



# Pet Loss & Grief Support

*Resources Compiled by the Humane Advocacy Department*

“Each person’s grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they all have a need to be witnessed. That doesn’t mean needing someone to try to lessen it or reframe it for them. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss, without trying to point out the silver lining.” – David Kessler

This packet is designed to be accessed online as there are several hyperlinks in which you can click on.

Use the table of contents below to pick the section you want to go to.

Each section is separate so you can skip sections if you’d like.

\*We are not therapists or licensed counselors; these resources have been compiled as reference material for you.\*

## Contents

How Will I Know When It Is Time to Say Goodbye? .....	3
All Encompassing Quality of Life & Euthanasia Guide .....	4
Information on Euthanasia .....	5
End of Life Care – The Final Days/Weeks.....	6
Anticipatory Grief – Before Losing Your Pet .....	7
Grief & Coping With Loss – After You Lose Your Pet .....	8
Grief .....	8
Coping .....	8
Supporting Somebody You Know Who is Grieving .....	8
Hot Lines & Chat Rooms .....	9
Pet Loss Support Groups.....	9
Books.....	9
What To Do When You Need More Support .....	9
Crisis Support Services .....	9
California Therapists Specializing in Pet Loss & Grief .....	10
Explaining Pet Loss to Youth & Adolescents .....	11
Online Resources .....	11
Books.....	11
Companion Animals Grief .....	12
Euthanasia in Special Circumstances (Behavioral Euthanasia) .....	13
Remembering and Memorializing Your Pet.....	14

## How Will I Know When It Is Time to Say Goodbye?

There are several tools that exist online for you to utilize in order to track, assess, and understand your pet's quality of life better. Picking one is ultimately up to you. Each is different.

Here are the few we recommend most:

- [How Will I Know? Assessing Quality of Life and Making Difficult Decision for Your Pet](#) (Online Booklet, 10 pages) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Knowing When It's Time](#) (Video, 34 minutes)
- [How Will I Know When It's Time](#) (Blog Post)
- [Making the Decision to Euthanize Your Pet](#) (Online Document, 1 page)
- [Grey Muzzle Quality of Life Calculator](#) (iPhone or Android mobile app)
  - “Many pet parents struggle with knowing when it is time to say goodbye to their faithful friend or when their pet's quality of life is still okay. There are a variety of tools to help you... Download this application from the app store and create your pet's profile. Then everyday mark if your pet had a good day, bad day or neutral day.”
- Lap of Love Pet [Quality of Life Scale](#) & [Daily Assessment](#)
- Dr. Mary Gardner's [Cat Life Quality Assessment](#) & [Cat Caregiver Assessment](#)
- Dr. Mary Gardner's [Dog Life Quality Assessment](#) & [Dog Caregiver Assessment](#)

# All Encompassing Quality of Life & Euthanasia Guide

- Pet Cloud's [Quality of Life and Euthanasia Guide](#) (Online booklet, 15 pages)
  - Sections Include:
    - [What is Euthanasia?](#)
    - [Anticipatory Grief/Bereavement](#)
    - [Your Decision](#)
    - [Treasuring Your Time](#)
    - [Quality of Life](#)
      - Breathing
      - Pain
      - Mobility
      - Cleanliness
      - Eating & Drinking
      - Happiness & Social Ability
      - How are you doing?
      - Finances
      - Quality of Life Charts
      - Three-Things Activity
      - What to Expect During The Procedure
      - Should I be Present During the Procedure?
      - Scheduling The Euthanasia
      - Aftercare Resources

## Information on Euthanasia

- [The Compassion of Euthanasia](#) (Video, 17 minutes)
- [‘Saying Good-Bye To Your Beloved Pet: A Supportive Guide Through Euthanasia’](#) Dana Durrance, M.A (Online booklet, 25 pages)
- [‘What to Expect if You Choose to Be With Your Pet During Euthanasia’](#) Laurel Lagoni, M.S. (Online Document, 2 pages)

