



# Pet Loss and Grief Resources

A guide to dealing with the loss of a pet





## **Pet Loss and Grief Resources**

We know how hard it is to cope with the loss of a pet, so we're here for you during this devastating time. Feel free to explore some of the pet loss support resources below and on the internet to discover the best ways to begin processing your painful loss.

### **Coping with the loss of your beloved pet**

Grief is different for everyone, including how long people grieve. Some people feel that moving past their grief means they're being disloyal to their pet. Moving forward isn't being disloyal, and you'll know when you're ready to begin the healing process.

Time really does tend to mend a broken heart, and eventually you'll start to know when the time is right for you.

Throughout this document, you'll find plenty of resources designed to help you both grieve and overcome the loss of your pet, enabling you to move forward and live your life comfortably with the fond memories of your furry friend in your heart.

### **Anticipatory grief**

Caring for a terminally ill or geriatric pet can be a challenge, often involving particular care routines, frequent veterinary visits and intense worry. Knowing that the time you have left with your beloved pet is limited can cause stress and anxiety. You may find yourself hoping for a natural death, or the 'perfect' death.

Many pet owners experience anticipatory grief at this stage of their pet's journey. Anticipatory grief occurs prior to losing your pet and consists of a range of emotions including fear, guilt, anxiety and frustration.

Anxiety surrounding the anticipation of death is normal, but allowing the anxiety to overwhelm you can interfere with your ability to enjoy the remaining time you have with your pet.

Being prepared for this stage of your pet's life is the best way to deal with anticipatory grief and help your pet. Begin preparing and planning for your pet's passing by asking yourself the following questions:

### **How do I envision the last few moments of my pet's life?**

- Where do I want the last few moments to take place?
- Who should be present?
- Is there anything I don't want to happen?

### **How do I feel about euthanasia?**

- Do I understand the process?
- Do I have questions for my vet?

### **What can I do now so I can look back and think, "This was the perfect passing?" and "I have no regrets?"**

Are there any "bucket list" items I want to experience with my pet?

What can I do to make my pet feel extra special?

While it's extremely difficult to face the prospect of life without your pet, answering these questions will help you prepare as your pet's time draws near.

Thoughtful, advanced planning will help alleviate much of your anxiety so you can focus on providing your pet with compassionate, physical care.

Making your pet's last days extra special with lots of love, along with their favourite toys, activities and food also may ease your grieving heart.

***If you are experiencing anticipatory grief, or find it difficult to answer the above questions, a consultation with may be beneficial.***

## Support groups

Pet loss support groups can provide a safe and non-judgmental place for family members to be able to share their feelings and experiences, whether it be before or after the loss of their beloved pet.

Support groups are a place where you will meet others who understand what you're going through, as sometimes your family and friends may not completely understand your grief. Many groups welcome children as well.

To find a pet loss support group in your area, contact us for recommendations. Or, try a Google search for groups in your area.

## Pet loss support groups and counselling

Pets and People

<https://petsandpeople.com.au/>

Patch & Purr

<https://www.patchandpurr.com.au/help-advice/pet-loss-grief-support/>

## Distance therapy

Not all counselling needs to be away from your home. Distance therapy is available and can be just as helpful. [Click here](#) for a website that was created by Marty Tousley, RN, MS, FT, DCC. She has been a hospice counsellor for 17 years.

Marty is a registered nurse with a Master's in Advanced Psychiatric Mental-Health Nursing, was awarded the Fellow in Thanatology (advanced certification for professionals in the fields of grief, loss, and transition) and is a Distance Credentialed Counsellor.

Her website is designed to help those who are anticipating or mourning the loss of their loved ones, regardless of species! The website includes discussion groups, healing courses, resources, and a blog to help you find comfort.

## Universities that offer counselling

Some overseas universities have excellent resources on their websites for those experiencing the loss of a pet:

Colorado State University

<https://vetmedbiosci.colostate.edu/argus/pet-loss-support/>



Louisiana State University

[https://www.lsu.edu/vetmed/veterinary\\_hospital/services/counseling\\_services.php](https://www.lsu.edu/vetmed/veterinary_hospital/services/counseling_services.php)

The University of Tennessee Knoxville

<http://vetsocialwork.utk.edu/grief-and-bereavement/>

