

# Impact on children

## Animal cruelty is family violence

### Power and control

Children understand the abuser's motives

- > Abusers use threats and acts of animal cruelty as a control tactic.
- > Pets are harmed as retribution or punishment against an act of individual independence.
- > Animal cruelty increases fear, grief, and PTSD in children who hear, witness, and are forced to engage in animal cruelty.

### Impact on children

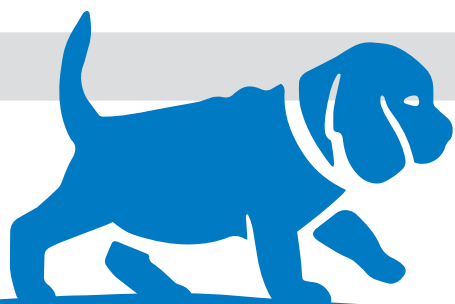
Impact on sibling relationships

- > Complex sibling relationships, the pet is considered a sibling.
- > Child may seek comfort from pet in place of parent.
- > Children may re-enact abuse on pet due to sibling competition, or to threaten or punish sibling.
- > Children who witness animal cruelty are 3x more likely to abuse animals.

### Moral development

Developing compassion

- > Children develop ideas about fairness and motives of behaviour from adults.
- > Children may accept animal cruelty as a form of punishment for animal misbehavior.
- > Children report guilt and shame in response to their inability to protect their pet from abuse.
- > Children who act with cruelty to animals are 5 x more likely to abuse humans.



When a child has been abused contact:

Oranga Tamariki, the Ministry for Children (0508 FAMILY)

If an animal has been harmed contact the SPCA:

SPCA New Zealand Targeted Intervention Manager 027 700 3495

