing human services, established a partnership with the objective of enhancing the understanding of how the concern for the safety of animals creates further barriers for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse within a Saskatchewan context. By working together, both organizations seek to improve the effectiveness of current service delivery in order to positively impact the health and safety of individuals and the community at large (F. Wach, Saskatchewan SPCA, personal communication, November, 2015). Following this established partnership, a project advisory team was formed, including representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Services, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), and the University of Regina.

Established in 1928, the Saskatchewan SPCA is a registered charitable organization working to prevent animal cruelty. Through education and public outreach, the Saskatchewan SPCA helps raise awareness of the human-animal bond, promote the humane treatment of animals, and make a positive difference in the lives of animals. Initiatives that address the link between interpersonal violence and animal abuse are of particular interest to this organization (F. Wach, personal communication, November, 2015).

Reports of suspected animal cruelty in Saskatchewan are investigated by Animal Protection Officers (APOs). Animal cruelty investigations relating to companion animals in the four major cities of Saskatchewan (i.e. Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw) are handled by the local SPCA or Humane Society; investigations involving pets and livestock in all other areas are handled by Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan (APSS). Members of the RCMP and municipal police forces also have the authority to investigate reports of animal cruelty. APSS notes the two main types of animal

cruelty are neglect (which may or may not be deliberate) and deliberate physical abuse. Examples of neglect include very thin animals; animals that have injuries or illness that have not been treated; and deliberately abandoned animals. Physical abuse can take the form of hitting, throwing, or otherwise deliberately injuring an animal (Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan, 2016).

During the course of investigation into animal neglect or abuse, APOs may have the opportunity to observe people and animals in their home environment (F. Wach, personal communication, November, 2015). Due to this, the investigation of animal abuse is often the first point of contact and intervention for social services (Arkow, 2003). Investigations of animal cruelty by APOs in Saskatchewan in recent years have revealed situations involving child neglect, elder self-neglect, and bullying (F. Wach, personal communication, November, 2015). These examples illustrate the close connection between human health and well-being, and the health and well-being of animals.

STOPS To Violence is a provincial organization dedicated to supporting partnerships with individuals, communities, organizations, and governments, with the mission of encouraging the use of ideas, environments, and opportunities to address issues related to interpersonal violence and abuse (T. Knutson, STOPS To Violence, personal communication, November, 2015). Interpersonal violence and abuse refers to the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). For example, slapping, hitting, intimidating, belittling, humiliating, forced sexual intercourse, or isolating a person from family or friends are all behaviours that can be classified as interpersonal violence and abuse (World Health Organization, 2013). Establishing partnerships, enhancing education, and facilitating solutions for prevention and intervention are needed in order to enhance support for individuals experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse (T. Knutson, STOPS To Violence, personal communication, November, 2015). Through STOPS To Violence’s work within the community, the association between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse became apparent.

1.2 Background Information and Statistics

This report was not intended to include an extensive literature review of the relevant projects and organizations serving individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who have concern for animal care and safekeeping. Statistics relevant to Saskatchewan and Canada, as well as some information that directly aligns with the research questions, are discussed; however, this is not a comprehensive examination. As such, reference is made below to previous studies that are relevant to the current project.

Relevant concepts for this project include companion animals, which are animals that are kept for company or pleasure. Companion animals are typically smaller animals, such as cats, dogs, birds, gerbils, or fish. Livestock are considered to be animals that are raised for income, food, or other uses,

such as cattle, horses, sheep, pigs, or poultry. Service animals are animals that have been trained to provide assistance to people who have disabilities.

Within this research project, interpersonal violence and abuse refers to violence and abuse that occurs between two people who know each other. This can occur within or outside a family setting. Violence is when there is an unlawful exercise of physical force that may result in criminal charges or physical and/or sexual abuse. Abuse is when someone in a caring relationship does or says things to gain control over another person by hurting that person or causing negative feelings, such as fear, anxiety, guilt, helplessness, or worthlessness.

1.2.1. Animal Abuse Statistics in Canada

Statistics Canada (2011a) reports that of the 1,033,381 individuals who reside in Saskatchewan, 67.0% live in an urban area and 33.0% live in a rural area. For the purposes of data collection for Statistics Canada (2011a), rural population is referred to as “persons living outside centres with a population of 1,000 and outside areas with 400 persons per square kilometre.” Saskatchewan is known to be geographically diverse in terms of urban and rural regions, as well as farming communities. The Census of Agriculture and Census of Population reported that in 2006, there were 44,329 farms in Saskatchewan, with 105,015 individuals residing in rural farm regions and 6,585 residing in urban farm regions (Statistics Canada, 2008). Breaking this down further, 35.0% of surveyed farm owners reported animal farming and production (e.g., beef cattle ranching, horse and other equine production, livestock combination farming) and 65.0% reported crop farming and production (e.g., wheat farming, oilseed farming, hay farming; Statistics Canada, 2007).

It is difficult to ascertain the prevalence of animal cruelty in Saskatchewan. Until April 1 of 2015, the Saskatchewan SPCA had been responsible for investigations of suspected animal abuse among livestock (province-wide) and companion animals (in all areas outside of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw) within Saskatchewan. During their 2013 – 2014 fiscal year, the Saskatchewan SPCA opened 735 new case files in response to reports of the possible abuse or neglect of companion animals and livestock. However, this figure does not include investigations handled by local SPCAs and humane societies; nor does it include investigations handled by the RCMP and municipal police forces (F. Wach, personal communication, November, 2015). This information suggests that prevalence rates for animal cruelty are likely much higher. Moreover, across Canada, reports of animal cruelty are increasing. This significant increase has resulted in the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies requesting tougher sentences for animal cruelty and changes to the animal cruelty law within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, which has not been updated since 1892 (Canadian Federation of Humane Societies, 2015).

1.2.2. Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Statistics in Canada

Statistics Canada (2013) reports that the average rate of family violence, including violence and abuse occurring among relationships based on kinship and dependency within Canada is 279 per 100,000 population, with Saskatchewan having the highest prevalence rate (582 per 100,000) when compared to

the other provinces. When looking at statistics related to intimate partner relationships, the prevalence rate of violence and abuse within Canada is 341 per 100,000 population, with Saskatchewan again having the highest prevalence rate (765 per 100,000 population) among the provinces. However, it is important to note that 78.0% of incidents involving family violence are not reported to police, suggesting that prevalence rates are much higher (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2015).

In a twelve-month period, more than 103,000 women were admitted, along with their children, to the 593 domestic violence shelters in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011b). Of these women, 2,349 stayed at shelters in Saskatchewan (Statistics Canada, 2013). In addition to the numerous physical and mental health consequences for individuals experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse, including increased rates of depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and suicide ideation (e.g., Campbell, 2002; Jordan, Campbell, & Follingstad, 2010; Lindgren & Renck, 2008; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006), it is estimated that in Canada, family violence results in \$487 million in lost wages, \$872 million in criminal justice system costs, \$408 million for health care needs, and \$2.3 billion for increased social service costs. In total, the economic impact of interpersonal violence and abuse is roughly \$6.9 billion each year (Varcoe et al., 2011). These statistics illustrate the importance of developing a clearer understanding of the barriers individuals face when planning to leave abusive relationships.

1.3. Interpersonal Violence and Abuse and Animal Safekeeping

Given the devastating prevalence of interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse, accessing services to enhance the safety and coping of individuals and the community at large is imperative. However, there are a number of cultural, social, and practical barriers that impact access to domestic violence services (Riddell, Ford-Gilboe, & Leipert, 2009). Concern for the safety of animals is cited within the research literature as a barrier to accessing services and seeking safety; unfortunately, research on this issue to date is scarce (Flynn, 2009).

As noted above, 71.0% of individuals seeking refuge from domestic violence and entering a safe shelter report that their perpetrator exerted abuse on a family pet through such methods as threat, injury, or murder (Ascione, Weber, & Wood, 1997). In a recent study conducted by Ascione and colleagues (2007), when compared to individuals not experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse, women staying in domestic violence shelters were 11 times more likely to report that their partner had hurt or killed a pet and were four times more likely to indicate that their partner had threatened a pet. DeGue and DiLillo (2009) also found that individuals who reported retrospective accounts of witnessing animal cruelty were more likely to have experienced previous family violence, when compared to individuals with no history of seeing animal abuse.

Loar (1999) suggests that perpetrators of violence and abuse use animals as a method of control. For instance, victims may be forced to remain silent about the occurring abuse, as perpetrators may threaten to harm companion animals if silence is not maintained (Loar, 1999). As noted, being concerned for the safety of animals is a barrier to accessing services among individuals experiencing

interpersonal violence and abuse. Faver and Strand (2003) suggest that 55% of domestic violence victims feel that their animals provide emotional support. Thus, it is not surprising that Ascione and colleagues (2007) found that concern for animal safekeeping delayed women from seeking domestic violence shelter services, especially among women who did not have children. The researchers suggest that for women who do not have children, animals may provide stronger emotional support and attachment (Asicone et al., 2007).

The abovementioned information indicates a clear connection between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse, suggesting that individuals who are concerned about the care and safekeeping of their animals may delay leaving situations of violence for numerous reasons. This report adds to previous knowledge by presenting information collected from knowledgeable service providers regarding the barriers that individuals face when planning to leave abusive relationships, the risks for animals, supports available in Saskatchewan, and how to improve the effectiveness of the current resources and services available.



1.4. Research Questions

The project advisory team recognized that interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse often occur in tandem within urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. To gain a deeper understanding of this relationship and to inform the development of an action plan for next steps in establishing and strengthening services among animal welfare and human service agencies, information was gathered to address two research questions:

- 1 Is the concern for the safety of companion animals and livestock a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse in Saskatchewan?
- 2 Are there existing networks and supports in Saskatchewan that provide safekeeping of animals for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse?

Section 2: Methodology

This report presents the research findings, as well as recommendations for next steps, gathered through both quantitative and qualitative investigation. Through gathering information to increase the understanding of interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping, a wealth of knowledge and experience was obtained from animal welfare and human service representatives, allowing for the generation of suggestions for improvement of current supports and services offered, as well as important recommendations for next steps.

To conduct the present study, a mixed methods approach was taken. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Regina Research Ethics Board. Questionnaire and interview topics were designed, reviewed, and revised based on feedback from the project advisory team. The remaining materials needed for the project, including anticipated timelines, participant contact information, and recruitment scripts, were prepared, revised, and printed.

To recruit participants, three lead contacts were appointed. Lead contacts were responsible for recruiting eligible human service and animal welfare representatives. An e-mail script was created for the purposes of recruitment (See Appendix A). For the quantitative portion of this project, participants were recruited to complete an online questionnaire through SurveyMonkey. Potential participants were e-mailed and asked to participate, with the e-mail including information about the current project, what participation would entail, and the specific questions that would be asked. Following this e-mail, a second e-mail was sent out containing the survey link. Participants were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Representatives from transition houses and shelters, family violence outreach services, victim services, SPCAs, humane societies, and veterinary clinics were contacted. Further information regarding the participants recruited is provided in Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

Following the quantitative portion of this project, which took place between July of 2014 and July of 2015, further, more in-depth qualitative information was collected through semi-structured interviews with a subsample of individuals who participated in the online questionnaire. To decide which representatives would be contacted to participate in these interviews, certain criteria were outlined (See Section 4). Using the established criteria, nine participants were contacted with a recruitment e-mail (See Appendix B). All agreed to participate. Participant demographic information is outlined in Section 4, Table 1.

Five main questions were utilized in the qualitative interviews (See Appendix C). As the interviews were semi-structured, additional questions were asked as information was provided from the interviewees. All interviews were conducted via telephone at a time convenient for each participant. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed into a Microsoft Word document. To maintain confidentiality, all participants are identified by position and region.

