Recognizing the Human-Animal Bond through veterinary social work

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Inspiring Minds

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Title: Recognizing the Human-Animal Bond through veterinary social work

Animals and humans have long enjoyed a special relationship known as the Human-Animal Bond (HAB). In social work, the HAB is beginning to play a more important role in understanding and supporting people. Through veterinary social work (VSW), a little-known discipline in Canada, social workers focus on four pillars: compassion fatigue and conflict management among people working with animals, animal-related loss and grief, animal-assisted interventions, and the link between animal and human violence. This Independent Study project allowed me to create a VSW course that examines the four pillars, as well as the One Health approach to VSW and the role of the HAB in general social work practice. My hope is to spark interest in this emerging area, and highlight the need for social workers to recognize the important role animals may play in their clients’ lives.