

Sources of Support

Hotlines

University of California	800-565-1526
Cornell University	607-253-3932
University of Illinois	877-394-2273
Iowa State University	888-478-7574
Ohio State University	614-292-1283
Tufts University	508-839-7966
Virginia Tech	540-231-8038
Washington State	509-335-5704
ASPCA Pet Loss	212-876-7700

Websites

www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu
web.vet.cornell.edu/public/petloss/saeuth.htm
www.petloss.com/muns.htm
www.americanhumane.org
www.peteducation.com
www.pet-loss.net
www.Peggyhaymes.com (Triad area counselor)

Additional Reading

Cat Heaven by C Rylant, 1997
Dog Heaven by C. Rylant, 1995
When a Pet Dies by F. Rogers, 1988

The Rainbow Bridge

Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.

When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by.

The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; His eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

Author unknown...

Coping With The Loss Of Your Beloved Companion



CAROLINA VETERINARY SPECIALISTS

Charlotte
2225 Township Rd
(704) 504-9608

Greensboro
501 Nicholas Rd
(336) 632-0605

Huntersville
12117 Statesville Rd
(704) 949-1100

Winston Salem
1600 Hanes Mall Blvd
(336) 896-0902

10 Ways To Cope With The Loss of Your Beloved Pet

1. Give yourself permission to grieve because you have experienced a tremendous loss. For many of us, beloved pets are our "children"--companions who give unconditional love.

2. Realize that you are not going crazy when you grieve deeply for a pet. It is normal when you have sustained a great loss to feel debilitated for awhile. So take all the time you need to heal.

3. Know that guilt often accompanies grief, especially over pets. Because your pet couldn't tell you that she was sick, you may feel guilty about not taking her to the vet sooner. Or you may feel responsible if your pet was killed after escaping from the yard. Guilt--which suggests that you could have done something--can mask the fear of being powerless to keep your pet alive.

4. Find a special way to say good-bye to your pet. Often, pet loss happens so quickly that you don't have time to say the things you wanted. But you can do so even after a pet has died. Write a letter to your pet. Have a family ritual celebrating her life and acknowledging her death. Or look at a photo of your pet and tell her all you would have said if there had been time.

5. Pick a meaningful way to memorialize your pet. You can do a scrapbook, plant a tree, write a poem, or donate money in your pet's name to a charity for animals.

6. If you decide to get another pet, do so only when you are ready. You will never be able to replace the pet you have lost; it takes time to invest emotionally in another.

7. Find at least one other person you can openly talk to about your loss. Share your feelings without censorship. Realize that family members or other loved ones grieve differently or may be in too much pain to support you.

8. Be especially good to yourself, because it takes lots of energy to grieve. Get extra rest. Eat a healthful diet. Drink lots of water. Avoid caffeine. Exercise moderately. Deeply relax through massage or meditation. For sleep problems, consider taking non-addictive herbal drops or capsules from a health food store.

9. Find creative expression for your feelings:
*Do journaling. Write down whatever you are feeling without criticism.
*Work out your feelings in clay. Be mindful of what you've created because it will have special meaning for you.
*Use pastels, oils, charcoal, crayons, pen, or pencil to draw your feelings.
*Make a collage that captures your feelings in pictures.

10. Try to do at least one thing each day that brings you joy. Fly a kite, take a walk, garden, watch the sunset, listen to music, or see a funny movie. Allow yourself to laugh! Laughter releases the body's natural opiates and gives you a respite from pain.