Findings from this project represent a sample of service providers within rural and urban regions of Saskatchewan. As the current sample was not and could not be randomly selected, findings from this project cannot be generalized to the entire population of Saskatchewan. However, similar experiences and themes arose among human service and animal welfare representatives across Saskatchewan, suggesting that these findings are valid and meaningful.



Section 3: Quantitative Research Findings

The findings presented in this section are based on questionnaire responses from service providers involved with animal welfare and human service organizations in urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. An online questionnaire format was utilized, where respondents were asked to indicate their responses by selecting from the items available or to include text comments. Information was obtained regarding the opinions and experiences of knowledgeable service providers, current support services available, challenges experienced when providing support, as well as suggestions for improvement and next steps in relation to interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping, which are discussed below.



3.1. Responses from Animal Welfare Service Providers in Saskatchewan

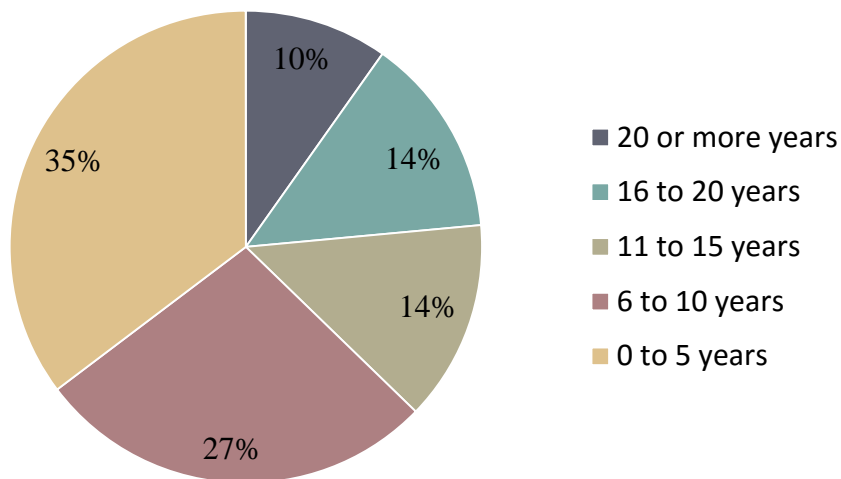
A response summary of animal welfare service providers showed 39 individuals accessed the online survey between July of 2014 and March of 2015. Of the 39 individuals who accessed the survey, one respondent did not wish to participate. The remaining respondents represented the views and experiences of SPCAs or humane societies ($n = 13$) or veterinarians ($n = 25$).

However, while 38 animal welfare service providers accessed and responded to the survey, not all respondents answered every question. Various questions were also skipped, due to the survey design or personal choice. In order to provide an accurate reflection of the questions answered, the statistics presented below reflect the total number of responses obtained for each specific question.

Question 1. How long have you been involved in providing support and services related to animal welfare?

- ❖ The chart below illustrates the reported involvement in providing support and services among 32 animal welfare participants.

Figure 1. Years of Providing Support among Animal Welfare Service Providers



Question 2. Does your agency provide or facilitate temporary care for animals?

- ❖ Of the 31 individuals who responded to question two, 83.87% ($n = 26$) reported that their agency provided or facilitated temporary care for animals, with 16.13% ($n = 5$) reporting that their agency did not.

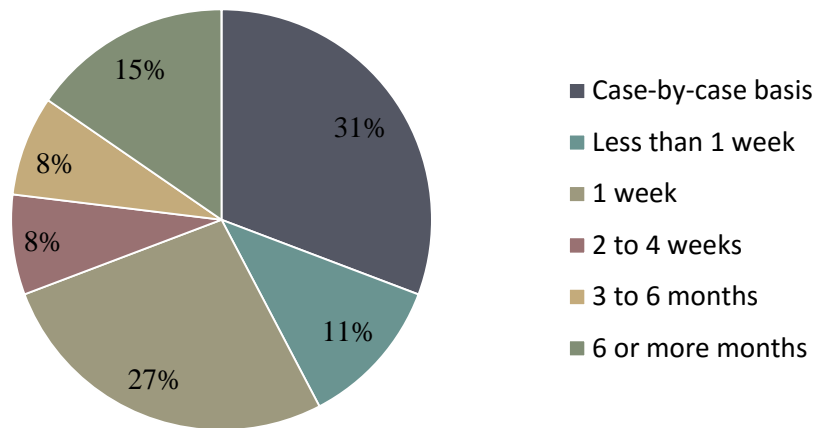
Question 3. What type of animals are you able to accommodate?

- ❖ For question three, participants were asked to select all answers that applied. Participants indicated that their agency accommodated companion animals ($n = 23$, 85.19%) or livestock ($n = 4$, 14.81%). The remaining respondents indicated that their ability to accommodate animals depended on the type, size, and number ($n = 7$, 25.93%).

Question 4. What is the length of time you are able to accommodate temporary care?

- ❖ Of the 26 responses to question four, the chart below illustrates the reported responses for the lengths of time agencies are able to accommodate animals. Situational or case-by-case basis was noted to be determined by the availability of space and foster families, or until the animal is found a home.

Figure 2. Lengths of Time Animal Welfare Agencies Can Accommodate Animals



Question 5. Do the owners of the animals have access to them while they are in temporary care?

- ❖ Of the 23 responses to question five, several animal welfare providers indicated that owner access to animals while the animals are in temporary care depends on various circumstances ($n = 11, 47.83\%$). Of the responses given, participants indicated that factors taken into consideration include what is best for the animal, if the police and courts are involved, the demeanor of the owner, and where the animal is placed. For instance, if an animal is placed in a foster home, this arrangement is confidential and access to the animal is not an option. Arrangements may be made on an individual basis, but the animal would have to be transported to an alternative location. The remaining animal welfare providers indicated that owners have access to the animals ($n = 10, 43.48\%$) or do not have access ($n = 2, 8.70\%$).

Question 6. Are you aware of any other temporary animal care services in your area, either formal or informal? This could include vet clinics, organized foster programs, or informal networks.

- ❖ Of the 27 responses to question six, 55.56% ($n = 15$) indicated being aware of other temporary animal care services, either formal or informal, with 44.44% ($n = 12$) reporting being unaware of temporary animal care services.

Question 7. What temporary care services are available in your area? Please describe.

- ❖ Of the 15 responses to question seven, participants described temporary care services, either formal or informal, including local volunteer-run animal rescue charities, animal foster homes, veterinary clinics, boarding kennels, livestock yards, and animal daycares, as well as SPCAs and humane societies.

Question 8. Has your agency been requested to provide or facilitate temporary animal care or safekeeping for people who are leaving abusive relationships?

- ❖ Of the 27 responses to question eight, 44.44% ($n = 12$) indicated that providing or facilitating temporary animal care or safekeeping for people who are leaving abusive relationships was not relevant to their agency, with 37.07% ($n = 10$) stating that their agency had been requested to offer this service. Interestingly, although reporting that their agency did not offer this service, several participants expressed interest in providing support if needed ($n = 5$, 18.52%).

Question 9. What type of animals have you been requested to assist with?

- ❖ Of the 10 respondents who indicated that their agency had been requested to provide or facilitate temporary animal care or safekeeping for people leaving abusive relationships, the majority reported that this involved companion animals ($n = 9$, 90.0%), with the remainder identifying livestock ($n = 1$, 10.0%). No respondents identified service animals for people with disabilities.

Question 10. What challenges have you experienced when assisting someone to arrange temporary animal safekeeping?

- ❖ Of the 9 responses to question ten, several challenges when assisting in the arrangement of temporary animal safekeeping were identified, including shelter space, availability of animal foster homes, anonymity of animal foster homes, safety for staff members, legal issues with animal care (e.g., seizures, health issues, aggressive behaviour), as well as contact with the owner and inquiries from the perpetrator, were all identified as major challenges.
 - A representative of a rural SPCA indicated that in the two cases where their agency was asked to provide temporary care in the past year, both transitions “went fairly smoothly.”

Question 11. Is your agency able to transport animals for safekeeping?

- ❖ Of the 15 responses to question eleven, 60.0% ($n = 9$) of animal welfare providers reported that their ability to transport animals for safekeeping was dependent on the type, size, and number of animals. The remaining animal welfare providers indicated that their agency either had the ability to transport animals ($n = 3$, 20.0%) or did not ($n = 3$, 20.0%).

Question 12. Do you think your agency is able to effectively respond to requests for assistance with animal safekeeping in situations involving interpersonal violence?

- ❖ Of the 15 responses to question twelve, participants indicated that their agency either “somewhat” had the ability to effectively respond to requests for assistance with animal safekeeping in situations involving interpersonal violence ($n = 7$, 46.67%), had adequate ability ($n = 5$, 33.33%), or were not able to effectively respond ($n = 3$, 20.0%).

Question 13. What would improve your ability to respond to requests for animal safekeeping?

- ❖ Of the 11 responses to question thirteen, participants indicated that responding to requests for animal safekeeping would be improved through many measures, such as ensuring anonymity of animal foster homes, increasing safety for staff members and volunteers, recruiting more volunteers, expanding shelter space, including a space for animals within domestic violence shelters, creating facilities to house livestock (e.g., pens, corral areas), and interagency cooperation. In addition, one participant reported that more information and education describing the association between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping is needed.
 - A representative from an urban SPCA stated that improvement may be enhanced by developing and implementing “A coordinated network among social service agencies, law enforcement, animal welfare organizations, which would enable effective and efficient communication among the parties involved and facilitate finding a space for animals needing safekeeping. Additionally, funding for these services would be required if we were to attempt to meet the real need for these services.”

Question 14. Does your agency work with domestic violence shelters or other domestic violence services in your area?

- ❖ Of the 26 responses to question fourteen, 76.92% ($n = 20$) reported that their agency did not work with domestic violence shelters or other domestic violence services in their area. The remaining animal welfare providers indicated collaboration among their agency with domestic violence shelters or other domestic violence services ($n = 6$, 23.0%).

Question 15. Which domestic violence shelters or domestic violence services do you work with? If you work with informal supports, please describe them.

- ❖ Of the 5 responses to question fifteen, participants indicated that their agency collaborated with local city police, social services, victim services, and a transition house.
 - A representative from an urban SPCA indicated that their agency had “some contacts with shelters, but these are not formal.”

Question 16. In your opinion, is there adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in your area to assist individuals to successfully leave an abusive relationships?

- ❖ Of the 26 responses to question sixteen, 73.08% ($n = 19$) of animal welfare providers held the opinion that there was not adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in their area, with 26.92% ($n = 7$) indicating belief that there was adequate access. However, it is important to note that further in-depth analysis revealed that several participants who held the opinion of adequate access to animal safekeeping supports indicated for question eight

that their agency had not received requests to facilitate animal safekeeping, as this was not relevant to their agency.

Question 17. Would you like more information or training about animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse?

- ❖ Of the 26 responses to question seventeen, participants reported that they would like more information or training about animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse ($n = 13, 50.0\%$), with the other half indicating that this was not relevant to their agency ($n = 13, 50.0\%$).

Question 18. What kind of information would be useful to you?

- ❖ For question eighteen, the 13 service providers from question seventeen who reported wanting additional information were asked to select what information would be useful to them and to select all that were of interest. When asked what information would be useful, they indicated that training about animal safety and interpersonal violence and abuse ($n = 11, 84.62\%$), information about services provided in their area ($n = 10, 76.92\%$), and information about supporting someone to plan for animal safekeeping ($n = 7, 53.85\%$) would be useful moving forward. Information, education, and training regarding the link between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal abuse was also suggested as an important topic to consider.

