

# Grieving A Pet Loss

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It is hard to describe how much our pets can mean to us. For many, a pet is a meaningful companion, a furry family member, a best friend, an emotional support.

## **A pet is a consistent part of our lives.**

For however long they are with us, they are part of our daily routines and are therapeutic in nature. Many pets have helped us through life's ups and downs by gifting us with quiet support, warm snuggles, unconditional love, or even just their unique personalities that make us smile and laugh despite whatever else in life we are dealing with. They can provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose, helping us to have the motivation to get up and care for them. The loss of a pet is the hardest part about pet ownership, and is a significant loss.

## **Some things we may experience when grieving a pet loss:**

We feel responsible in some way(s).

We may feel guilt about care decision-making at their end of life.

We feel intense sadness, loneliness, or disbelief.

We may be shocked or disturbed by how quiet the house is after they're gone.

We may struggle with reliving their end of life mentally.

We may hear insensitive or hurtful things from others, like "get over it" or "just get another pet".

## **We are so sorry for the death of your beloved pet.**

The emotions you share with your pet are real, and the grief you are experiencing for your pet is valid. There may be instances of feeling judged about your grief, or not feeling allowed to grieve your pet. We encourage you to tend to your grief in ways that feel most helpful to you. Please be patient and tolerant as you move through your grief.

## **Take gentle care of YOU during this time.**

- Look after yourself – tend to your emotional and physical health needs
- Be with people who understand – talk about your grief and your pet
- Distractions can help (but don't always avoid grief)
- Capture memories and reminisce when you're ready
- Memorialize Your Pet - Create something that honors them
- Take your time when you consider getting another animal – only you can determine the right timing for you



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