

AHA Conference, Schaumburg, IL

Workshop: The Social Psychology of Partnering to Help Animals*
Pamela Carlisle-Frank, Ph.D., President of FIREPAW, Inc.



The Foundation for Interdisciplinary Research & Education Promoting Animal Welfare
[FIREPAW, Inc.], www.firepaw.org

**Based on the book for animal welfare professionals: Silent Victims: Recognizing and Stopping Abuse of the Family Pet, by Pamela Carlisle-Frank, Ph.D. & Officer Tom Flanagan*

The Social Psychology of Partnering to Help Animals
At-a-Glance Tip Sheet

Potential Obstacles to Look Out For:

- Lack of agency and/or community support
- Skewed priorities
- Ignorance and resistance from agencies and or the community
- Lack of adequate training by partner agencies
- Miscommunication between agencies
- Difficulty finding fosters or safe houses for animal victims
- Lack of commitment from partner agencies
- Political infighting within multidisciplinary partnerships

Symptoms: Individual/agency insists on taking control; requires all communications to first be filtered through them; dictates changes not supported by other participants; leaves other members out of the loop; becomes competitive, manipulative, or engages in other behaviors that undermine the primary goal of helping animal victims

- Confusion about which agency has what responsibility

- Institutional Limitations

*Institutions inherently lack the capacity to completely address problems of violence to animals and can reach only a fraction of those animals who need help

*Institutions frequently only provide after-the-fact crisis intervention and do little to modify the social norms that could prevent violence toward animals in the first place

*Institutions will fail to help animals if they do not draw on the leadership in the community to develop long-term changes. This becomes especially important in communities with ethnic groups who hold cultural attitudes and traditions harmful to animals

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Strategies/Techniques for Successful Partnering to Help Stop Animal Suffering

-STRIVE FOR DIVERSITY: Your partnership should strive to include the following professionals and agencies: Municipal leaders; officers of the court; veterinarians; animal control; animal shelters; animal welfare organizations; law enforcement; fire department officials; social service agencies; domestic violence caseworkers and shelter managers; family and elderly service professionals and therapists.

-SEEK OUT SYMPATHETIC INDIVIDUALS: If local organizations and agencies are reluctant to join your multidisciplinary partnership, locate and bring on-board *individuals* rather than entire agencies who are sympathetic to your goals

-KNOW YOUR MEMBERS: Identify specifics about who in your partnership has received what types of training for recognizing and stopping animal abuse

-UTILIZE AVAILABLE RESOURCES: Utilize the numerous resources available to assure all active players have appropriate training (NOTE: See book: *Silent Victims: Recognizing & Stopping Abuse of the Family Pet* for a comprehensive list of resources providing training to those working to stop animal abuse).

-CREATE SOLID COMMUNICATION PLANS: Draw up a clear plan *and* a back-up plan to overcome problems arising from miscommunication

-GET ORGANIZED: Establish a phone-tree with a designated, competent, central contact person. (Central contact person should conduct follow-up calls updating all participants who have

missed partnership meetings of the current status of open cases, any changes in procedures, etc., and pass along all important messages.)

-CREATE LOGISTICAL PLAN: Create a structured, detailed plan for how your partnership plans to get animal victims of abuse to safety. Include...

- *Who will pay for animals' housing, food and veterinary care if the guardian is unable to?
- *How long will the foster or safe haven be expected to house animal victims?
- *What will happen to animals whose guardians cannot get back on their feet for prolonged periods or cannot secure animal-friendly housing?
- *Should the guardian be informed of where the animal is being housed?
- *Should guardians and their children be permitted to visit the family pet?

-INCLUDE THE RIGHT MIX: Ideally, multidisciplinary partnerships should include a/an: veterinarian, animal shelter, animal welfare organization that trains and organizes foster families

-BE CLEAR ABOUT RESPONSIBILITIES: Lay out clear details for all involved in partnership of each individual's and agency's responsibilities when a call of possible animal abuse comes in. All involved need a clear understanding of the importance of each person/agency as a link in a chain, and the problems that arise if someone drops the ball.

-MAKE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS CLEAR: Make clear statements of the need and expectations for all participants

-MAINTAIN COOPERATIVE MILIEU: Create and maintain an environment where participants feel genuinely welcome and safe to openly discuss reservations or problems

-APPOINT BACK-UPS: Appoint alternate persons to step in when primary people are unable to fulfill their commitment

-DEVELOP CLEAR GUIDELINES: Lay ground rules up-front about participants' roles and the importance of maintaining a climate of mutual respect, open communication and cooperation. Clear guidelines should ideally be put in writing with all participants receiving a copy.

-CREATE CLEAR PROCEDURES: Establish clear procedures for cross-reporting in cases of human and/or animal abuse

-PLAN FOR THE BIG PICTURE: Design a plan for conducting humane education within your community

- *Reach out to community leaders to design educational materials, brochures and programs
- *Invite the community to play an active role in distributing literature and information about stopping animal abuse
- *Plan on periodic face-to-face programs presented to the community about animal abuse

* Target small segments of the community at a time. In step-fashion first reach out to religious institutions, community organizations, etc.

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10 Features of Successful Multidisciplinary Partnerships

Successful Multidisciplinary Partnerships tend to...

- 1) Hold regular partnership meetings to touch base and reinforce solidarity
- 2) Create and maintain an atmosphere that fosters mutual respect and cooperation
- 3) Incorporate a diverse group of professionals with a variety of backgrounds and training and will offer a rich mixture of input and ideas from a variety of perspectives
- 4) Always make efficient use of members' time
- 5) Ensure that growth of the partnership is nurtured rather than feared (Newcomers are made to feel welcome and that their ideas and experiences are valued)
- 6) Develop a written plan and back-up plan of procedures and guidelines for both (a) crisis intervention and (b) proactive community outreach educational efforts
- 7) Make sure every participant fully understands and agrees to his/her role in the partnership plans
- 8) Develop a communication tree
- 9) Assign a central liaison to communicate changes, developments and vital information about animal abuse cases
- 10) Hold follow-up meetings following crisis intervention to update everyone involved, exchange key information for follow-through, and to determine what could be learned to prevent future similar situations, enhance educational outreach, and streamline current procedures

Working Together to Help Animals:

The Social Psychology of Partnering to Help Animals

Pamela Carlisle-Frank, Ph.D., President of The Foundation for Interdisciplinary Research & Education Promoting Animal Welfare [FIREPAW, Inc.]
(www.firepaw.org)

This workshop examines the socio-psychological factors that influence the obstacles--and the solutions--to working effectively in multidisciplinary partnerships to stop animal abuse. Based on her work in the area of organizational and group behavior, and her book about animal abuse ([Silent Victims: Recognizing & Stopping Abuse of the Family Pet](#)), Frank offers insights and techniques for overcoming common issues that arise such as:

- the foot in the door phenomenon,
- orientations of personal control,
- out-group homogeneity effect,
- learned helplessness,
- self-serving bias,
- self-monitoring,
- judgmental overconfidence,
- illusory thinking,
- mood & judgement issues,
- conformity,
- group effects,
- group think,
- group polarization.

The workshop will also offer strategies for effective persuasion and for establishing and maintaining partnerships and attaining goals.