

## Dealing with Loss

### Losing someone you visit

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 Head Office staff can offer support. Call us on 01865 671440 or email: [reception@petsastherapy.org](mailto:reception@petsastherapy.org)
- If you were very attached to the person, you may need some time to grieve for them. Please let us and your Voluntary Area Co-ordinator 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 loss of your own pet

- The impact of pet loss is often underestimated.
- You may experience the same or similar feelings of grief as losing a friend or family member, particularly as so many of us are very closely attached to our pets – our very special animals are often as close as family.
- Please do contact us if you feel we can help in any way and do let us know if you have lost your pet, so that we can let the establishment know on your behalf, if necessary.
- 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](mailto:pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk) .