Question 19. Are you aware of any programs or promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse that can help us learn more? Please tell us about them.

- ❖ Of the 10 responses to question nineteen, four participants indicated no awareness of programs or promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse ($n = 4, 40.0\%$), with two participants indicating that this was not applicable to their agency ($n = 2, 20.0\%$). The four remaining participants described awareness of programs or promising practices, including the Petsafe Keeping Program (Calgary Humane Society), the Safe Places Program (Regina Humane Society), an emergency shelter program offered through the Saskatoon SPCA, and the ability to organize emergency shelters with boarding kennels in needed.
 - A member of the Regina Humane Society stated that “The Regina Humane Society has operated a Safe Places Program in the City of Regina and surrounding area for close to 20 years to support animal safekeeping in circumstances of interpersonal violence and abuse. We have standard operating procedures, applications, contracts, and communication materials to support delivery of the program.”



3.2. Responses from Human Service Providers in Saskatchewan

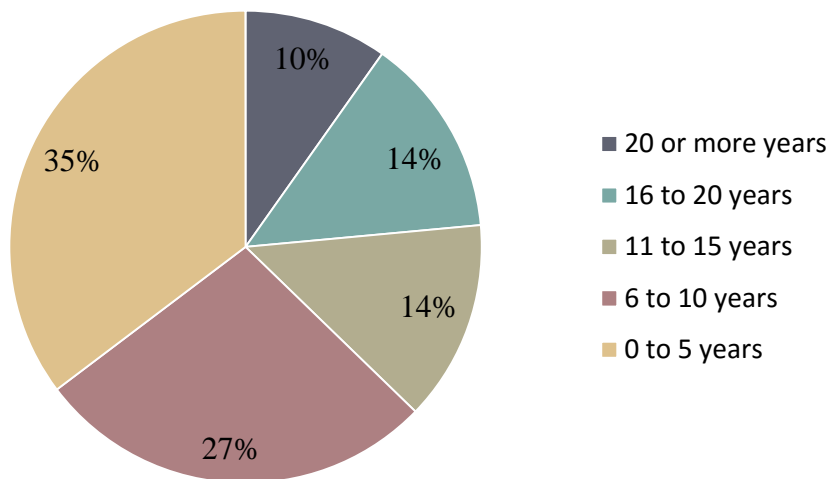
A response summary of human service providers showed 58 individuals accessed the online survey between August of 2014 and July of 2015. Of the 58 individuals who accessed the survey, two respondents did not wish to participate. Therefore, the remaining respondents represented the views and experiences of domestic violence shelters, specialized victim services, and other domestic violence services (i.e. parent mentoring, outreach services).

While 56 human service providers accessed and responded to the survey, not all respondents answered every question. Various questions were also skipped, due to the survey design or personal choice. In order to provide an accurate reflection of the questions answered, the statistics presented below reflect the total number of responses obtained for each specific question.

Question 1. How long have you been involved in providing support to individuals who experience interpersonal violence and abuse?

- ❖ The chart below illustrates the reported involvement in providing support to individuals who experience interpersonal violence and abuse among 51 human service participants.

Figure 3. Years of Providing Support among Human Service Providers



Question 2. In your experience, can the safety and safekeeping of animals impact an individual's planning and decision making to leave abusive relationships?

- ❖ Of the 49 responses to question two, the majority of human service providers reported that the care and safekeeping of animals can impact planning and decision making for individuals leaving abusive relationships ($n = 47, 95.92\%$), with the remainder being unsure ($n = 2, 4.08\%$).

Question 3. Are you aware of individuals who have not left an abusive relationship because of concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals?

- ❖ Of the 49 responses to question three, 77.55% ($n = 38$) indicated awareness of someone who did not leave an abusive relationship due to concern for the care and safekeeping of animals, with the remaining participants reporting unawareness of possible situations ($n = 11, 22.45\%$). However, as it is known that individuals may not seek domestic violence shelter services due to animal ownership, these statistics are likely an underrepresentation of actual prevalence rates.

Question 4. Does your agency ask individuals about the safety of animals as part of your intake process?

- ❖ Of the 49 individuals who responded to question four, 65.31% ($n = 32$) answered that their agency asked information regarding the safety of animals as part of their intake process, with 34.59% ($n = 17$) reporting that their agency does not.

Question 5. Has your agency been requested to help with temporary safekeeping of animals?

- ❖ Of the 48 responses to question five, 64.58% ($n = 31$) of participants reported that their agency has received requests to help with the temporary safekeeping of animals, with the remaining 35.42% ($n = 17$) of participants indicating no requests to date.

Question 6. What type of animals has your agency been requested to assist with?

- ❖ For question six, participants were asked to select all answers that applied. Of the 31 respondents who experienced receiving requests to help with the temporary safekeeping of animals, all participants indicated that this involved providing assistance with companion animals ($n = 31$, 100%). Participants also reported that assistance with livestock ($n = 8$, 25.81%) and service animals for people with disabilities ($n = 5$, 16.13%) was requested.

Question 7. What challenges does your agency experience when assisting someone to arrange temporary animal safekeeping?

- ❖ When assisting someone to arrange temporary animal safekeeping, 28 service providers described various challenges that arise. Challenges included domestic violence shelters not allowing animals (e.g., due to lease, shelter restrictions), difficulty housing larger animals due to space and lack of viable options, animal welfare agencies operating at full capacity, animals not being up-to-date with vaccinations, certain programming only being available within urban areas, lack of transportation from rural areas, and financial barriers (e.g., boarding costs). The result of these challenges was reflected upon, with participants noting that a lag in response time for arranging temporary animal safekeeping impacts the safety of victims experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse.
- ❖ In addition, individuals may delay or not access domestic violence shelter support and services for fear of animals not being returned, financial concerns with leaving livestock behind, and not being able to see animals once accessing domestic violence shelter support. Animals were described as offering emotional support for victims of violence.
- ❖ Relevant comments regarding question seven include:
 - “Shelters in our community do not allow animals. Unless the individual has family or friends who are willing to take the pet or assist with feeding and tending to livestock, the victim is often left in a bind. It is certainly an obstacle in terms of leaving” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural
 - “The SPCA in [rural area] has in the past offered homing for a dog or cat while a person is in the shelter. They ask that the animal be up to date with shots. This stops some women as their animal has not had shots and they can’t afford the fee the SPCA is asking. Sometimes the SPCA can’t take an animal and then a woman may not come in” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural
 - “We leave it up to the individual to make arrangements prior to them coming to shelter” – Domestic Violence Shelter, Rural

- “Although [animal welfare agency] and [volunteer-run animal charity] are both awesome in helping us find a safe place for clients’ animals to stay, sometimes they are full and aren’t able to provide a space. Also, some clients do not want to be apart from their animals, due to the animals’ age/health or their own emotional well-being, so they will choose not to use the above-mentioned services. I have also assisted clients in locating kennel boarding, but clients with no money are not able to afford this service” – Domestic Violence Family Services, Urban
- “One of the challenges we face is the ability for the woman to take the animal with her when she leaves the home. This can be due to a number of reasons, such as leaving quickly, the partner prevents her from taking the pet, etc. We cannot keep animals at the agency, so the process of having an animal picked up has to be done quickly and this is not always possible. It is not always possible to do this quickly due to the availability of [animal welfare agency] to pick up the animal or that there is a suitable home for the animal to go. There can also be safety concerns for the woman in returning to the home to get the pet or that there is a joint ownership of the pet. A challenge for the women using the [animal safekeeping program] is not being able to see the pet once it goes into care. In some cases, the inability to see the pet discourages the woman from using the service” – Domestic Violence Shelter, Urban
- “Lack of availability for safekeeping of animals, cost for the client, client wants their animal(s) to remain in their personal care, scared their abuser will take the animal, cannot always find shelter or someone willing to assist” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural

Question 8. Does your agency currently provide support to individuals to plan for temporary safekeeping of animals as part of their plan to leave an abusive relationship, if needed?

- ❖ Of the 48 responses to question eight, 56.25% ($n = 27$) of human service providers indicated that their agency currently provides support to individuals to plan for temporary safekeeping of animals as part of their plan to leave an abusive relationship. The remaining human service providers indicated that their agency either does not currently offer this support, but they would “like to be able to do this” ($n = 18$, 37.50%), or that they do not provide this support because it is not relevant to their agency ($n = 3$, 6.45%).

Question 9. Is your agency able to transport animals for safekeeping?

- ❖ Of the 45 responses to question nine, 62.22% ($n = 28$) indicated that their agency is not able to transport animals for safekeeping. The remaining respondents indicated that they were able to transport animals for safekeeping ($n = 2$, 6.90%) or that their ability to transport animals depended on the type, size, and number of animals ($n = 15$, 33.33%).

Question 10. Do you think your agency is able to effectively respond to requests for assistance with animal safekeeping?

- ❖ Of the 45 responses to question ten, participants indicated that their agency was “somewhat” able to effectively respond to requests for assistance with animal safekeeping ($n = 21, 46.67\%$), was not able to, ($n = 17, 37.78\%$), or was adequately able to ($n = 7, 15.56\%$).

Question 11. What would improve your ability to support individuals to plan for animal safekeeping?

- ❖ To enhance planning for animal safekeeping, 34 human service providers offered suggestions for improving their ability to support individuals. Suggestions for improvement included implementing a structured referral process for animal care and safekeeping, improving timely response, increasing knowledge of what options are available for all service providers, creating emergency funding (e.g., transportation, boarding, vaccinations), more animal welfare placement options, reliable and consistent partnerships, as well as developing formal agreements to handle livestock requests (e.g., stockyard, other farmers, neighbours, volunteers).
- ❖ In addition, service providers indicated that creating a domestic violence shelter or special program where animals are allowed to stay with individuals, either in their rooms or in a nearby building, would promote and enhance emotional well-being and healing.
- ❖ Relevant comments regarding question eleven include:
 - “More resources to be able to direct clients. A more structured referral process that we could use” – Domestic Violence Family Services, Urban
 - “Have contacts (names, phone numbers) of people who are willing to foster animals so that people in abusive situations can leave and that their animals will be looked after” – Domestic Violence Shelter, Rural
 - “The main thing that would improve this situation would be to have access to a shelter that allowed animals to stay with their people (either in their rooms or in a nearby building) so that they could be together during an extremely traumatic time. If that is not possible, I believe that an increased number of foster families, where pets would be kept with families, rather than in a kennel, would ease clients’ minds. Finally, though least desirably, I guess if clients needed to pay for boarding (due to capacity at local animal welfare agencies), we could have a small fund to be able to help with that specifically” – Domestic Violence Family Services, Urban
 - “We don’t have any policy or plan that allows us to give support for animal safekeeping; maybe if this is something we looked at doing and discussed, we would have the proper ability to provide this support. It’s something I’d be interested in doing” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Urban
 - “Having foster homes ready, willing and available to take animals on a short notice for little to no cost would be the best alternative at this point. Even having a kennel or the humane society provide short-term and affordable housing would be great” – Domestic Violence Shelter, Rural

- “More placement options, less elapse time, allow for some unknowns (i.e. many places want to know how long the placement is needed, but this depends on so many variables, like housing and support women need, which makes it hard to give a specific time), something for rural areas, something that is available within 24hrs of arriving, and not taking time to fill out applications, then wait for it to be accepted/rejected, and then waiting weeks for placements” – Domestic Violence Shelter, Urban
- “We are currently working with our local [animal welfare agency] to get something in place to provide victims of interpersonal violence temporary shelter for their pets. Unfortunately, in speaking with staff at the animal shelter here, it seems that certain requirements, such as the immunization records of animals and cost associated with their stay might be obstacles. Many of our clients are struggling financially and may not have their pets vaccinated. For those that have their pet vaccinations up to date, there is often no time for them to gather/locate proof of vaccination. One of the questions our [animal welfare agency] shelter manager inquired about is who would incur the cost of providing food and shelter to any animals they take in. These are all issues and questions we are working on, but it would be nice to have an agreement in place in which the [animal welfare agency] would take in pets of interpersonal violence victims, no strings attached, until they are able to secure housing that could accommodate themselves and their pets. In terms of livestock, other than neighbours, family/friends pitching in when possible, there doesn’t seem to be any options available for assisting victims of interpersonal violence. If there were community volunteers capable of assisting in situations such as this, it would certainly make it easier for victims” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural

Question 12. Does your agency work with animal welfare organizations or networks, formal or informal?

