

Pet Loss Resources



We extend our heartfelt condolences for the passing of your beloved pet or the impending loss you're facing. May you forever hold dear the cherished memories you've created together and discover meaningful ways to commemorate your special bond at your own pace. We recognize the immense challenge this moment presents for you and your family. For those seeking extra assistance during times of loss, we offer the following resources to assist you in your healing and remembrance journey.

Give yourself time to process grief.

The grieving journey doesn't follow a linear path, and it's common to experience the various stages of grief in a non-sequential manner. Usually, the process starts with denial, which is a natural coping mechanism that provides a shield until a person can ultimately accept their loss. Certain individuals might encounter emotions of anger that can be directed towards anyone connected to their cherished pet, such as family, friends, and caregivers. Meanwhile, others might face a profound sense of guilt concerning their actions or inactions.

Following the initial phases of denial, anger, and guilt, pet owners may undergo genuine sorrow or grief, potentially leading to depression and withdrawal. Acceptance emerges as individuals come to terms with the reality of their loss and can reminisce about their animal companion with less sadness. Engaging in a healthy grieving process doesn't entail forgetting your companion; rather, it involves coming to terms with their absence and allowing your cherished memories to serve as a tribute to your beloved pet.

Tips for coping with the loss of your pet.

Recognize that you are in a state of grief and grant yourself the liberty to express it. Containing your feelings of sadness can extend the duration of your grieving process.

Shift your focus toward reminiscing about the happy moments shared with your companion, rather than dwelling on their final moments.

Memorialize your pet through a bereavement ceremony or activity such as:

- Plant a tree in memory of your beloved pet.
- Write an obituary.
- Spread your pet's ashes somewhere special or create a place in your home for your pet's ashes and photos.
- Create a memory box with your family containing your pet's collar, favorite toys, and photos.
- Share memories and photos of your pet on social media.
- Purchase memorial accessories that incorporate your pet's ashes. Etsy has various options for "pet memorial".
- Create an ofrenda in memory of your pet.

Keep in mind the importance of self-care. It's essential to make sure you're nourishing yourself, staying hydrated, and taking care of your well-being during this challenging period.

Reach out to support groups, friends, or family who can lend a sympathetic ear to help you process. Below are a few support groups and resources that may be helpful to you:

Friendship Pet-Loss Support

Group at Friendship Hospital for Animals. Learn coping strategies and develop ways to honor your pet's life.

2nd Tuesday of Every Month
Virtual 7 pm-8 pm -- (access by computer or telephone via Zoom)

Last Saturday of Every Month In person 11 am-12 pm- Friendship Second Floor Lobby

Pet loss DC provides pet loss grief support in DC, VA, MD, and CO

The Pet Compassion Careline

provides 24/7 grief support with trained pet grief counselors.

Lap of Love offers veterinary hospice and in-home care services while also extending access to grief courses and one-on-one support sessions with a grief counselor that spans for 50 minutes.

The Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement

offers free chat rooms and services that connect you with pet bereavement counselors.

Tips for helping your other pets.

After losing a housemate, your survivor pet may display indications of severe distress. Regardless of the duration they shared together, housemates form a strong emotional connection. The absence of their companion can be highly distressing for your surviving pet.



Since they can't articulate the grief they're enduring, they might exhibit signs of restlessness, reduced appetite, increased attention-seeking, and heightened anxiety. Support your survivor pet by showering them with additional TLC. Dedicate a portion of your daily schedule to engage in activities like playtime, walks, and cuddles. If they have a reduced appetite, consider sitting with them during meals or incorporating a small food supplement into their regular diet. Avoid introducing significant dietary alterations, as this may lead to stomach upset. It might also be worthwhile to explore the use of **pheromone diffusers** to promote your pet's relaxation and well-being.

With heartfelt sympathy for the loss of your beloved pet, please know that we are here for you during this difficult time.