

## GENTLE REMINDERS WHILE GRIEVING

### DEAFENING SILENCE

The silence in your home after the death of a pet will be excruciatingly loud.

While the presence of even our smallest animal friends takes up physical space, many times the presence is felt with our senses. Acknowledging this will assist in preparing for the many emotions.

### THE BOND WITH YOUR BELOVED PET

The relationship shared with your pet is special. There will be people who think you should not mourn for your pet or who will tell you that you should not be grieving as hard. Your grief is normal and the relationship you shared needs to be mourned.

### GRIEF CAN'T BE RANKED

Sometimes our heads get in the way of our heart's desire to mourn by trying to justify our emotions. Some people will want to rank their grief. While this is normal, your grief is yours alone and deserves care and attention.



24/7 grief support is available to all through our Pet Compassion Careline. Call to reach a grief counselor today.

**1 (855) 245-8214**

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**24/7 GRIEF SUPPORT  
AVAILABLE TO ALL**

**Losing a pet is extremely painful -  
you don't have to face this alone.**

The trained Pet Compassion Careline grief counselors understand how impactful the loss of a beloved pet can be and are available to offer complimentary support and counsel.

## UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

INFORMATION & RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



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## WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is a healthy and normal response to loss. Attempting to suppress grief can actually prolong the grieving process. Grief can feel like being lost. The familiar things we relied on to live each day are gone. It is also common to replay the last moments of your beloved pet's life repeatedly in your mind.

No one can provide a magic cure for grief. When grief is new, it is common to feel exhausted: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Changes in appetite, sleeping patterns, or health are frequently reported. Those who are grieving often describe feelings of being out of control, isolation, and loneliness. Things that seemed so important before may now seem trivial. Others may experience a sense of "life isn't fair" or being in a tunnel or fog. All of these feelings are normal and part of the grieving process, which follows no organized plan or schedule. Don't be surprised if you start to feel better, and then feel as if a wave has hit you. There will be ups and downs in the process of grieving.

The purpose of healthy grieving is not to "get over" the death of a loved one, but to integrate the experience of a pet's death into present life. In this process, it is not unusual for certain memories of your beloved pet to become blurred. This does not mean that you are forgetting your best friend or that your love is diminished. The truth is, you will ALWAYS love this very special member of your family. The hope is that as time goes on, the feelings of sadness will become less difficult. Eventually, the hope is that you will be able to talk and even smile or laugh at good memories.

## STAGES OF GRIEF

### DENIAL

This stage helps you to survive loss. Your world can feel meaningless and become overwhelming. Denial is a common defense mechanism that helps to numb our emotions.

### ANGER

The emotion we are most accustomed managing is anger and it is a necessary part of the healing process. It is important that you allow yourself to truly feel this stage in order to move through it.

### BARGAINING

A normal reaction to feeling helpless is to bargain - often followed by thoughts of "if only". You may believe you could have done something differently to change the final outcome.

### DEPRESSION

This is typically when you will really start to feel the impact of your loss. You may begin to retreat by being less social or less vocal about what you are going through.

### ACCEPTANCE

Accepting your loss doesn't always mean you are back to normal or "okay". This stage is about accepting your loss, recognizing this new reality is a permanent one, and knowing you will be okay.



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## SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

- Crying
- Anxiety and fear
- Difficulty sleeping
- Frustration
- Loss of focus
- Abnormal behavior
- Questioning the purpose of life
- Fatigue
- Weight loss/gain
- Digestive issues
- Headaches
- Lowered immunity
- Aches and pains

***Consider speaking to your doctor or a mental health professional if these symptoms continue for more than a year after your beloved pet's passing.***