- ❖ Of the 45 responses to question twelve, respondents indicated that their agency either does not work with animal welfare organizations or networks ($n = 24$, 53.33%), or does ($n = 21$, 46.67%).

Question 13. Which animal welfare groups or networks do you work with? If you work with informal supports, please describe them.

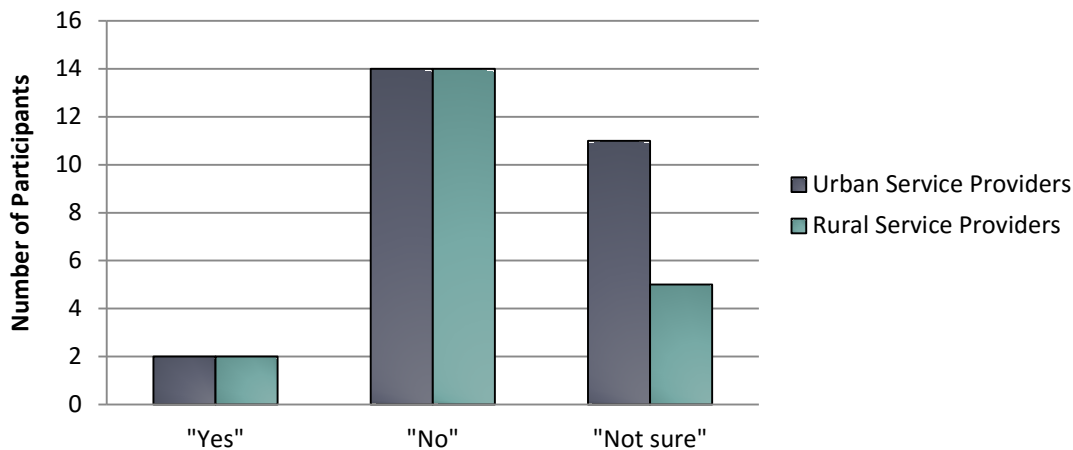
- ❖ Of the 20 responses to question thirteen, human services providers stated that their agencies work with Saskatoon SPCA, Saskatchewan SPCA, Swift Current SPCA, Regina Humane Society, New Hope Dog Rescue, Northern Animal Rescue (NAR), and Guardian Angel Animal Rescue, which is located in Yorkton but sister organizations are located in other communities.
 - “We are currently in the beginning stages of building a partnership/relationship with our local SPCA staff. The Alberta SPCA currently has the Petsafe Keeping Program, which is funded by donations to the Alberta SPCA. The Lloydminster SPCA has applied to have their shelter included in this network, but it has not yet been

finalized. Once this is completed, it would only address victims of interpersonal violence on the Alberta side of Lloydminster; however, our local shelter is willing to create a “shelter specific” contract to assist those on the SK side. What this looks like and how well it will work remains to be seen” – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural

Question 14. In your opinion, is there adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in your area to assist individuals to successfully leave abusive relationships?

- ❖ Of the 48 responses to question fourteen, 58.33% ($n = 28$) of participants reported that there is not adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in their area to assist individuals in successfully leaving abusive relationships. The remaining participants reported inadequate access ($n = 16$, 33.33%), or adequate access ($n = 4$, 8.33%).
- ❖ When looking at the responses among urban and rural domestic violence service providers, opinions regarding this question were similar:

Figure 4. Question 14: Opinions of Urban and Rural Domestic Violence Service Providers



Question 15. Would you like more information or training about animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse?

- ❖ Of the 48 responses to question fifteen, 79.17% ($n = 38$) of human service providers indicated that they would like more information or training about animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse, with the remaining participants indicating that additional information or training is not needed or relevant to their agency ($n = 10$, 20.83%).

Question 16. What kind of information would be useful to you?

- ❖ For question sixteen, participants were asked to select all answers that applied. Of the 38 responses, participants indicated that further information about animal welfare networks in their area ($n = 31$, 81.58%), information about

supporting someone to plan for animal safekeeping ($n = 31$, 81.58%), and training about animal safety and interpersonal violence and abuse ($n = 27$, 71.05%) would be beneficial. In addition, one participant reported being interested in information regarding the typical cost of animal safekeeping.

Question 17. Are you aware of any programs or promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse that can help us learn more? Please tell us about them.

- ❖ Of the 20 individuals who responded to question seventeen, more than half reported being unaware of programs or promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse ($n = 11$, 55.0%). The remaining nine participants provided responses describing current programs or promising practices offered through various organizations, including the Alberta SPCA Petsafe Keeping Program, Swift Current SPCA, Regina Humane Society, animal kennels or rescue shelters to aid in finding animal foster homes, and a possible partnership between Red Cross and an urban region SPCA. In addition, a current program offered through Noah's Animal House, based in Las Vegas, Nevada, which provides domestic violence shelter support where animals are housed next to clients, was noted.
 - "I know that there are some shelters in the United States that house the animals next to the clients, removing many barriers regarding animals and leaving an IPV situation. An example of this is: <http://noahsanimalhouse.org/>" – Domestic Violence Family Services, Urban
 - "I believe the Red Cross was working on some sort of partnership with SPCA and perhaps some other organizations but I am unsure of where that is at this time" – Domestic Violence Shelter, Urban
 - "I am aware that often kennels or rescue shelters will find a 'foster' parent for animals if there is an individual attempting to leave an abusive relationship" – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural
 - "Alberta SPCA has a Petsafe Keeping Program which provides a network of shelters and is completely funded by the Alberta SPCA through donations" – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural
 - "Speaking from personal experience, our animals become part of the family. They are just like our children and need to be protected also. I have asked friends, extended families, and would approach the SPCA to help out in extreme cases of emergency..." – Domestic Violence Victim Services, Rural

Section 4: Qualitative Research Findings

To gather a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping, semi-structured telephone interviews were held with nine service providers who represented the views and experiences of animal welfare or human service providers in urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan. Service providers were contacted to participate in this portion of the research project based on their years of work experience, direct work experience with individuals victimized in abusive relationships, experience with issues related to animal safekeeping, and knowledge of short and long term options for animal safekeeping within their community. The answers provided within the quantitative portion of this research project were analyzed to decide which participants were eligible to participate. Participant characteristics are outlined in Table 1.

The semi-structured interview contained five questions (See Appendix C) and ranged from 15 to 30 minutes. Following completion of data collection and transcription of each interview, thematic analysis was used to identify emerging patterns and themes. Each transcript was reviewed and analyzed by a doctoral student in psychology. Relevant statements were transferred to a separate document and sorted into themed groups.

The project advisory team acknowledges that the information shared is not verified; however, as the service providers involved in this research project varied in years of professional knowledge and experience, it is thought that their quotations and statements are an accurate reflection of the challenges faced when supporting victims of interpersonal violence and abuse who present with concerns regarding animal safekeeping. We also acknowledge that service providers are often offering the best support possible in the face of limited resources and funding. It is our hope that through this research, we are able to move forward with innovative ways to increase support for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who are concerned about animal care and safekeeping.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics (N = 9).

Participant	Welfare Sector	Agency	Region	Years in Current Position
1	Animal	SPCA/HS	Urban	0 to 5
2	Animal	SPCA/HS	Rural	20 or more
3	Human	DV Shelter	Rural	20 or more
4	Human	DV Shelter	Urban	16 to 20
5	Human	Victim Services	Rural	6 to 10
6	Animal	Veterinarian	Urban	11 to 15
7	Human	DV Shelter	Urban	20 or more
8	Human	DV Shelter	Urban	6 to 10
9	Animal	Veterinarian	Rural	6 to 10

Note. SPCA = Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; HS = Humane Society; DV Shelter = Domestic Violence Shelter. Participant numbers correspond with the illustrative quotes included below.

4.1. Major Themes

Based on thematic analysis, there were a number of important themes that emerged with regards to interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping. These themes will be discussed in relation to two overarching concepts:

- 1) Identified issues and challenges, and
- 2) Suggestions for improvement and next steps.

4.2. Identified Issues and Challenges

4.2.1. Animal Abuse an Indicator of Other Abuse

Service providers described a noticeable association between incidents of animal abuse occurring in tandem with other forms of abuse. One participant described a situation of animal abuse occurring, with the suspicion of additional abuse occurring within the home. Moreover, one participant reflected on an incident where a child was exposed to a severely abusive household. This child started to exhibit strange and harmful behaviour towards animals. She speculated that this child may have modelled abusive behaviour based on his experiences within the home.

- ❖ **Participant 6:** “I had a family come in with their small breed. They had two or three kids...little kids, probably the oldest was six. And they were good kids. I don’t even really know exactly what happened, the oldest child said something and the father slapped her across her face and then sent the kids to the car. So that was really shocking. I was just taken completely aback. And of course at that moment, I didn’t know what to do. So I just continued the appointment and sent them on their way. But it really bothered me that if he would do that in that sort of public place...what was happening in their house? So then I contacted the police and of course, because we had their contact information, I could give them all that. And from talking to the person I talked to, it sounded like these people were already on their radar or in the system so to speak. That really made me think that there is potentially or definitely violence in this household.”
- ❖ **Participant 6:** “So it was a young woman who had a kitten and the kitten came in. She brought it in once. It was injured, but I couldn’t really tell what had happened to it. She told me it had fallen off the couch. It was a small kitten and it wasn’t terribly injured, but something had happened to it. And her story didn’t really seem right because it’s a small kitten and they fall off things and usually it’s not a big deal. So we put it on pain medication and sent it home. And then not too long later, she brought it back and it was dead. It had been obviously injured badly. She told me it was in the shower and fell, or something like that, like something again that just didn’t seem right...And then shortly after that...this young woman was dating a man, or I think they were living together. The mother of the man she was dating came to talk to me because she felt that she had killed the kitten. She was worried about her son living with her or potentially marrying her and having family and all this sort of thing. I really felt like there was more obvious sort of violence maybe happening.”
- ❖ **Participant 7:** “A young boy, he was about three. He told me about biting the heads of his turtles off. At first I kind of thought he just had this wicked imagination and then later his mom told me the same story. His home was extremely violent. I can’t say that he was physically hurt, but just the things that were going on in the house were dramatically strange.”
- ❖ **Participant 9:** “To be quite frank, it seems like most of the times if there are abuse allegations there, they tend to carry over into the household. That’s been my experience a couple of different times when we’ve been in more extreme cases that weren’t just hoarding related. Hoarding related I think is a totally different ball of wax. But it’s...seizures in relation to starvation or straight cruelty tends to spill over into household issues as well. I’ve had a couple of issues that have been that way. The situations in my mind, usually it’s the man that’s involved that’s fairly volatile.”



4.2.2. Animals Provide Emotional Comfort

Service providers discussed the importance of animals offering a sense of emotional comfort and security for individuals leaving abusive situations, in addition to children that may be involved.