## End of Life Care – The Final Days/Weeks

- [End of Life Care](#) (Blog Post)
  - “Coping with the impending loss of a pet is one of the most difficult experiences a pet parent will face. Whether your furry friend is approaching his golden years or has been diagnosed with a terminal illness, it’s important to calmly guide the end-of-life experience and minimize any discomfort or distress. As your pet’s health declines, you may elect to care for your pet at home—with the supervision of a veterinarian—or you may decide to end his suffering with euthanasia.” Read on to find out how to help make your pet’s final days peaceful and dignified.
- [How Can I Make My Pet’s Last Day Special](#) (Blog Post)
  - “Losing a loved one is never easy. Knowing your pet is nearing the end is bittersweet, because the grieving process often begins with a poor prognosis, but that also gives you time to create a special goodbye for your beloved companion. Celebrate a lifetime of love by treasuring your pet’s final moments and filling them with comfort and peace. Letting go is hard, especially if your pet suddenly falls incurably ill, but creating a plan gives you some control over this heartbreaking event. Consider the following tips to make your pet’s final days special.”
- [The Experience of Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)

## Anticipatory Grief – Before Losing Your Pet

- [Plan Ahead for Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)
  - It's not easy to face loss. Yet, experts say the process may be a bit easier to bear when you make key decisions before your pet dies. It's not easy to face loss. Yet, experts say the process may be a bit easier to bear when you make key decisions before your pet dies."
- [Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement](#) (Chat Room for Support)
  - As of February 2023, this chat room is open every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 8:00 – 9:30pm Eastern Time. Anybody experiencing anticipatory grief is always welcome to attend any regular chat as well. Check website for details.
- [How Will I Know? Assessing Quality of Life and Making Difficult Decision for Your Pet](#) (Online Booklet, 10 pages) \*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\*
- [How To Deal with Anticipatory Grief for a Terminal Ill or Elderly Pet](#) (Blog Post)
- [The Experience of Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)

# Grief & Coping With Loss – After You Lose Your Pet

## Grief

- [Honoring the Bond: What is Grief](#) (Video, 1 minute)
- [Stages of Grieving](#) (Blog Post)
- [Coping With Losing a Pet](#) (Blog Post)
- [How Animals Grieve](#) (Blog Post)
- [Grieving Through the Holidays](#) (Video, 4 minutes)
- [Pet Cloud Grief Release Program](#) (Workshop, \$200 - \$300)
- [Pet Cloud Grief Support Guide](#) (Online booklet, 32 pages)
  - Sections Include:
    - Grief is Normal and Natural
    - Human-Animal Bond
    - What to Expect in Grief
      - Physical Signs
      - Mental Signs
      - Social Signs
    - Isolation and Depression
    - Guilt
    - Resolution and Closure
    - Taking Care of Ourselves
    - Talking to Children about Grief
    - Journaling Activity
    - Relationship Timeline Activity
- [Self Care During the Grieving Process](#) (Blog Post)

## Coping

- [Coping With the Loss of a Pet: A Guide for Adults, Children and Surviving Animals](#) (Online Booklet, 12 pages) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Honoring the Bond: It's Okay to Feel a Variety of Emotions at the End of a Pet's Life](#) (Video, 1 minute)
- [Coping With the Death of Your Pet](#) – How to take care of yourself, your family, and other pets when you've had to say goodbye (Blog Post)
- [The Experience of Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)
- [Coping Through Holidays and Special Event Days](#) (Blog Post)

## Supporting Somebody You Know Who is Grieving

- [What to Say When Someone Loses a Pet](#) – Comforting Words of Condolences to Express Your Sympathy (Blog Post)
- [How to Support Your Grieving Friends](#)
  - [Supporting Your Grieving Friends](#) (Video, 4 minutes)
  - [Being Present for your Grieving Friends](#) (Video, 13 minutes)



## Hot Lines & Chat Rooms

- Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine – Pet Loss Support Hotline 607-218-7457
- Lap of Love – Pet Loss & Bereavement Support Hotline 855-532-5683
- Tufts University – Pet Loss Support Hotline 508-839-7966
- Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement [Chat Room](#)

## Pet Loss Support Groups

- [Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement](#) – Directory of Services & Service Providers Locally & Online
- [PetCloud Free Pet Loss Support Groups](#)
- [Lap of Love Pet Loss and Grief Resources](#) – Support Groups and Counseling
- [Best Friends Animal Loss and Support Groups and Resources](#)

