

The Connection Between Cruelty to Animals and Human Violence

Nearly all violent individuals were abused, neglected, or abandoned as children. The majority of violent individuals started abusing animals as children or adolescents, and later added violence against humans.

According to the FBI, the triad of: 1) being abused as a child, 2) reacting by torturing animals, and 3) becoming violent to humans -- is so well established that animal cruelty is used as a means of identifying possible suspects in violent crimes and as an indicator of possible future offenders.

Juvenile Violence

Every year, 4000 kids under 18 murder others and 5000 more commit suicide. Virtually all of them were abused and began abusing animals by their teenage years.

Luke Woodham, 16, killed his mother and 3 classmates in Pearl, Mississippi.

Kip Kinkle, 15, killed his parents and 2 classmates, wounding 22 more, in Springfield, Oregon.

Jose Hernandez, 17, killed his father, mother, 6-year old brother, and 8-month old brother.

Jim Hardy and 2 friends, 17, beat a boy to death to see what it was like.

Dylan Kiebold and Eric Harris, 16, killed 13 and wounded 20 more in Littleton, Colorado.

All of them were known to be torturing animals. No one did anything about it. There are hundreds of more examples of violent kids who were abused and who tortured animals. "One of the most dangerous things that can happen to a child is to kill or torture an animal and get away with it." - Margaret Mead.

Serial Killers

The FBI estimates there are 500 serial killers operating in the U. S. at any one time. Most of them rape, torture, and savagely kill their victims. The number of serial killers has increased in recent years. All known serial killers were abused as children. All known serial killers tortured animals.

Edmund Kemper killed his mother, grandparents, and 7 college girls; began torturing cats at age 13.

Jeffrey Dahmer killed 17 young men and boys, beginning at age 18. Started abusing animals at age 10.

David Berkowitz killed 6 young people, set 1400 fires. Began torturing animals before age 10.

Albert DeSalvo murdered 13 and raped 300. Trapped animals in boxes for archery target practice.

Charles Manson, responsible for 35 ritual murders, tortured animals as satanic sacrifices.

Albert Hamilton Fish, guilty of 15 murders and 100 rapes, set animals on fire.

Henry Lee Lucas, believed responsible for 100 to 200 murders, tortured animals severely as a child.

Other Violent Crimes

Studies of violent criminals in prisons, patients in psychiatric hospitals, women in battered women's shelters, domestic violence cases including child abuse and elder abuse, and national crime statistics indicate that:

46% of sexual homicide perpetrators abused animals;

48% of convicted rapists abused animals;

88% of child abuse situations also included cruelty to animals if animals were present;

70% - 80% of spouse abuse situations also included animal cruelty if animals were present;

30% of child molesters abused animals;

60% of aggravated assaulters abused animals;

95% of serial killers abused animals.

Many elder abuse situations also involve animal abuse if animals are present.

Animal cruelty is a valuable predictor of present and future violent individuals. Many human lives could be saved, much human tragedy and suffering could be prevented, and a great deal of money would be saved, if police forces, prosecutors, judges, social workers, and the public were to recognize the strong connection between animal cruelty and human violence and take animal cruelty seriously.

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