

# Enhance Women's Safety by Keeping Pets Safe

89% of women in domestic violence situations who had pets reported the pets had been mistreated by their partner<sup>1</sup>

56% of women in shelter who were surveyed reported delaying leaving the abusive situation due to concern for their pet's safety<sup>2</sup>

Reasons why women with pets do not leave violence are complex and can include fear for the pet's safety and lack of safe shelter for the pet.

**Ensuring that women have refuge when fleeing violence with their pets is important to the safety of women and their pets.**

**A survey by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) in 2017 found that some Ontario shelters accommodate pets through:**

- On-site kennels
- Allowing pets in the shelter
- Assisting women in finding a foster family for their pets
- Coordinating with pet services such as local rescues, Humane Societies, and/or veterinarians<sup>3</sup>

**Benefits for families when pets remain with them in shelter may include:**

- Reduced anxiety about their pet's safety
- Emotional and physical support
- Companionship
- Enhanced sense of belonging, security, and safety

**How can you help women with pets to seek refuge from violence?**

- Ask the shelter what they need to support women and their pets (e.g. volunteers, financial support)
- Donate pet supplies
- Consider fostering a pet
- Share this infographic

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<sup>1</sup> Barrett, B. J., Fitzgerald, A., Stevenson, R., & Cheung, C. H. (2017). Animal Maltreatment as a Risk Marker of More Frequent and Severe Forms of Intimate Partner Violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*: 1-26.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> OAITH. (2018). *Pet Safety and Women: Options for women with pets leaving abusive situations*. Available through: <http://www.oaith.ca/assets/library/FINAL%20Pet%20Safety%20and%20Women%20Report.pdf>