## Books

- [Sacred Sendoffs: An Animal Chaplain's Advice for Surviving Animal Loss, Making Life Meaningful, and Healing the Planet](#) 5/5 stars on Amazon (\$15)
- [The Pet Loss Companion: Healing Advice from Family Therapists Who Lead Pet Loss Groups](#) \*HA Staff Recommended\* 5/5 stars on Amazon (\$15)
- [When Your Pet Dies: A Guide to Mourning, Remembering and Healing](#) \*HA Staff Recommended\* 4.5/5 stars on Amazon (\$10)
- [It's never long enough: A practical guide to caring for your geriatric dog](#) 5/5 stars on Amazon (\$50)
- [Geriatric Dog Health & Care Journal: A complete toolkit for the geriatric dog caregiver \(Old Dog Care and Pet Loss\)](#) 5/5 stars on Amazon (\$20)
- [Nine Lives Are Not Enough: A Practical Guide to Caring for Your Geriatric Cat \(Old Cat Care and Pet Loss\)](#) 5/5 stars on Amazon (\$40)
- [Geriatric Cat Health & Care Journal: A complete toolkit for the geriatric cat caregiver \(Old Cat Care and Pet Loss\)](#) 4.5/5 stars on Amazon (\$20)
- [Pet Loss Suggested Reading List](#) – Additional List of 'Making Health Care and/or End-of-Life Decisions for Your Companion Animal', 'Books/Audio Recordings'

## What To Do When You Need More Support

### Crisis Support Services

- [Crisis Support Text Line](#) – Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Volunteer Crisis Counselor
  - Text, Chat, and WhatsApp Options to connect
- [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - We can all help prevent suicide. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

If you are looking for resources to address thoughts about suicide, self-harming, or harming others, contact [800-273-8255](tel:800-273-8255) or visit <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

Call 911 or your local emergency services for help if you are experiencing a mental health emergency.

#### California Therapists Specializing in Pet Loss & Grief

- [Marina Resa, MA LMFT](#)
- [Janice Lee Shapiro, LMFT](#)
- [Briana Messerschmidt, MS LMFT](#)

# Explaining Pet Loss to Youth & Adolescents

## Online Resources

- [Helping Children Cope with the Serious Illness or Death of a Companion Animal](#) (Online booklet, 6 pages) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Children and Pet Loss – Age Related Developmental Stages](#) (Blog Post)
- [Helping Children With Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)
- [Six Family Friendly Ways to Help Kids Grieve After Pet Loss](#) (Blog Post)
- [Coping With the Loss of a Pet: A Guide for Adults, Children and Surviving Animals](#) (Online Booklet, 12 pages) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Talking To Children About Pet Loss](#) (Video, 47 minutes)
- [Grief Resources for Children and Pets](#) (Blog Post)
- [“I Miss My Pet” Pet Loss Workbook](#) (Online booklet, 30 pages)

## Books

- [The Invisible Leash: A Story Celebrating Love After the Loss of a Pet \(The Invisible String\)](#) \*HA Staff Recommended\*
  - Reading Ages: 3-9 years; Grade Levels: Preschool – 3.
  - 5/5 stars on Amazon: (~\$10-20)
- [The Rainbow Bridge: A Visit to Pet Paradise](#)
  - Reading Age: 4-9 years; Grade Levels: 3 – 7
  - 4.5/5 stars on Amazon (~\$10)
- [Until We Meet Again: From Grief to Hope After Losing a Pet](#)
  - Reading Age: 6-8 years; Grade Levels: 1-2
  - 4.5/5 stars on Amazon (\$20)

## Companion Animals Grief

- [Coping With the Loss of a Pet: A Guide for Adults, Children and Surviving Animals](#) (Online Booklet, 12 pages) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Do Companion Animals Grieve?](#) (Online Booklet, 2 pages)
- [How Animals Grieve](#) (Blog Post)
- [Reactions of Other Pets in the Home](#) (Blog Post)

## Euthanasia in Special Circumstances (Behavioral Euthanasia)

- [Honoring the Bond: Behavioral Grief](#) (Video, 2 minutes)
- [Euthanasia for Behavioral Issues: A complicated and difficult decision](#) (Online Booklet, 3 pages)
- [Caring for and Making Choices About Animals with Behavioral Issues](#) (Online Booklet, 4 pages)

## Remembering and Memorializing Your Pet

- [Ways to Memorialize Your Pet](#) (Blog Post) **\*\*HA Team Recommended Read\*\***
- [Memorializing Your Pet](#) (Blog Post)
- [Seven Heartfelt Ways to Memorialize Your Pet](#) (Blog Post)
- [Ten Unique Ideas for Memorializing Your Dog](#) (Blog Post)
- [Beginning to Heal Resources](#) (Blog Post)