

Northern Oaks

Bird & Animal Hospital

Pet Loss and Grief

It is completely normal to grieve the loss of your pet as you would any family member. It may be all-encompassing or the emotions may come over you in waves. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Typically, there are certain stages of grief. They are shock/denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. You may arrive at each stage in any order and possibly even more than once. There is not a specific timeline for dealing with the loss and you may face a lack of understanding from well meaning friends who have never had a deep relationship with an animal and just do not understand the depth of feeling you are experiencing over the loss. If you feel a lack of compassion or the grief is simply too great, you should seek compassionate support. There are many sources available. Look into the following for further direction:

- Humane Societies may have a support group
- Professional counseling
- Family/Friends
- Pastoral Counseling
- Hotlines:
 - UC Davis 916.752.4200 (weekdays 6:30 pm-9:30 pm)
 - Cornell University 607.253.3932 (Tues, Weds, Thurs 6:00 pm-9:00 pm)
 - University of Florida/Gainesville 904.392.4700 (weekdays 7:00 pm-9:00pm)
 - The Ohio State Listening Line 614.292.1823 (weekdays 6:30 pm-9:30 pm, Sat, Sun 10:00 am-4:00 pm)
 - Chicago Veterinary Medical Association 708.603.3994 (Leave Message)
 - Association for Pet Loss and Bereavement (www.aplb.org)
 - Pet Loss Support (www.petloss.com)

Books for Adults

Anderson, M., *Coping with Sorrow on the Loss of Your Pet*, 2nd ed. Peregrine Press, 1996.

Harris, E., *Pet Loss: A Spiritual Guide*. Llewellyn Pub, 1997.

Kowalski, G., *Goodbye Friend: Healing Wisdom for Anyone Who Has Ever Lost a Pet*. Stillpoint Pub. 1997.

Steinbach, D., *Loving, Caring, Letting Go without Guilt: A Compassionate but Straightforward Look at Pet Euthanasia*. Willow Bend Pub. 1997.

Books for Children

Morehead, D., *A special Place for Charlie: A Child's Companion Through Pet Loss*. Partners in Publishing, LLC 1996.

Rylant, C., *Dog Heaven*. Blue Sky Press. 1995.

Rylant, C., *Cat Heaven*. Blue Sky Press. 1997.

Viorst, J., *The tenth good Thing About Barney*. Atheneum, 1971.

Another good source of general information is www.veterinarypartner.com