Participants noted that women and children are often attached to their animals, and in most

situations, these animals provide emotional support and enhance coping in situations filled with stress and turmoil. In some circumstances, animals are referred to as family members.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** “Well, we had a woman who needed our services for a couple of pets. I’ve never seen anybody who loved her animals quite like this one. She was actually fleeing the country, not just the home. So we kept her animals until they could safely leave the country. People will do anything for their pets.”
- ❖ **Participant 2:** “Her dogs were that comfort. They were her children. They were everything to her.”
- ❖ **Participant 3:** “Quite often family pets have to be left behind when the woman and children leave. That becomes an issue in that the children are upset with leaving them because sometimes they’re their security blanket type thing.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “For some people, the pet is very, a very real emotional support to them, is something that provides them comfort. They would rather not have their pet go into the program because they can’t see the pet for the time that it’s in the program.”
- ❖ **Participant 5:** “They already have the loss of their partner even though there was violence in there, but also the loneliness of being away from the pet.”
- ❖ **Participant 7:** “I think in the last few years, I think like society itself has become more in having animals not as pets but family member kind of attitude. So I think things have changed that way...where before, you know, the dog would be fine, the cat’s fine, and now it’s like leaving their child behind.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “We have one woman right now where we’re kind of just, we’re coaching her and trying to see what decision she’s going to make. She came into the shelter with her three children. Lots of physical abuse. She feels really guilty for having to grab her kids and leave the animals behind. And I mean, it’s kind of...how did she explain it...she explained it as it makes her feel even more guilty because not only have the kids lost their home, but they’ve lost the one thing that was comfortable to them and that was really important. It’s like they lost their home and they lost their friend, their pet. It’s kind of like a security blanket, that one thing you’re familiar with.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “I’ve never had anyone who’s had...even a goldfish. I know a goldfish isn’t the most high up on someone’s priority, but at the same time, for some of the kids that have come into the shelter, that little goldfish is their world.”
- ❖ **Participant 9:** “She didn’t leave until after their dog passed away, which was pretty much garbage. It’s junky enough that...I think the dog passed away and then a week later she managed to get out of the house, but that was years in, right. Same scenario, left horses there, but family pet wise, most people can’t leave without their dog.”
- ❖ **Participant 9:** “I don’t...not that I advocate for staying in a shitty situation because of a dog or because of you know...and you kind of nailed it before. It’s typically these people in this situation who need emotional reassurance. And usually that’s the only individual giving it. So how bad is it to have to leave behind your pet or whatever, when in fairness, probably that point in their life is the worst.”

4.2.3. Animals Used as Method of Control

Using animals as a method of control was discussed by service providers. Stories were told regarding the exertion of control over victims and children through threats to harm or kill animals. The exertion of control discussed was often used to prevent individuals from fleeing their home to seek safety.

- ❖ **Participant 3:** “Family pets are an issue usually. The threats of the abuser to the victims, whether they are the adult victim or the child victim, that if you leave, I’ll kill your dog or cat or whatever.”
- ❖ **Participant 3:** “We have had situations where women have told us that during a severe and violent attack on them, the perpetrator has also hit their dog or strangled their cat when they were present, as a means of controlling and threatening them, and saying ‘This is your cat but it could be you.’”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “I’ve seen the partners use the pets either to get to the kids or to get to mom. Or just to the woman herself because legally, pets are considered property right. They’re not actually seen as a family member or as a companion or anything like that; they’re just seen as property.”

4.2.4. Accessing Domestic Violence Shelter Services

When considering the emotional connection and attachment that individuals and animals share, especially during situations of violence and abuse, service providers described the difficult nature of making the decision of whether or not to seek safety and refuge through shelter services. Participants reflected that often times, individuals will not access shelter services due to the inability to find temporary care for animals. If temporary care is found, victims may not be able to see their animals while the animals are in care, which becomes problematic.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** “If an animal is in our care for [animal safekeeping program], they have no contact. I mean, they can always get in touch with me and I can give updates. Because it’s 100% confidential, they’re not allowed to see them.”
- ❖ **Participant 3:** “We’ve had a few over the years who have chosen not to come because of [lack of animal welfare options]. However, the majority of those people have been able to access a safe place with a relative or friend who has been willing to let them take their cat or dog. But some of them just say ‘Well, I can’t come then,’ and we don’t have contact with them to know what’s happened.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “There have been instances where I know people have refused or turned down coming into the shelter because they weren’t able to take the pet out of the home, they weren’t able to leave or make sure the pet was safe, so they chose to stay in the home rather than come into shelter.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “We’ve actually also had situations where people have been so desperate to have a safe place for their pet where they’ve tried to smuggle it into the shelter, or they’ve wanted to keep their pet in their vehicle because they didn’t feel they had any other place or any other option. Sometimes in those situations what the problem is, is that once a pet goes into an [animal safekeeping program], the person doesn’t have any access to the animal.”
- ❖ **Participant 5:** “A woman who felt unsafe at her residence in a rural area actually...she cared for, I think it was three dogs, two or three dogs that she had.

She felt unsafe there because her ex-partner would return to the residence once he was released. He had assaulted her. So one of her barriers was that she didn't have a safe place for her and the dogs to go to. She knew about the shelter, but knew she couldn't take the dogs there."

- ❖ **Participant 7:** "I'm sure there are many I don't know about. That's the only one that...she was at the door with her animals in their little cages and we couldn't accommodate her. We suggested we could find a place for the animals and she didn't want to do that. So I believe she went home."

4.2.5. Fear of Negative Consequences to Animals

When making the decision of whether or not to access domestic violence shelter support and services, participants indicated that individuals will often decide not to access shelter care, for fear that something negative may happen to their animals. One participant reported that although animal welfare agencies may be able to provide temporary care for animal safekeeping, these agencies are not exempt from negative situations that may arise. If something does happen to an animal while the animal is in care, this creates an increased amount of stress and emotional turmoil for victims of violence and abuse. In addition, if the only option is for animals to be left with the perpetrator, service providers discussed that victims may put themselves in dangerous situations in order to ensure that their animals are being properly taken care of.

- ❖ **Participant 2:** "Someone going into one of these homes needs to understand that the organization and the foster, everyone is going to do their absolute best, but it's not a perfect world and stuff does happen. You're trying to help them. You're taking on their animals so they can go into protective care and get on their feet, then something happens to their animal and they feel like they might as well have stayed where they were."
- ❖ **Participant 2:** "You put a strange animal in a strange home and they may run away. You do your best to not, but the bottom line is sometimes that happens. Then they get hit by cars and then it's even more devastating."
- ❖ **Participant 3:** "I've had two incidents for sure about larger animals on farms. One was when a lady had to leave the farm and come here for safety reasons. The RCMP had brought her here. But she felt she needed to go out and feed and water the animals every day, because if she didn't, her partner wouldn't. So she was exposing herself to the danger over and over every day by having to go feed and water them. And she felt she needed to do that because that was her income."
- ❖ **Participant 4:** "We've had a few instances where livestock have been an issue and it's people coming in off farms and stuff. It tends to be around the concern of who's caring for the animals, making sure that the animals are being fed and tended to properly, that sort of thing."
- ❖ **Participant 8:** "I've seen some women go back on a daily basis to their home and they're waiting for their abuser to go to work so that they can try and sneak in there to feed their dogs."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "I don't know how much follow through there usually is of that, and I don't care to know the answer to that to be honest. But rather than being too worried about who owns it, it's usually if you don't take it, I'm going to kill it. But that being said, horses are an awful lot of work. So I think if somebody's not

getting along with you, the likelihood of them looking after your stuff is pretty slim.”

4.2.6. Accessing Safekeeping Programs for Animals

When a victim of interpersonal violence and abuse makes the decision to access temporary care for their animal, the process of accessing animal welfare support is a concern. Participants indicated that coordinating transportation of the animal, such as picking an appropriate time, timely response, and ensuring the safety of everyone involved is difficult to manage during this process. In addition, minimal options are available if animal safekeeping is needed after-hours, which creates further complications to seeking safety. Victims of interpersonal violence and abuse will often flee when their situation worsens and in the spur of the moment, which will likely not involve prior planning. One participant expressed frustration around the planning process and filling out the paperwork for accessing animal safekeeping programs, as it is often cumbersome and timely.

- ❖ **Participant 4:** “One of the biggest obstacles to it is the thing of the pet ownership and being able to coordinate getting the animal from the house. Because most of the shelters, you can’t bring your pet here right. You have to have the [animal welfare agency] go to the house and pick up the animal. And that whole transportation aspect and then the woman may have to return to a home where it’s not safe for her; those sorts of things can create huge obstacles through the whole process.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “If there’s a real safety issue, then it’s also that the police have to be involved because the [animal welfare agency] doesn’t want to attend if it’s not a safe situation without the police there. And for some people, they just don’t want the police involved no matter what the situation is.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “They can’t bring the pet to the shelter. Particularly for us because there are a number of other things, or parts of organizations in the building, so they can’t be sitting in the lobby with their dog or their cat. So then that creates an issue in timing of going out and getting the pet and making sure the pet’s safe.”
- ❖ **Participant 5:** “If this happened in the middle of the night and the animal shelter wasn’t open, I don’t know where they would end up taking the animals to.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “The first things that come to mind is just how long it takes for the program to get set up. So when we have women that come in, first of all they don’t even know that this is available to them, and then they are sitting in the shelter wondering and feeling guilty for themselves and for their children because they’ve had to leave their pets behind, and they don’t know if the pets are safe. And then when we tell them that there’s this program and if they’re actually from [urban region], then it takes weeks to get everything together. Because then the [animal welfare agency], you contact them, well first you have to fill out all the paperwork, and then you got to contact them and they actually have to be open at that time. So I mean they’re not open you know later in the evenings or in the middle of the night, and it’s only one person or like a small group that deals with this part of the program right. And then they have to go and find a foster, well foster parent I’ll call it, for the animals and they can only do it for a certain amount of time. And like they’re asking women you know, like how long are they going to need this space? They don’t know these answers

coming into the shelter. They're still trying to find a place that's safe for them too and to get comfortable. Those are just some of the things I've seen."

- ❖ **Participant 8:** "In my experience, it has been weeks to find a foster parent and that's only if they do. There have been cases where they just don't and then the woman gets frustrated and goes back. Or they're trying to rush into finding housing so they can have their animals, or know that their animals are safe."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "Lots of this stuff is in the middle of the night or whatever...and the degree of organization if the resources aren't readily available, it's you know, it's unlikely that people spend lots of time planning in those situations. And I think that, as far as the really hard core domestic abuse situations, those people leave because it's not safe, and that's usually decisions that come on the tail end of a fight...you know, not a month of planning."

