

Supporting Children

- Use honest, age-appropriate language – avoid euphemisms like "went to sleep"
- Let them ask questions and answer simply and truthfully
- Validate their feelings – sadness, confusion, and anger are all normal
- Children often process grief through play and imagination, join them when you can
- Watch for changes in behaviours and seek support if needed

Supporting Partners & Friends

- Everyone grieves differently – avoid comparing or judging timelines
- Simply being present is often more helpful than finding the right words
- Acknowledge their loss directly: "I know how much they meant to you"
- Offer practical help rather than waiting to be asked
- Check in after the first few weeks/months – grief doesn't end

Supporting Surviving Pets

Animals form deep bonds with one another and often experience their own form of grief. You may notice your surviving pet searching the house, eating less, acting unusually clingy, or becoming quiet and withdrawn.

It's never too early or too late to get support.

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222, 58th Ave SW, Calgary AB (By appointment only)



At Two Rivers Therapy, our therapist understands the complexities that come with grieving your companion. It's normal for profound loss to activate other emotional trauma's and challenge current values that you may have. Therapy can be a safe place to explore what is coming up for you without judgement.

Professional Support when you need it:

- In-Person and Virtual Therapy options
- Individual and Couples over 18
- Compassionate Grief Focused Support
- Direct Billing available for most insurers

Grieving Your Companion

A Gentle Guide for Hard Days



"What cannot be said will be wept." – Sappho

You deserve a safe space to honor your bond, process your grief, and find your way forward.



Losing a pet is a profound loss. The bond you shared was real, deep, and irreplaceable. However you are feeling right now is okay. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and there is no timeline you need to follow.

What You May Experience

- Deep sadness and waves of tears
- Guilt about decisions made
- Anger or frustration
- Feeling the loss of routine
- Physical symptoms like fatigue or heaviness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sensing your pet's presence
- Relief (especially after illness) followed by guilt
- Feeling misunderstood by others
- Loneliness in a quieter home

Go Slowly

Grief does not run on a schedule, give yourself permission to feel whatever comes without judgment.

- Unpredictability is a normal part of the process, and some days will naturally feel heavier than others.
- Grief is physically and emotionally exhausting, listen to what you need and slow down when you can.
- Simple moments—a warm drink, a gentle walk, or quiet space—can help keep you grounded.
- You do not need to "move on" from the bond you shared; you carry that love with you as you navigate your new normal.

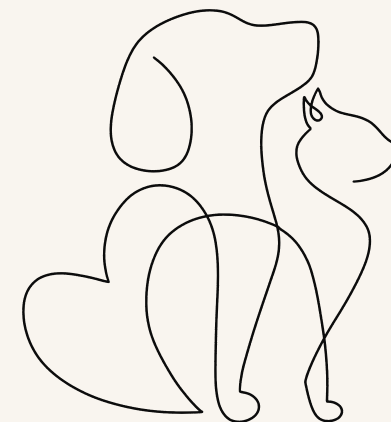


Managing Guilt

Guilt is a very common reaction to loss, often reflecting how deeply you cared rather than anything you did wrong. When "what-ifs" arise, try to gently remind yourself that you made decisions out of love using the best information you had at the time.

"Until one has loved an animal a part of one's soul remains unawakened."

— Anatole France



Setting Boundaries

Pet loss can often be misunderstood by others, well-meaning people may unintentionally minimize your pain with dismissive comments.

- It is okay to say "I'm not ready to talk about it yet"
- You can step away from conversations that feel dismissive
- Protect your energy — decline social obligations if you need to
- You do not owe anyone an explanation for your grief