

Coping with Pet Loss

9. Will my other pets grieve?

Pets observe every change in a household, and are bound to notice the absence of a companion. Pets often form strong attachments to one another, and the survivor of such a pair may seem to grieve for its companion. Cats grieve for dogs, and dogs for cats.

You may need to give your surviving pets a lot of extra attention and love to help them through this period. Remember that, if you are going to introduce a new pet, your surviving pets may not accept the newcomer right away, but new bonds will grow in time. Meanwhile, the love of your surviving pets can be wonderfully healing for your own grief.

10. Should I get a new pet right away?

Generally, the answer is no. One needs time to work through grief and loss before attempting to build a relationship with a new pet. If your emotions are still in turmoil, you may resent a new pet for trying to "take the place" of the old-for what you really want is your old pet back. When you are ready, select an animal with whom you can build another long, loving relationship—because this is what having a pet is all about.

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Questions anyone who has ever faced the Loss of a Beloved Family member asks themselves.

- Am I crazy to hurt so much?
- What Can I Expect to Feel?
- What can I do about my feelings?
- Who can I talk to?
- When is the right time to euthanize a pet?
- Should I stay during euthanasia?
- What do I do next?
- What should I tell my children?
- Will my other pets grieve?
- Should I get a new pet right away?



A range of options

Just as you have made decisions all their lives, about food, Vet Care, Holiday Care—in the final stages of their life—you need options which best suit you.

In this difficult time you need reassurance that this decision is right for all the family.

Pets At Rest, Memorial Gardens
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Pets At Rest Memorial Gardens

Caring for Pets and their people —by providing a full pet funeral service

CARE, COMFORT, CHOICES

Coping with Pet Loss

It's okay and natural
to Grieve
When you lose a very
special family
member.



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Ten Tips on Coping with Pet Loss

by Moira Anderson Allen, M.Ed.

Anyone who considers a pet a beloved friend, companion, or family member knows the intense pain that accompanies the loss of that friend. Following are some tips on coping with that grief, and with the difficult decisions one faces upon the loss of a pet.



Following are some tips on coping with that grief, and with the difficult decisions one faces upon the loss of a pet.

1. Am I crazy to hurt so much?

Intense grief over the loss of a pet is normal and natural. Don't let anyone tell you that it's silly, crazy, or overly sentimental to grieve!

People who don't understand the pet/owner bond may not understand your pain. All that matters, however, is how you feel. Don't let others dictate your feelings: They are valid, and may be extremely painful. But remember, you are not alone: Thousands of pet owners have gone through the same feelings.

2. What Can I Expect to Feel?

Different people experience grief in different ways. Besides your sorrow and loss, you may also experience the following emotions:

Guilt may occur if you feel responsible for your pet's death-the "if only I had been more careful" syndrome. Denial makes it difficult to accept that your pet is really gone. Anger may be directed at the illness that killed your pet, the driver of the speeding car, the veterinarian who "failed" to save its life. Sometimes it is justified, but when carried to extremes, it distracts you from the important task of resolving your grief.

Depression is a natural consequence of grief but can leave you powerless to cope with your feelings. Extreme depression robs you of motivation and energy, causing you to dwell upon your sorrow.

3. What can I do about my feelings?

The most important step you can take is to be honest about your feelings. Don't deny your pain, or your feelings of anger and guilt. Only by examining and coming to terms with your feelings can you begin to work through them.

Some find it helpful to express their feelings and memories in poems, stories, or letters to the pet. Other strategies including rearranging your schedule to fill in the times you would have spent with your pet; preparing a memorial such as a photo collage; and talking to others about your loss.

4. Who can I talk to?

If your family or friends love pets, they'll understand what you're going through. Don't hide your feelings in a misguided effort to appear strong and calm! Working through your feelings with another person is one of the best ways to put them in perspective and find ways to handle them. Find someone you can talk to about how much the pet meant to you and how much you miss it-someone you feel comfortable crying and grieving with.

5. When is the right time to euthanize a pet?



At Pets At Rest, there is always someone for you to talk to.

Visit the gardens, Or the web site for Comfort,Care, Support

Your vet is the best judge of your pet's physical condition; however, you are the best judge of the quality of your pet's daily life.

Nothing can make this decision an easy or painless one, but it is truly the final act of love that you can make for your pet.

6. Should I stay during euthanasia?

Many feel this is the ultimate gesture of love and comfort you can offer your pet. Some feel relief and comfort themselves by staying: However, this can be traumatic, and you must ask yourself honestly whether you will be able to handle it. Uncontrolled emotions and tears-though natural-are likely to upset your pet.

7. What do I do next?

When a pet dies, you must choose how to handle its remains. If you prefer a more formal option, several are available. To many, a pet cemetery provides a sense of dignity, security, and permanence. Owners appreciate the serene surroundings and care of the gravesite.

Cremation is an option that allows you to handle your pet's remains in a variety of ways: bury them (even in the city), scatter them in a favorite location, place them in a columbarium, or even keep them with you in a decorative urn (of which a wide variety are available).

It's also wise to make such plans in advance, rather than hurriedly in the midst of grief.

8. What should I tell my children?

You are the best judge of how much information your children can handle about death and the loss of their pet.

Always feel free to call or visit Pets At Rest, we understand your great loss.

Talking about Pet Loss is the right thing to do- whatever stage of life they are currently enjoying.