



Complex case Management with animals

Considerations and forward planning

Cases can become complex when animals are in the family. Being able to provide referrals, resources and support for the animals coming out of a domestic and family violence (DFV) situation can mean the difference between the family finding safety and a drawn out case management process. Supporting animal family members requires forward planning and a level of preparedness. Lucy's Project can assist with staff education and resource development as well as creating local referral pathways for your area/organisation. Email awarearc@lucysproject.com for more information.

Key considerations

1. Don't wait until there is a crisis to ask for help and instead be prepared in advance. Google the animal support services in your area and then give them a call to make yourself and your organisation's needs known to the animal service. Be aware of their limitations and availability to help.
2. Your local pet shop/store may be willing to help with emergency supplies such as beds, leads, food, etc. Again, it is essential to have such an arrangement in place before you need to ask for it.
3. Be cautious about helping to rehome dogs without proper training in DFV safety for animals. Microchips, registrations, and the visibility of the dog on social media and in the community can put human life at risk. Animals can become mobile tracking devices if the animal's whereabouts become known to perpetrator.
4. If you are an animal service and a person discloses that the animal came from a DFV background, always ask if that person has support for themselves. Be prepared with DFV numbers or contacts in your area that can help. You can always share 1800 RESPECT if needed.

5. Be cautious about supporting a DFV animal if their owner/carer does not have support for themselves. Be aware of the risks of the perpetrator trying to reclaim the animal or the risk that the victim may have to disappear for safety reasons, leaving you with an animal that is not your property to rehome. Be aware of your rights and be prepared for plans to change.
6. There is no single solution for all cases you manage with animals. You will need a range of support options. A good place to start is knowing the local vet, animal refuge, and pet store. If you are in a rural or regional area, know the major stock feeds and large animal supports including transport.
7. Paws and Recover have offered access to their intake procedures. If they are relevant to you, you can use this research to develop your own resources for animals in your area. Click [here](#) to access.
8. Develop an intake form for animals appropriate to your service. If you are unable to assist with housing animals, a form that staff can utilise to approach animal services in a safe and relevant way can expedite the process. Lucy's Project are happy to assist with this (fees apply).
9. Flexible support packages (VIC) and other funding may be available in your area to help you support animals through your service. Be sure to keep up to date with grants and funding that you qualify for.

In summary- **Be prepared, be safe, and know your community before a crisis occurs.** Being ready to help the animal family members at the start of a case will help reduce the time it takes to offer adequate support to the human clients. Animal-ready communities and services keep the whole family safe.