4.2.7. Animal Safekeeping is Short Term

Service providers noted that if the decision is made to access animal safekeeping, the options available are often short-term. This creates additional barriers, as individuals fleeing violence and abuse may not know the exact amount of time they will need for their animals to be in care or they will have no other options once the temporary short-term care limit is maximized. Limited options in regards to animal safekeeping further impacts the decision of whether or not to leave an abusive situation. In addition, the amount of time that temporary care is available for animals is largely dependent on situational factors, such as amount of space and the availability of animal foster homes. Service providers reported that they often try, to the best of their ability, to accommodate victims fleeing violence, but limited resources, space, and funding are influential factors.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** "The issue with our program is that it is geared to be very short-term. We're contacted because they're going into a shelter or a transitional place and animals are not allowed in those places, which gets us into a pickle because they're looking for short-term care for their animals that are going into the weeks and the months. That's difficult for us to accommodate."
- ❖ **Participant 1:** "We try to keep it around two weeks. Sometimes it's less, sometimes it's more. But it's also very dependent on what we have for available foster care, or if we don't have foster care, then if we have available space in the shelter to hold the animal. It's very situation specific."
- ❖ **Participant 1:** "I think we've pretty much been able to cover it off between foster care and keeping them here in the shelter. But like I said, that's a very short-term fix. These people typically need longer."
- ❖ **Participant 6:** "I'm sure that we could for a short-term time. Like if someone...I work some evenings where I'm the only vet there. So if someone came to me, brought their animal to the clinic and said, 'I'm trying to leave my husband now, tonight, and I need a place for my animal,' then I mean we would definitely help them. And we don't have a...our clinic is not huge. So we don't, we don't have a boarding facility which some clinics do, so they have more kennels and things. But we would certainly be able to keep an animal for a few days in that situation, and hopefully in a few days they would be able to figure out another way."
- ❖ **Participant 6:** "Just the space and time thing. Like certainly for a short period of time we could shelter an animal or two. But for longer term shelter, it would be

difficult I guess. And if they had many animals, which I mean most people don't, maybe two or three pets, I mean I'm sure we could accommodate that. But more than that, it might become difficult just based on the space thing."

4.2.8. Limited Financial Resources for Safekeeping Options

A significant barrier that was discussed among service providers was the lack of financial resources available for victims of interpersonal violence and abuse if costs are associated with programs and services accessed for animal care and safekeeping. The option of kennels and boarding facilities was discussed for housing companion animals and larger animals; however, these alternatives often involve incurred costs that are not realistic for victims fleeing abusive situations.

- ❖ **Participant 5:** "A woman who was experiencing domestic violence, the police responded and she had I believe two dogs at the time. And there's a situation that happened where the police were working with her and her partner was taken into custody and they needed to put the dogs somewhere for a period of time to be cared for, so they took them to the shelter. And when she was done working with the police that day, she needed to, she wanted to go get them but she didn't have the money the shelter was requiring. When the RCMP take dogs there, I guess then there is a charge to the owner and she didn't have the money. The person in-charge of the animal shelter was very sweet and very willing to just not charge her or she somehow worked it out so that she wasn't charged. So that was perfect."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "All these people in rural Saskatchewan, they're also looking at do they have the means. Because boarding horses is such an expensive situation that for most people, it's not even an option. So either they have to leave without and just leave that, or they have to try and find a family member or friend where they can move some stuff to."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "They can't afford to board somewhere, so we're usually trying to look for either horse rescue operations or someone who...every once in a while I have a client that has horses and I've had to put one down for them or something and they'd like a pasture buddy. You know like, we try to set up that kind of stuff if we can."

4.2.9. Records and Paperwork for Animals

Several participants indicated that the lack of available or up-to-date paperwork or vaccination records is a safety concern when individuals are accessing animal safekeeping programs. For instance, for some programs, proving ownership of animals is a determining factor for whether or not animals can be removed from the home. However, one participant described that among veterinary clinics, when an animal is brought in, there is often an assumption that the person is the owner, as ownership is hard to prove otherwise. Overall, legal issues, safety concerns, cases not being "straight forward," and financial issues if vaccinations are required were stated as additional concerns that need to be taken into consideration.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** “I’ve noticed a lot of the time the people who are accessing this program are probably at lower income levels and things of that nature. So a lot of these animals haven’t had regular veterinary care or they’re not spayed or neutered. We still accept them into the program. We vaccinate them on intake and make sure they’re covered for vaccinations. If they want to, they can access our spay/neuter program.”
- ❖ **Participant 2:** “The health of animals and where the responsibility for the health of the animal lies. If a lady brings in a six month old animal that’s never been vaccinated, it’s running the risk of catching everything as it runs along sniffing, so the legalities of that. And you can’t say well you can’t use the program if your animal’s not fixed or not vaccinated.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “Often the problem that we run into with the [animal safekeeping program] is providing ownership of the pet, because if there are no ownership papers, there’s nothing to prove that the woman is the owner of the pet, and then they can’t remove it from the home.”
- ❖ **Participant 4:** “In some cases if the animal hasn’t had shots, they’ll want that done as part of them going into the program. And for somebody on social services, the cost of that is absolutely prohibitive. Or anybody on a fixed income, they just don’t have the financial resources to do that.”
- ❖ **Participant 6:** “Ownership is always very hard to prove. I think people want to think that there’s some magical thing about ownership of a pet, but the reality is, whoever brings the pet to us, we have no other way of knowing. I mean, they tell us they’re the owner, but that’s all we have to go on. As far as the initial presentation of the animal, if someone says ‘This is my animal and I need shelter for it,’ then we’re not gonna be like ‘Well how do we know who’s it is?’ So proof of ownership is usually not an issue.”
- ❖ **Participant 6:** “And as far as vaccination status, what we tell people is if your pet’s not fully vaccinated, then they may...staying here they may be a little bit at risk if sick animals come in. And I guess, maybe the only other thing is if we were worried about it not having a rabies vaccine and we were worried that the animal might bite somebody, then we may say ‘Well, we need to do a rabies vaccine’ or something like that to cover for that.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “There was one case where it was actually his dog but she cared for it. They were living together and technically he had bought the animal so it was his, but she was the one caring for it and he wouldn’t pay any attention to the animal. And then when there was a physical fight, it was actually the dog defending her against him, but then she wasn’t able to bring the animal because it wasn’t actually seen as hers. A lot of the women coming into the shelter, I mean, they’re coming with not much, or they’re coming from a background where they don’t have lots of disposable income and to be able to provide all that stuff, or just even to have the presence of mind. When you’re fleeing because you have someone that’s chasing you, you’re not thinking ‘oh, I better grab this vaccination record.’”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “And another thing with ownership records is that that’s assuming that you’ve actually purchased the pet somewhere. Lots of people take in strays or they’re given a pet from a friend.”
- ❖ **Participant 9:** “If they don’t personally have the paperwork for the critter, are we stealing it? Because the thing is, if they don’t load it...like I prefer that they load their own stuff because most of the time, that’s a bad scenario. And if you have a ticked off spouse, you don’t want somebody coming with the RCMP and

saying 'you stole my horses.' The thing is that, it either has to be something where it's very very clearly their animal or they have the paperwork for it or to that affect. But it's yeah, it's unfortunate and dicey."

4.2.10. Limited Options in Rural Areas

In addition to the abovementioned barriers, rural areas face several unique limitations in terms of available resources. Service providers stated that animal safekeeping programs and practices within rural regions are minimal, so often times, victims of interpersonal violence and abuse are left to rely on informal support from family and friends. In addition, programs and services that are available within urban regions are not accessible to individuals living in rural communities. One participant provided information regarding current rental accommodations in her rural community, stating that to her knowledge, rental options that accept animals are essentially non-existent.

- ❖ **Participant 3:** "With the family pets, it's really difficult unless they have a family member or friend who can look after them. Our [animal welfare agency], if they have space, they might take a family pet. But they're very crowded; they're full all the time. And there are no options available for the woman if there are larger animals, unless it is a situation where the farming...a partnership between the family members brothers or something like that. They just don't have any options available to them."
- ❖ **Participant 4:** "The other thing that becomes a problem within accessing the program is that anybody that's not living within kinda the city limits, so say it's someone coming in off a reserve or from a rural community, the [animal welfare agency] cannot go out and get the pet from the home because they're not in the city limits."
- ❖ **Participant 8:** "Like first of all, it doesn't seem like the program is very well known within the community and they only do within [urban region]. Our shelter serves a very large area within Saskatchewan, all the way to [rural region]. But the program only serves people who are living in [urban region], so that's a very small area compared to what we serve."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "I certainly have had more experience in regards to clients needing, either be it cats or dogs or whatever, looked after for a wee bit until they can get settled. There's nowhere for them to go really. So when you're looking at situations with farm dogs or to that effect, either they know somebody that they know well enough that they can ask to hold onto their stuff, or like I said, I occasionally get phone calls, like could we, 'Is there a couple of months span that this critter could be somewhere while they're getting settled.' That tends to be more so the issue because the thing is that, renting wise, and especially rural, there's very limited rental opportunities. And where there are, you can't rent anywhere with animals around here. So you pretty much have to find something independently or buy something."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "The key obstacles? Well in terms of low income places, there's nowhere to rent that takes pets. That would be...right, because you need to think low income right. And that's the biggest problem I find is that rental places won't even take small critters. So housing wise, there's an economic gap in terms of what's available. Most of the time, or certainly with my own clients, it

hasn't been an issue with regards to can they afford to feed it or to that affect, it's that they have to find a place to live and that place to live has to be conducive to their own health, which needs to be worried about before they're worrying about the extra creatures. So I would say first and foremost, that's the biggest issue."

- ❖ **Participant 9:** "It really comes down to who do you know. And if you find the right person that will help you, then score. I'm not saying they're not out there, there are good people everywhere, but when you hit that level of a high stress situation, it's finding the right person quickly."

4.2.11. Confidentiality Concerns in Rural Areas

Confidentiality was discussed as a concern among rural communities. This was discussed in terms of animal foster homes, where ensuring the victim remains anonymous may be difficult due to rural communities being small and aware of current happenings. Ensuring confidentiality for safety reasons was mentioned.

- ❖ **Participant 2:** "Confidentiality is an issue because foster families have to be kept confidential, as well as the people going into these homes. They need to be kept confidential for everybody's safety."
- ❖ **Participant 2:** "The woman might have a brother or a brother-in-law who would be willing to, but then would he become in a dangerous situation from the perpetrator?"
- ❖ **Participant 2:** "The importance of really screening your foster homes or wherever the animals are going to be in...almost intense screening. Nowadays everyone wants to foster, it's a big cool thing to do. Everybody seems to brag about it, at least around here. That's what I'm dealing with right now. 'I'm fostering for so and so and I'm fostering for so and so.' A foster home for this project has to be completely confidential. Whether they have a made-up story of 'Oh my aunt is in the hospital and I'm looking after her dog' or whatever the case may be, the importance of screening a foster home and making sure they understand the safety, both for themselves, the animal, and the person staying in the shelter. It's a small community, everybody sort of knows everybody."

4.2.12. Limited Safekeeping Options for Larger Animals

Similarly to limited options being available in rural regions, options for the care of larger animals when victims are seeking safety and support is problematic. If temporary care for larger animals is found and arranged, issues surrounding transportation may create problems.

- ❖ **Participant 4:** "As far as I'm aware, there's nothing for livestock."
- ❖ **Participant 5:** "Where the animals aren't domesticated and they're cattle, that is, I don't really know how to fix that problem. I guess the barrier is just that they don't feel they have the resources to help them out, to take care of them."
- ❖ **Participant 8:** "When it comes to women that are coming from rural areas and say if they have a farm background, there's pretty much nothing for livestock. And then that causes tons of problems. I had one client where after she left, she couldn't get onto social assistance because it was considered an asset for her."

But at the same time, when she was trying to go for the division of property, her partner was claiming that she had abandoned everything and shouldn't have a right to it. And still to this day, she is trying to fight that. I mean I think it's been about three years."

- ❖ **Participant 9:** "[Discussing moving horses]. There's a lot of leg work involved. And I mean, there again is why...I'm on the road all the time, so I have a better chance of having an idea of somebody who might be looking or amicable to the idea of another horse. That's not...I don't love those phone calls because that's not an easy thing to set up. And the other thing is if you're going to...and that's if somebody is in a rotten spot in their life, usually you have to set up a trailer as well because they typically don't have access to, or if they do, they don't want it to seem as though they're stealing the trailer."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "It's not just let's find a place, it's how do we get it out of there?"

