

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 partner¹

56% of women in shelter who were surveyed reported delaying leaving the abusive situation due to concern for their pet's safety²

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 veterinarians³

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

¹ 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.

² Ibid.

³ 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>