

## Pet Loss Support

Pet loss and grief counselling services -  
Kathy Landsman  
www.griefsupportauckland.co.nz  
Phone: 0274 847 189

Celebrant Service - Pet Rites  
Vivienne Hill  
Petrites@xtra.co.nz  
027 419 6395

Celebrating Life Journey's  
Corinne Henrikson  
(09) 827 - 0470

Pets on the net may also be able to help.  
www.petsonthenet.co.nz

Handing your pet over for cremation is an act of trust. We strongly advise you to use, or to ensure your Vet Practice uses, a NZPCA member.

### References:

This brochure has been produced by the NZPCA from supporting reference sources such as Goodbye, Friend - Gary Kowalski  
Pet loss - Herbert A. Niebrug  
Losing a Pet - Jane Matthews

### Nationwide Membership

This brochure is produced by the New Zealand Pet Crematorium Association (NZPCA)

The NZPCA is currently setting standards for cremation of pets such that owners can understand what service is being provided. All our members adhere to a strict code of ethics and conduct to ensure that high professional standards are achieved and members provide a genuine, personal and reliable service that will offer peace of mind to the bereaved.

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To find your nearest cremation facility please visit  
[www.nzpetca.org.nz](http://www.nzpetca.org.nz)  
or telephone our National helpline  
0508 273 636



Freephone: 0508 273636

[www.nzpetca.org.nz](http://www.nzpetca.org.nz)



## Coping with Pet Bereavement



## Your best friend

Friend and companion; our pets can mean so much in our lives and many of us are unprepared for the extent of our grief when we lose them.



Rather than deny our feelings it is important to recognise what our pet has meant to us. Not only has their love for us been unconditional, they have given us a chance to love them back.

Our pets tolerate our moods and our bad days. They let us be ourselves and do not waver in the depth of their love.

## Difficult feelings

Feelings are nature's way of enabling us to deal with loss and heal from loss. Accept that you will have good days and bad days, and remember that sooner or later - as with any bereavement - time will begin its healing process.

We are very good at insisting "life must go on". Taking time out is a way of acknowledging to yourself the depth of your loss.



Try not to dwell on comments made by well-meaning friends and colleagues suggesting for example, that "it's only a pet" or "just get another one".

## Grief

We all experience loss differently; there are no rules about what you feel or how you should react. Besides feelings of sadness you may experience any or all of the following emotions:

**Shock and Denial:** The reality of death has not yet been accepted by the bereaved. He or she feels stunned and bewildered - as if everything is "unreal."

**Anger:** The grief stricken person often lashes out at family, friends, themselves, God, the veterinarian or the world in general. Bereaved people will also experience feelings of guilt or fear during this stage.

**Bargaining:** In this stage, the bereaved asks for a deal or reward from either God, the veterinarian or the clergy. Comments like: "I'll go to Church every day, if only my pet will come back to me," are common.

**Depression:** Depression occurs as a reaction to the changed way of life created by the loss. The bereaved person feels intensely sad, hopeless, drained and helpless. The pet is missed and thought about constantly.

**Acceptance:** Acceptance comes when the changes brought upon the person by the loss are stabilised into a new lifestyle.



## Children and pet loss

Children react to the death of a pet in many different ways, depending on their age and what else may be going on in their lives.



If they are already struggling, perhaps with school or friendships, the loss of a pet's unconditional love and approval can trigger some powerful emotions. But there are no rights and wrongs when it comes to loss. Some children are not deeply involved with their pets, or may appear more curious than upset. Teenagers, especially, may struggle to show or share any emotion, but may still need understanding and reassurance from the adults around them.

## Your choice

You may already have made the decision about whether your pet is to be buried or cremated.

If you rent your property or move frequently, cremation gives you more choice about how to handle your pet's remains.

Whatever you opt for, do allow yourself the opportunity to commemorate your pet, celebrating the love, joy and friendship your pet brought to your life.

## More pets at home?

If you have another pet at home it could be grieving for the companion it has lost. It may need the company and friendship as much as you do. Remember you will not be replacing the lost pet, but extending your love to another pet who may need a loving, caring home.