4.2.13. Financial Livelihood Dependent on Larger Animals

The interviewees reported that adding to the limited safekeeping options for larger animals, victims of interpersonal violence and abuse often feel that their hands are tied in terms of their financial



sustainability. Individuals living in rural areas are often dependent on livestock as their means of financial security and livelihood. When leaving an abusive situation, the division of assets and property significantly impacts the decision of whether or not to leave. Participants described that individuals will often stay in abusive situations due to the complexities associated with the division of assets.

- ❖ **Participant 3:** "The lady and her children left the farm and she disclosed that her husband was very very violent towards the cattle. He would whip them and beat them unmercifully if they didn't follow his commands. She had concerns that if the SPCA stepped in, then there could be a problem with the sale of the cattle and that was her only source of income."
- ❖ **Participant 3:** "Rural women are really challenged to leave their animals, especially if they're...if they're grain farmers that's one thing, but if they depend on livestock, it's a serious situation for them."
- ❖ **Participant 4:** "And then it also comes up in terms of division of assets of who actually owns the livestock, that sort of thing. I know for women who have come in off the farm, this has been a particular concern for them."
- ❖ **Participant 4:** "In one case specifically it prevented her from leaving the relationship. She lived in a rural area and I believe the animals to care for were cattle. She called in looking for some support for herself, feeling unsafe being in the relationship with this person. Actually she was married to him and not being able to leave or get out of the relationship because of...it was her responsibility to care for the animals, and if she didn't, there would also be the financial problems that would come with that as well. In her situation, I don't believe she

called back. And I'm not sure what the resolution was for her, whether she remained in the relationship or if she eventually got out."

- ❖ **Participant 9:** "Abuse is abuse. It's a terrible situation anyway you look at it, but typically farm wives I think stay longer and through worse because they tend to have very little access to leave and typically more animals."

4.2.14. Lack of Awareness of Available Resources

Service providers indicated that a current gap affecting their ability to support victims with concern for animal care and safekeeping is a lack of awareness regarding available resources, services, and programs within the community. Creating a resource book of available options was noted.

- ❖ **Participant 7:** "What is the greatest need? I'm thinking awareness, knowledge out there about some strategies you can take so that your animals are safe...Just knowing that there are services available or to contact these numbers to get some advice. That 2-1-1 number, I'm sure they do address that I would think. You know, I was just looking through this resource book and I don't really see anything like that in here."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "The second issue is when it actually comes down to shelter situations, no one seems to know where, who to phone to figure out where their pet could go."

4.3. Suggestions for Improvement and Next Steps

4.3.1. On-site Victim Support and Animal Safekeeping

Service providers were asked what their key obstacles were at the moment to providing their respective service. Two participants reflected that in a "perfect world," services to ensure support and safety would not be needed. Following this, participants described the option of offering a domestic violence shelter with on-site animal care and support. It was noted that this living situation may create further issues that would need to be dealt with during the developmental phase.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** "In a perfect world, I think the shelters and those places would allow people to have pets. That's their main sort of, their comfort. [Women] spend a lot of time worrying and stressing about what's going to happen to their animals. And ultimately, I would say a large portion of people end up surrendering them because they just have no other options."
- ❖ **Participant 2:** "In the perfect world, we wouldn't have to supply that service."
- ❖ **Participant 7:** "In a perfect world we wouldn't have to. I know that there are some shelters that are starting to bring animals into the shelter. I don't actually see that... I think maybe in a perfect world it might be nice, but I think it can create a bunch of other issues too. I mean, you're already living communal and now you have communal animals, and then they don't always get along and all that stuff."

4.3.2. Streamlining Access to Animal Safekeeping Program

Participants suggested that streamlining the paperwork process involved in securing animal safekeeping programs and placements would be beneficial, as this may improve accessibility and timely response.

- ❖ **Participant 4:** “I think accessibility is a key thing to it in terms of just streamlining the process of accessing the program. There’s a lot of paperwork that has to be done and a whole referral service, that kind of thing. So simplifying that process would really make a difference. Also the whole part of having to prove ownership, and I don’t know what could be changed within that. I understand that there’s laws and stuff like that, but if there’s something that could be done within that situation to make it easier for the woman to remove the pet from the home.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “The very first thing to be addressed would be, more on the procedural side of the [animal welfare program], that it takes sooo long to even get the whole process started and to find a foster parent or a place for the animals to go.”

4.3.3. More Programming

Developing and implementing more program options was suggested. Ensuring that these programs offer financially realistic and appropriate resources would be vital moving forward. Finding creative ways to increase the amount of space, foster families, and volunteer capacity was noted.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** “What is the greatest need? I think there needs to be more programming to assist them. Like as far as I know, we’re the only ones who have any sort of program to help people with temporarily housing their animals. And I mean, there’s plenty of rescues or boarding facilities, things of that nature, but generally these people don’t have the funds to be able to access those.”
- ❖ **Participant 1:** “I mean...God knows it would make my life easier if there was some sort of program that helped offset the costs with boarding facilities or something.”
- ❖ **Participant 3:** “The humane society here is in the process of obtaining a new facility that will be quite a bit larger than what they have. So I think that will be the next step for us is once they get enough funding in place to have that facility, to work with them to possibly come up with a solution, either through their facility or their foster homes.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “Even if there was something in the community that was a little less formal. I know there is like [volunteer-run animal welfare charity], but to my knowledge, it’s not a place, like they’re trying to adopt out cats. But even an organization that would be able to say ‘For a woman fleeing domestic violence, she can drop her cat off for up to six weeks,’ or something like that. You know, that would be good too.”

4.3.4. Creating Partnerships

Service providers discussed the importance of interagency collaboration when supporting victims of interpersonal violence and abuse when concern is raised regarding animal safekeeping. Creating

innovative partnerships with community organizations was suggested. For instance, one participant discussed the recent partnership established between veterinary services and social work to enhance support for individuals, such as by providing counselling to a veterinarian or to a family dealing with the passing of a beloved animal. This innovative partnership indicates that thinking outside the box in regards to interagency partnerships can lead to significant progress and positive change.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** “We’re limited by the number of foster families that we have and we’re limited by the size of our facility and all sorts of things. So I mean, we help as many people as we can, but like I said, if there were other agencies that could help in some way, that would be huge. Like even hotels, there’s not that many pet friendly hotels.”
- ❖ **Participant 5:** “That’s probably something that would help, if I was to contact the animal shelter and talk about a plan for when this does happen and how we could work together.”
- ❖ **Participant 6:** “Well I don’t really know how all these things work, but it would be nice if the humane society could be on board. So say a scenario where someone came to us in the evening, which the humane society is not open so they obviously can’t take the dog there then. But they could leave the dog with us, and then in a few days when they’re able to make other arrangements, if the humane society was able...and maybe not to surrender the dog to them, but just for the humane society to be able to keep the dog. But again, I know for them, it’s going to be a space issue as well.”
- ❖ **Participant 7:** “You know, I’m sort of stuck on that social work thing. Because I think...I was surprised but happy that that was happening. It isn’t something you put together necessarily. So it’s like wow, that’s really good. Just in general, the support for people that are having a difficult time if they have to put their dog down or whatever. But not only that, there’s a place for people to talk about animals that come in with broken ribs and knowing that there’s violence in the home. You know, sort of expanding that discussion.”
- ❖ **Participant 9:** “The other aspect of that is...[town name] is a small community and it’s rural. I happen to be pretty good friends with the RCMP and so I frequently phone and say ‘what am I supposed to do about this?’ You know, ‘am I likely to get in trouble if I do something like this’ or ‘do you know anything about this?’ That kind of stuff. At least that way, if something goes south, you have somebody who already knows that you’re there.”

4.3.5. Education and Awareness of Available Resources

Developing and implementing education and training programs to promote awareness of support services available for both service providers and victims in regards to interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping was suggested. Increasing awareness of options that are available is imperative moving forward. One participant discussed the possibility of creating a provincial registry of available services.

- ❖ **Participant 6:** “Well that’s good information because I didn’t really know that that was available. It’s good to talk to you because it makes me think more about what I would maybe do in that scenario. Because sometimes if you

haven't thought about it ahead, it's hard to in the moment, it's hard to sometimes decide what you're going to do."

- ❖ **Participant 7:** "Even having educational things around what vets can do, you know that kind of thing. Maybe having a spokesperson that can talk about options."
- ❖ **Participant 7:** "Awareness, building on our knowledge base, knowing what to do and where to go, and how to let people know that there's options."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "I think the one thing that I would say would be key or what would be the most likely to be helpful is a well-advertised network. I think that's what it comes down to, if a person could easily find...if it was a question of googling, if there was some way to hit on where there's foster places, that would be the quickest way...or something set up, some network set up so these people know where to look. Because I think, even shelter wise, if you phoned a shelter today and you said 'Listen. This is the situation' and they said 'Yes, you can come here,' and you said 'What do I do with my dogs?' ...they would have no answer for you. I mean, that's a bit of a situation in itself when you look at it rural wise, there's not even an accessible shelter right, not even for people."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "I question if it's not feasible for some sort of provincial registry for people, even if it's short-term, you know how the SPCA has like 72 hour places. When we've done seizures, they always have 72 hour places, you know, or the ability to line up 72 hour places. I question if they couldn't, if that wouldn't be the route for setting up if you had to leave and you needed some sort of, be it a week or two to sort out somewhere your stuff could go, if they wouldn't be a resource that way."
- ❖ **Participant 9:** "If I was queen of the world to be honest, I would have some sort of listing shelter wise where they have lists of people that will just take your pet and keep them until you're ready to come back for your pet, or some listing or some rental directory of rental places that accept pets, or some degree of organization."



Section 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Question 1: Is there a concern for the safety of companion animals and livestock as a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse in Saskatchewan?

5.1.1. Quantitative Findings

When animal welfare representatives were asked if their agency had been requested to provide or facilitate temporary animal care or safekeeping for individuals leaving abusive relationships, 37.07% indicated experience with this, noting that the majority of their experience involved the care and safekeeping of companion animals. Of the remaining participants, 44.44% indicated that this service was not relevant to their agency and 18.52% reported that although they had no experience with this, they were interested in learning more about providing support to individuals seeking options for animal safekeeping when leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse. When human service representatives were asked about their work experience, 95.92% reported that concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals largely impacted the decision making of individuals leaving abusive situations. In addition, 77.55% of human service participants indicated having awareness of someone who did not leave an abusive relationship due to concern for the safety and safekeeping of animals. These findings suggest that while the majority of human service providers have firsthand experience with the care and safekeeping of animals being a barrier to individuals leaving situations of violence and abuse, a discrepancy exists among the experiences of animal welfare and human service providers. This illustrates the need for collaboration among both service sectors.

5.1.2. Qualitative Findings

The knowledge and experience of service providers who participated in the qualitative interviews indicated a clear association between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping, and how this largely affects the lives and decision making of individuals. Several issues and challenges were identified that further complicate the relationship between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping. Service providers discussed that animals are often used as a method of control to prevent individuals from leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse. Stories were told regarding the exertion of control over victims and children through threats to harm or kill animals.

- ❖ **Participant 3:** “We have had situations where women have told us that during a severe and violent attack on them, the perpetrator has also hit their dog or strangled their cat when they were present, as a means of controlling and threatening them, and saying ‘This is your cat but it could be you.’”

In addition to animals being used as a method of control, service providers discussed that options for animal care and safekeeping are difficult to access for individuals seeking safety from interpersonal violence and abuse. Participants noted that individuals will not access domestic violence shelter

services due to the difficulty of finding temporary care for their animals. It was mentioned that fear regarding the negative repercussions of leaving animals behind prevents individuals from seeking safety, for themselves and their animals. Two examples of this include worry that animals may be subjected to harm after leaving the home and concern regarding financial livelihood if livestock are left behind. In these situations, victims will often put themselves in danger in order to ensure that their animals are being properly taken care of.

