

- Some researchers have long championed Children's rights in the field
- Government's VAWG strategy now recognises young people as victims as a distinct issue
- Government's Domestic Abuse Bill (2019) commits to better addressing young people's needs alongside improvements for children (NB falls short recognising 'independent agency' though calls continue to progress this research, policy & practice agenda
- These steps can & should be embedded within a strategy to identify companion animals to victims as those given *independent agency*.
- Impact?



Power & Control Wheel (Pence & Paymer, 1993).
The original wheel identified a set of behaviours adopted by abusive partners in order to maintain control & power

Behaviours include:

- 1) Coercion & Threats
- 2) Intimidation
- 3) Emotional Abuse
- 4) Isolation
- 5) Using children
- 6) Economic Abuse
- 7) Male Privilege
- 8) Minimising, denying harm, blaming

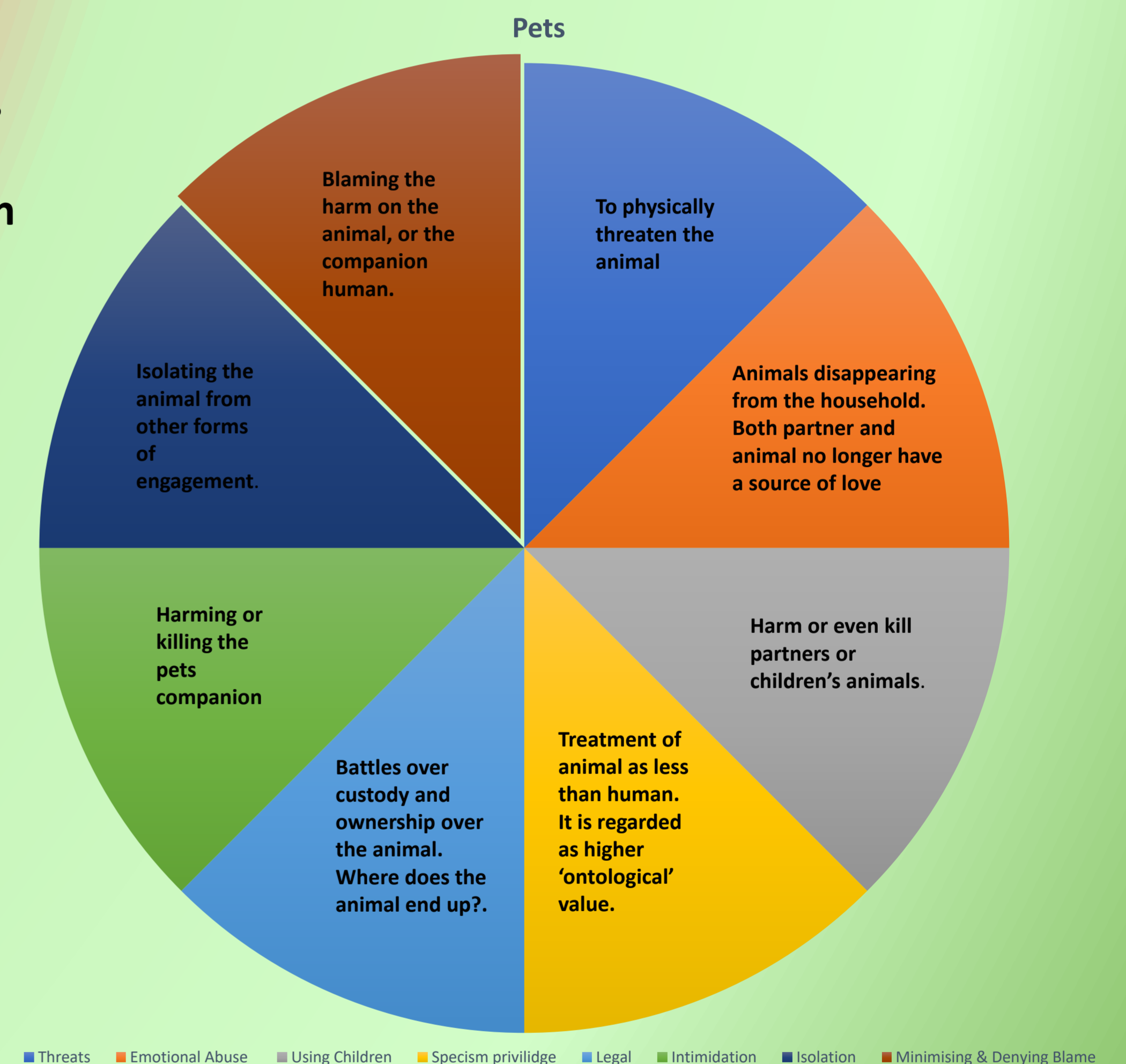
Our interpretation builds on this

Children and Pets: The Hidden Victims of Domestic Violence & Abuse (DVA): Where Action & Activism Merge!



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Anthropocentrism vs Specisism and towards an animal and human symmetry approach

- One way to shift the focus to include animals in the same way as children is to consider a broader ontological debate on anthropocentrism & speciesism
- An *anthropocentric perspective* of companion animals has provided some developments towards their protection e.g. pet fostering to victims seeking to escape/flee
- This is aligned with a hierarchal concept of specism placing humans at the top of a policy agenda comparative to non-human species A *speciesist perspective* emphasises the rights of animals to *independent agency* in the same way as humans. Translates into policy & criminal law regarding the treatment of animals as victims of animal cruelty. These services already exist e.g. animal organisations taking responsibility for prosecutions of animal cruelty.
- We contend that the treatment of companion animals/pets should – not unlike the developments regarding children as victims of DVA – be incorporated into the same approach to developing & tackling strategies to address DVA.