



# LINKING ANIMALS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WORK



## OVERVIEW



- 1. Purpose of research
- 2. What we did
- 3. What we found
- 4. Anticipated outcomes

## I. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

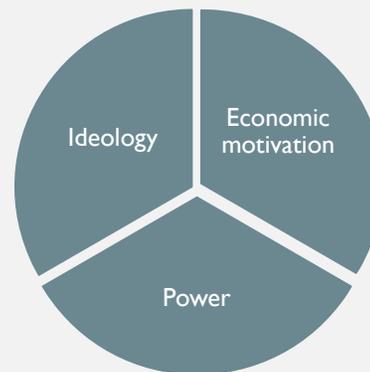


- **General**
  - **Contribute to elimination of speciesism**
    - **Speciesism:** The normalized, systematic, institutionalized oppression of non-human animals (Kemmerer, 2011) ;  
Discrimination based on species (David Wolf, 2000)
    - **Social justice issue:** moral philosophy, ecofeminism
- **Specific**
  - To raise awareness of social workers of speciesism and explore their willingness to advocate for animals

## 2. WHAT WE DID: RELEVANT THEORY



### Nibert's Theory of Oppression (Nibert, 2002)



## 2. WHAT WE DID: THEORY OF CHANGE



Education &  
Discussion



Dismantle  
Symbolic  
Boundaries  
(Cherry, 2010)



Localized  
change in  
ideology

## 2. WHAT WE DID: METHODOLOGY, METHODS



- **Methodology:** Participatory Action Research (PAR)
- **Research Team:** Advocates (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2013; Sample 1996)
  - RASTA Farm Sanctuary, BCSPCA , Social work educator, Community health social worker, Initial researcher
- **Action:** developed education module; delivered module to social workers
- **Methods:** focus groups (students, social workers, online); individual interviews; thematic analysis

### 3. WHAT WE FOUND



#### Preliminary Finding I

#### Education and networking increased willingness to advocate for animals

- Before: **personal** interest

After: new or deeper **professional** interest

- *But if it's invisible and they don't have a voice... documenting it like when we're doing a genogram or an eco map and talking about those important linkages - you know the dog needs to be there, right?... It's a way of increasing visibility and meaning, right?"*

*I think it fits into assessment and intervention like 'what's the issue?' and 'how to help?'. You know animals are part of both of those things."*

Marie

- *"I would say the linkages to oppression are what really stood out for me.... I know other people said we never really thought about it in this way but I think really when it comes to the education piece and linking with social justice and social work...the oppression piece really encapsulated all of that and brought it back together."*

Sara

- *"Yeah. I felt she really did open to me because I was interested - and it was a safe way to talk about her life."*

Elinor

### 3. WHAT WE FOUND:



#### Preliminary Finding 2

#### Undercurrent of social work activity related to nonhuman animals

- **Intimate Partner Violence**

*“Before I used to view this more as an attachment. It’s like if you want to leave you kinda have to make a few sacrifices. But really, it never really hit me that it’s like ...no maybe this isn’t a viable option or maybe the animal may really be in danger.”*  
Tara

*“Yeah, what you had just said kinda reminds me of the transition house that we have here for women who have seen domestic violence. Their policy right now is no animals because of potential allergies and aggressive behavior with the animals...which I don’t think is right and especially in such a small town.”*  
Susan

- **Resistance**

*“For instance people aren’t aware about the link between violence and animals and you try and say that...you’re in a team situation...you might find some push back saying well you can’t go in for just that...So I might at that time without this I might have gone, “Oh, okay” and sat back.”*

Barb

- **Guardian health issues, life changes**

## 4. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES



Individual social workers are more willing to advocate for other animals

Expanded understanding of social justice that influences education, policy and practice

Contributes to a more respectful and peaceful world

## REFERENCES

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