

**TABLE 5.4**  
**One Health Approach to Suspected IPV and Animal Abuse\***

Prepare Your Team	Resources and Strategies
<p>Understand mandatory reporting requirements in your area for animal neglect and abuse, child neglect and abuse, and IPV. Laws differ across states in terms of requirements to report these situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the abuse is currently happening and/or a person or animal is in danger, calling 911 or the police is indicated.</li> <li>• Be aware of state mandatory reporting and immunity laws for veterinarians. For a table of laws by state, see <a href="https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-veterinary-reporting-requirement-and-immunity-laws">https://www.animallaw.info/topic/table-veterinary-reporting-requirement-and-immunity-laws</a>.</li> <li>• The National Link Coalition also provides resources and numbers for reporting human and animal abuse. See <a href="https://nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse">https://nationallinkcoalition.org/how-do-i-report-suspected-abuse</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Learn about harm reduction for mandatory reporters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory reporters may not be able to comply with a client's wishes if they run counter to the law.</li> <li>• It is important to communicate that you may not be able to comply with their wish (especially if their desire is to do nothing or to just get contact information for resources) if you are in a state that has mandated reporting for IPV and/or animal abuse.</li> <li>• For information on harm reduction strategies, which seek to reduce negative impact to survivors of abuse while abiding by the law, see <a href="https://ipvhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Compendium-4th-Edition-2019-Final-small-file.pdf">https://ipvhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Compendium-4th-Edition-2019-Final-small-file.pdf</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Learn about the signs and indications for IPV and animal abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out to a local domestic violence advocacy organization for a training session. This is an important step as they know the local laws and resources.</li> <li>• Make use of online resources to identify IPV, such as these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.hubbardhouse.org/warning-signs-of-abuse/">https://www.hubbardhouse.org/warning-signs-of-abuse/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.harborhousedv.org/images/images/content/resources/community-education/Domestic_Violence_and_the_Workplace.pdf">https://www.harborhousedv.org/images/images/content/resources/community-education/Domestic_Violence_and_the_Workplace.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://futureswithoutviolence.org">https://futureswithoutviolence.org</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.thehotline.org/">https://www.thehotline.org/</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Make use of online resources and training to identify animal abuse, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/veterinary-resources-recognizing-and-reporting-animal-cruelty-and-neglect">https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/veterinary-resources-recognizing-and-reporting-animal-cruelty-and-neglect</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/animal-abuse-resources-veterinarians">https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/animal-welfare/animal-abuse-resources-veterinarians</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/awf-animal-maltreatment-report2023.pdf">www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/awf-animal-maltreatment-report2023.pdf</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hold educational sessions for staff so everyone knows what signs to look for.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide resources for clients and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish collaborative relationships with domestic violence shelters that accept animals.</li> <li>• Keep contact information and resources on hand to provide as needed.</li> <li>• Identify victim advocates who will respond to the office or meet with the client at a convenient and safe location.</li> <li>• Ask local IPV experts to assist in creating screening questions that can be asked when gathering the history in an examination.</li> <li>• Note that preparedness for screening is complex and the barriers to screening will vary among personnel.</li> <li>• If it is safe, ask individuals how they want to be helped. Do not assume they want the police called.</li> </ul>

*(Continued on next page)*

**TABLE 5.4, CONTINUED**

**One Health Approach to Suspected IPV and Animal Abuse**

Prepare Your Team	Resources and Strategies
Develop a plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A workplace safety plan ensures that employees feel safe and know what to do if IPV is suspected.</li><li>• For an example of one approach, see <a href="https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/academics/experiential-learning/clinical-program/gender-justice-clinic/domestic-violence-and-the-workplace-model-policy-and-toolkit/">https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/academics/experiential-learning/clinical-program/gender-justice-clinic/domestic-violence-and-the-workplace-model-policy-and-toolkit/</a>.</li><li>• The plan may also contain standard operating procedures for cases of suspected IPV, including how and when to offer resources and/or take action.</li><li>• Plans could include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to interrupt the veterinarian to pull them out of the room, such as a specific believable story using words that will alert the veterinarian to the concern.</li><li>• Suggestions for how to separate the clients so a brief private conversation can occur with the suspected victim. For example, a staff member may come in saying they have another form that must be filled out or may ask one of them to go with their pet to the back for treatment or diagnostics because their presence will help the pet remain calm.</li></ul></li></ul>
Provide mental health support for staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact a veterinary social worker to counsel staff and provide resources.</li><li>• Provide resources listed by the American Veterinary Medical Association, <a href="https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/wellbeing">https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/wellbeing</a>.</li><li>• Ensure team members are aware of resources provided by the company’s Employee Assistance Plan policy.</li></ul>
Provide resources for clients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Post information in the restrooms with the phone numbers for local IPV resources. Many will not take provided cards or dial a number because their partner monitors their phone and activities.</li><li>• Leave a pen and paper in the restroom with instructions for clients to provide information on how the clinic can help them (e.g., the client provides a number and requests that a resource agency call them during a specific time period when they will be alone, or the client can pass a note to the staff to call police or to schedule a recheck appointment at a specific day/time when the partner is not available.)</li><li>• When alone with a suspected victim, staff can offer them the use of a phone, so they can make a call without it being documented on their cell phone for the partner to find.</li><li>• If you are comfortable with this and have the resources to do so, you can hospitalize the pet (at their request) so the pet is safe from harm if they were to leave, and/or let them know that your hospital can help care for their pet (even if the pet is healthy) until arrangements can be made.</li><li>• Provide information for other pet housing options. Some domestic violence shelters now accept pets. Many humane societies can also offer crisis boarding for those fleeing IPV.</li></ul>

**\*Resources and strategies are suggestions and not intended to be exhaustive.**

**The 2025 AAHA One Health Guidelines are available at [aaha.org/onehealthpartnerships](https://aaha.org/onehealthpartnerships).**

These guidelines were prepared by a Task Force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and were subjected to a formal peer-review process. This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. ©2025 AAHA.

