

Statewide Pets Family Violence Referral Project

Molly O'Shaughnessy

General Manager Operations



@DVCrisisLine

1800 015 188

Toll free 24/7 Response line

www.safesteps.org.au

About safe steps



- 24/7 central responder to women & children experiencing family violence
- State-wide immediate response that informs, protects and connects women and children so they are safe
- Provides a pathway into specialist family violence services
- Intervention, support, advocacy and referral to support throughout Victoria and nationally

1800 015 188 – 24/7 toll-free response line

About safe steps



- Over **55,000** calls in 2014-15
- Over 7500 clients in the same period
- Over 50% of these were children and young people

Contributing Risk Factors – lethality



Lethality (homicide) risk assessment = when a victim is at most danger

- Changes/loss in employment
- **Violence towards Pets**
- Mental Health involvement
- Drug/Alcohol Misuse
- Separation from/reduced access to Children

Pets and family Violence



- **safe steps** sees daily instances of animals being harmed or killed
- Barrier to women leaving
- Compounds trauma for children, compounds disrupted attachment
- Multiple barriers to boarding or fostering, esp at very short notice
- Few (if any) FV services can accommodate animals

Pets referral project



- Partners:

safe steps

Lort Smith

RSPCA

- Purpose: to provide a consistent statewide response for pets of women and children experiencing violence

Case Study



Terri (no kids) was referred by the police on a Friday night in February. She was considered extremely high risk and was very fearful.

Her partner had been released from prison that day and she needed to go into hiding as he had threatened to kill her and was actively pursuing her. She lived in public housing, and had a medium sized dog which she could not abandon.

Terri has no friends or family in Victoria, and has no social connections.

Case Study



- safe steps emergency accommodation (motel)
- Supported accommodation
- Refuge
- Housing options – eg. private rental
- Traditional animal shelter response

QUESTION



- What would it take to facilitate a pets referral response in your region?



For more information ring

(03) 9928 9600

www.safesteps.org.au

safesteps@safesteps.org.au

 @safestepsCEO