- ❖ **Participant 3:** “I’ve had two incidents for sure about larger animals on farms. One was when a lady had to leave the farm and come here for safety reasons. The RCMP had brought her here. But she felt she needed to go out and feed and water the animals every day, because if she didn’t, her partner wouldn’t. So she was exposing herself to the danger over and over every day by having to go feed and water them. And she felt she needed to do that because that was her income.”
- ❖ **Participant 8:** “I’ve seen some women go back on a daily basis to their home and they’re waiting for their abuser to go to work so that they can try and sneak in there to feed their dogs.”

Following the emotional turmoil of leaving animals behind, it was discussed that difficulties with accessing temporary care services may prevent individuals from accessing these services as a whole. Service providers indicated that when attempting to access animal care and safekeeping, coordinating transportation of the animal, such as picking an appropriate time, timely response, and ensuring the safety of everyone involved is difficult to manage. Other challenges discussed included animal care being short-term and lack of financial resources, as well as lack of awareness about services available. The discussion of rural regions brought to light unique challenges, including limited options and concerns with confidentiality, and in some cases, the issue of financial livelihood being dependent on larger animals.

- ❖ **Participant 8:** “When it comes to women that are coming from rural areas and say if they have a farm background, there’s pretty much nothing for livestock. And then that causes tons of problems. I had one client where after she left, she couldn’t get onto social assistance because it was considered an asset for her. But at the same time, when she was trying to go for the division of property, her partner was claiming that she had abandoned everything and shouldn’t have a right to it. And still to this day, she is trying to fight that. I mean I think it’s been about three years.”

In most circumstances involving temporary care, participants stated that victims of abuse are not able to access their animals once temporary care has been arranged. This creates further difficulties. One important theme discussed was the notion that animals provide emotional comfort for individuals. Individuals and children fleeing situations of violence and abuse are often emotionally attached to their animals, and these animals provide emotional support and enhance coping in a situation filled with stress, turmoil, and uncertainty. In some circumstances, animals are referred to as family members.

- ❖ **Participant 4:** “For some people, the pet is very, a very real emotional support to them, is something that provides them comfort. They would rather not have their pet go into the program because they can’t see the pet for the time that it’s in the program.”

5.1.3. Research Question 1: Conclusion

Based on the information gathered and presented above, in combination with the information discussed in more detail throughout this report, a conclusion can be made that based on the knowledge and experience of service providers, concern for the safety of companion animals and livestock is a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse in urban and rural areas of Saskatchewan.

5.2. Question 2: Are there existing networks and supports in Saskatchewan who provide safekeeping of animals for individuals experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse?

5.2.1. Quantitative Findings

Among the animal welfare representatives who participated in the present study, 23.08% reported collaboration among their agency and domestic violence services, with 76.92% indicating no current collaboration or partnership. Of the animal welfare agencies that reported collaboration, this included formal and/or informal partnerships with local city police, social services, victim services, and a transition house. When asked if there is adequate access to animal safekeeping supports to assist individuals in successfully leaving abusive relationships, 26.92% indicated belief that there was adequate access, with 73.08% holding the opinion that there was not adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in their area. Further in-depth analysis revealed that several participants who held the opinion of there being adequate access to animal safekeeping supports indicated that their agency had not received requests to facilitate animal safekeeping, as this was not relevant to their agency; therefore, the indication of adequate access among these particular agencies is questionable. Participants were asked about promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse, with 40.0% indicating no awareness of services and 20.0% indicating these services were not relevant to their agency. The remaining participants described awareness of the PetSafe Keeping Program (Calgary Humane Society), the Safe Places Program (Regina Humane Society), an emergency shelter offered through the Saskatoon SPCA, and the option of organizing emergency shelter with boarding kennels.

Among the human service representatives who participated in the present study, 46.67% reported collaboration among their agency with animal welfare organizations, with 53.33% indicating no current collaboration or partnership. Of the human service agencies that reported collaboration, this included formal and/or informal partnerships with Saskatoon SPCA, Saskatchewan SPCA, Swift Current SPCA, Regina Humane Society, New Hope Dog Rescue, Northern Animal Rescue (NAR), and Guardian Angel Animal Rescue. When asked if there is adequate access to animal safekeeping supports to assist

individuals in successfully leaving abusive relationships, 8.33% indicated belief of there being adequate access, 33.33% reported being unsure of whether there is or not, and 58.33% held the opinion that there is not adequate access to animal safekeeping supports in their area. Participants were asked about promising practices related to animal safekeeping and interpersonal violence and abuse, with 55.0% indicating no awareness of services. The remaining participants described awareness of the PetSafe Keeping Program (Calgary Humane Society), Swift Current SPCA, the Safe Places Program (Regina Humane Society), animal kennels or rescue shelters to aid in finding animal foster homes, and a possible partnership between Red Cross and an urban region SPCA. A current program offered through Noah's Animal House, based in Las Vegas, Nevada, which provides domestic violence shelter support where animals are housed next to clients, was noted.

5.2.2. Qualitative Findings

Within the qualitative interviews, participants discussed a noticeable gap in the lack of awareness regarding current resources, services, and programs within the community that are available for animal care and safekeeping in situations involving interpersonal violence and abuse.

- ❖ **Participant 7:** "What is the greatest need? I'm thinking awareness, knowledge out there about some strategies you can take so that your animals are safe...Just knowing that there are services available or to contact these numbers to get some advice. That 2-1-1 number, I'm sure they do address that I would think. You know, I was just looking through this resource book and I don't really see anything like that in here."

While several programs were known within the community, there was still a noticeable gap in awareness of services available. Service providers suggested that more education, awareness, and programs are needed, in addition to establishing partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations. Participants suggested developing and implementing more program options that offer financially realistic and appropriate resources for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse. Finding creative ways to increase the amount of space, foster families, and volunteer capacity was noted. Furthermore, the importance of interagency collaboration was discussed. Creating innovative partnerships with community organizations was suggested, and to develop this, thinking outside the box may be an avenue leading to positive change.

- ❖ **Participant 1:** "We're limited by the number of foster families that we have and we're limited by the size of our facility and all sorts of things. So I mean, we help as many people as we can, but like I said, if there were other agencies that could help in some way, that would be huge. Like even hotels, there's not that many pet friendly hotels."

5.2.3. Research Question 2: Conclusion

Based on the information gathered and presented above, in combination with the information discussed in more detail throughout this report, a conclusion can be made based on the knowledge and

experience of service providers. While there are some existing services and programs available that provide safekeeping options for animals and livestock when individuals are leaving situations of violence and abuse, these programs contain several challenges and limitations that may delay or prevent individuals from seeking safety when faced with the overwhelming concern for animal care and safety.

- ❖ **Participant 9:** “The second issue is when it actually comes down to shelter situations, no one seems to know where, who to phone to figure out where their pet could go.”

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the information gathered, a list of recommendations was created:

- ❖ Develop education and training workshops regarding the connection between interpersonal violence and abuse and concern for animal safekeeping to human service organizations, animal welfare agencies, and the general public.
- ❖ Establish partnerships between animal welfare agencies and human service organizations to better provide services.
- ❖ Provide information about services available for both animal welfare and human service providers in urban and rural areas.
- ❖ Train service providers in supporting individuals to plan for animal safekeeping when leaving situations of violence and abuse.
- ❖ Create a list of resources and services for animal care and safekeeping currently offered within Saskatchewan (e.g., develop a resource book, provincial registry).
- ❖ Among domestic violence services, ensure that the intake process involves asking whether or not animal abuse is occurring/has occurred within the home.
- ❖ Formulate policies among animal welfare and human service organizations, to ensure a clear understanding of what each sector is responsible for. Establishing guidelines will remove ambiguity that may arise when working together.
- ❖ Generate specific and focused action plans for individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse who are concerned about animal care and safekeeping, in both urban and rural regions of Saskatchewan.

5.4. Research Challenges

Some challenges were encountered while carrying out the present study. Recruiting human service and animal welfare representatives from the community proved to take longer than anticipated. For future studies, considering appropriate timelines and allowing extra time for unforeseen challenges regarding recruitment is suggested.

When contacting representatives from various agencies, it became apparent that some individuals were unaware of the link between interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping. Offering additional information regarding the connection between these two issues may have resulted in increased participation, as well as participants being better informed prior to participation.

5.5. Concluding Summary

In summary, this report offers important knowledge regarding the barriers for individuals leaving situations involving interpersonal violence and abuse, while having concern for animal care and safekeeping. The information gathered throughout this project offers increased knowledge and insight, and has instilled hope that much can be done to assist individuals leaving situations of violence and abuse, to ensure the safety of both humans and animals. A collaborative spirit among animal welfare agencies and human service organizations is imperative, which will lead to positive change for individuals and the community at large.



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Appendix A

Quantitative Participant Recruitment E-mail

To (insert agency),

I'm contacting you to share information about a project and request your participation. The Saskatchewan SPCA is partnering with Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions (STOPS) to Violence on a project called "Interpersonal Violence and Animal Safekeeping". The purpose of this research project is to improve our understanding of the impact of the concern of safety of animals (including companion animals, livestock and service animals) as a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse. Through this project we will also gather information about what formal and informal supports exist to support people who experience this barrier and identify options to improve and build on these supports.

This research project will include two stages. The first stage is an online survey that will be sent to animal welfare organizations that serve as potential fostering networks in Saskatchewan and human service providers that provide direct support to people who are experiencing, planning leave or leaving domestic violence. The second stage will include follow up interviews with survey respondents to gather further information.

You will be receiving an e-mail from STOPS to Violence requesting your participation in the online survey in the next few days. We ask that your organization take a few minutes to respond to this survey to assist us in this research.

If you would like more information about the "Interpersonal Violence and Abuse and Animal Safekeeping" project, please contact Tracy Knutson, STOPS to Violence, at stopstoviolence@sasktel.net or 306.565.3199 or Frances Wach, SSPCA, at frances@sspca.ca or 306.382.4471.

Appendix B

Qualitative Participant Recruitment E-mail

Hi (insert name),

I am contacting you regarding a research project being conducted by STOPS To Violence and the Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA). This project is being undertaken to improve our understanding of the impact of the concern for the safety of animals as a barrier to individuals leaving situations of interpersonal violence and abuse.

You recently completed an online survey regarding this research project on (insert date). Based on your answers, we are interested in gathering additional information from you about your experience with this issue. The information you provide through both your personal knowledge and experience and that of your agency is vital to assisting us in developing a clearer understanding of the services and supports available for the temporary care of animals to assist individuals who are leaving abusive relationships. The information will also aid us in understanding the risks for animals and how we can improve the current supports available. The questions will be asked in a semi-structured interview, with the interview being conducted by myself, Melissa Wuerch, via telephone. The interview should take no more than 30 minutes of your time.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in participating or would like to know more information, please reply to this e-mail stating your interest. Thank you in advance for your time.

Appendix C

Semi-Structured Qualitative Interview Questions

1. Are there experience(s) related to interpersonal violence and abuse and animal safekeeping that you would like to share with me that will help inform this work? Are these specific cases that have stayed with you over time or are they classic examples?
2. What are the key obstacles at the moment to providing your service the way you would like to in a “perfect world?”
3. What do you see as the greatest need?
4. Is there one thing you see as key for next steps to improving your service? For your organization to be successful, for services to be provided, or resources that are needed?
5. Is there anything else you wish to add that I did not ask about?

