

## Pet Grief and Loss Group

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You are welcome to join the new online Pet Grief and Loss Group.

The group is facilitated by a trained Veterinary Social Worker and provides a safe and supportive place to help with your healing. Meet others who relate to what you are going through and provide mutual understanding and hope to help with the journey of grief.

This is an open group and you are welcome to attend as few or many times as you like.

When:

Where:

Cost:

## Individual counselling

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When:

Where:

Cost:

T: Call Wendy on 0475 627 020

E: [wendy@merakiservices.com.au](mailto:wendy@merakiservices.com.au)

W: [merakiservices.com.au](http://merakiservices.com.au)

Facebook: VetSocialWork

## Further help

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### Pets and People

Counsellors trained in grief/loss of companion animals (Qld)

T: 1300 431 450 (counselling rates apply)

W: <http://petsandpeople.com.au>

### Animal Welfare League Australia

W: <https://www.awla.org.au/home-news/learning-to-cope-with-pet-grief>

### Passing Paws Pet Cremations

Offer monthly empathy group (Perth)

W: <http://passingpaws.com.au/services>

### NALAG

Centre for Loss and Grief (NSW)

W: [www.nalag.org.au](http://www.nalag.org.au)

### Support Lines

<b>Lifeline</b>	13 11 14
<b>Suicide Call Back Service</b>	1300 659 467
<b>RuralLink</b>	1800 552 002
<b>The Samaritans</b>	135 247
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	1300 22 4636

Meraki Social Work  
Services

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Veterinary Social Worker

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Wendy Till  
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E-mail: [wendy@merakiservices.com.au](mailto:wendy@merakiservices.com.au)



# Pet Loss

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*Healing after a loss*





## A Unique Loss

When we lose a pet, we lose a friend and a member of our family. Animals who share our lives provide a special kind of companionship, unconditional love and support. The grief we feel can be as intense, and sometimes more distressing, than losing a human friend or family member.

This leaflet helps to explain the unique experience of the loss of a companion animal and the ways you can take care of yourself and your loved ones during those rough spots of grief.

## Is my grief normal?

When your pet dies you may feel a range of complicated feelings. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, no specific time frame, and our grief experiences are individual and unique.

**Disenfranchised grief** describes a type of loss that is minimised by society. Sometimes people try to help with our grief by telling us not to be troubled, such as "Oscar was just a dog and you can always get another one". It is important to remember what your pet meant to you and there is no reason to feel that your grief is not justified. You may reply with "yes, but he was my best friend".

Feelings of shock, denial, searching, yearning, disorientation, guilt, anger are all common responses, and you may feel your eating and sleeping patterns change. You may not feel as social as normal and find yourself thinking about your pet a lot of the time.

### Euthanasia

If you made the decision to euthanise your pet because it was suffering, you may be asking if you did the right thing, or if your pet suffered.

### Missing / stolen pets

If your pet is missing there may be uncertainty around whether your pet is dead or alive.

There may still be hope of your pet being found or returned and this can add an extra dimension to your grief.

## Strategies to help

- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Talking to a friend or professional counsellor who understands the human-animal bond can help express, and make sense of your feelings.
- Attend a Pet Loss Group.
- Remember and honour your pet— light a candle, frame a picture of your pet, organise a memorial or burial service, plant a tree or flowers, purchase a plaque/statue, write a journal/scrapbooking, or donate items/money to a local pet shelter.
- Be kind to yourself. Let friends and colleagues know how you are feeling and take some time-out if possible. Grieving is an important part of healing the sense of loss.
- If you feel grief is significantly impacting on your day to day functioning over an extended period of time, talk with your GP about sourcing extra support.

