

Dealing with Loss

Many of Pets As Therapy's visits are to older and frail people to whom many volunteers become very attached. Dealing with the loss of a resident, patient or client may be one of the hardest and saddest parts of your visiting.

- The Guidelines for Establishments ask establishments to let their volunteer know when a resident or patient has died. However, it is unfortunate that sometimes you only know about it when you arrive for your usual visit.
- If you have a Voluntary Area Co-ordinator, they may be able to help you through this difficult time. In addition, any of the Pets As Therapy staff can offer support.
- If you were very attached to the person, you may need some time to grieve for them. Please let us know if you would like to take some time out from visiting for a while.
- There are a number of support groups who can assist you in dealing with loss, or your own GP may be able to refer you to a counsellor.
- The Charity produces Bereavement Guidelines for volunteers – contact Reception on, Tel: 01494 569130 or email: reception@petsastherapy.org for a copy.

Dealing with the loss of your own pet

- The impact of pet loss is often underestimated.
- You may experience the same or similar feelings of grieving as losing a friend or family member, particularly if you were closely attached to your pet or they were a very special animal.
- Please do contact us if you feel we can help in any way. Please let us know that you have lost your pet, so that we can let the establishment know on your behalf, if necessary.
- Many volunteers like to include a photograph and text about their PAT Dog or PAT Cat and share their memories on the 'Precious Memories' section of the Pets As Therapy website.
- If you would like to talk to someone about your experience of pet loss, contact the Pet Bereavement Support Service at the Blue Cross. They provide a telephone support line and an email service.
- The support line is open seven days a week 8:30am - 8:30pm with an answer-phone outside these hours. To make contact, call the free-phone number 0800 096 6606 to find contact details of your nearest available telephone be-friender. The first call is free; thereafter calls are charged at local rates wherever possible. Support by email is also available, pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk.

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