

SUPPORTING INTERSPECIES HOSPICE



Judy
Liu Ramsey
Heart to Heart

*When a person goes into a hospital or hospice location, the animal becomes confused about what happened, especially when they don't return.

THE EXPERIENCE:

- They know their person is ill or injured
- Their primary concern is care of the person
- The bond creates mutual anxiety & worry

THE STRATEGY:

- Tell the animal what is happening - they understand
- Find out what the animal needs/wants physically, emotionally & mentally
- Let the animal know daily what will happen for person and for them

*The person worries about the animal and may not have arranged for care in their absence, especially if onset was sudden. Some animals may spend time without care until the person's caregivers think about the animal.

THE EXPERIENCE:

- The patient misses daily contact with their animal companion. Daily rituals are displaced for both.
- The animal's quality of life changes, sometimes drastically
- Both are hoping caregivers/family will "do the right thing" with regard to animal care & possible post-mortem placement

THE STRATEGY:

- Give the patient photos of their animal companion, with updates on care/activity
- While of sound mind, conversation with family members/friends regarding who will care for the animal per the person's wishes and resources
- Legal directive may be drawn up, including timing
- Direct the personal representative to find a sanctuary and assure ongoing care

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*When death occurs, whether at home or in a facility, the animal is frequently taken from their home and surrendered to a shelter. One minute they were in familiar surroundings with a person they loved and the next minute they are in a cage with chaos around them, noise, and unfamiliar surroundings and people.

THE EXPERIENCE:

- The animal is in familiar surroundings with a person they loved, and they suddenly find themselves kept separate from their person, or put into a crate in a chaotic environment with unfamiliar noises, surroundings and people.
- The animal doesn't know what happened to their person
- The animal doesn't know what will happen to themselves
- The animal is waiting to be euthanized

THE STRATEGY:

- To the extent possible, allow the animal and the person to be together in some way
- If the person leaves home, tell the animal what has happened to their person
- Acknowledge their grief
- Let the animal know they will have a life change
- Set up a Durable Power of Attorney with the personal representative who knows the person's wishes for the animal. It should include authorization and financial assurance for veterinary care
- Ideally, include the animal's care plan in the will, including
 - *funds available for ongoing care
 - *who will care for the animal & location if not with the family
 - *name a successor if the desired person is unable
- Providing a resource list and alternatives to euthanasia can be the responsibility of the personal representative

***OR**, the animal is taken by a family member/friend or adopted. There are behavioral issues because of the unfamiliarity of surroundings, people they may not know, and no acknowledgement of the animal's grief process or trauma of displacement.

THE EXPERIENCE:

- Animals are sentient beings who grieve loss, particularly of those they were bonded to
- The trauma of separation, particularly when sudden, causes PTSD and chronic anxiety/vigilance, with side effects of aggression, depression, withdrawal
- It takes from 3-9 months for most animals to adjust to their new surroundings

THE STRATEGY:

- Ownership transfer must be clear so veterinary care may be provided
- Let the animal know what is happening
- Offer information about the animal's adjustment period, grief and PTSD to patients and adopting families provides support and understanding that helps the animal adjust well

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CONCLUSION

- ❖ Create a space for the animal to accept the reality of its loss.
 - *Validate their grief
 - *Provide the ability to communicate messages for their person before death through interspecies communication

- ❖ Help the animal to process the pain of grief providing-
 - *Support for quality of life
 - *Clear communication of what will happen to them
 - * Opportunity to companion their person as is possible

- ❖ Help the animal rehabilitate
 - *Restore as much of daily routine & quality of life as possible
 - *Allow patient/compassionate adjustment to new living conditions.

- ❖ Help the animal find enduring connections with their new family/caregiver through communication and interspecies counseling

ADDING ANIMALS TO YOUR END-OF-LIFE CARE SERVICES

A. The Team

- The Human Client, the More-than-human Client
- Client's personal representative
- Veterinarian, ideally the animal's own
- Animal communicator
- Animal chaplain if needed for client & family members adopting

B. Personal Expertise/Resources

- Optional training in animal communication and/or species behavior
- Knowledge of animal resources in the area
 - Shelters, sanctuaries, rescue groups/species rescues
 - Trainers
 - Veterinarians
 - Animal communicators
- Use of modalities for animal anxiety & grief
 - Flower essences
 - Essential oils
 - Animal Reiki
 - Grief Support groups that focus on animal loss
- Knowledge of spiritual aspects of animals
- Knowledge of animal rights

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A SHORT LIST OF RESOURCES FOR ANIMAL COMPANIONS & THEIR PEOPLE

- * **Judy Liu Ramsey, Certified Animal Chaplain**, <https://JudyRamsey.net>
 - Telepathic and shamanic animal communication
 - Shamanic healing for animals addressing spiritual aspects of relationship and support for PTSD
 - Animal chaplaincy providing support, ceremony, consultation/communication during hospice, illness, recovery
 - Support and resources for empathy fatigue
 - Interspecies counseling
 - List of interspecies counselors & shamanic practitioners that work with animals
 - Trainings in animal communication, shamanic practice & interspecies counseling
- ***Penelope Smith**, <https://animaltalk.net>
 - List of professional animal communicators
- ***Animal chaplains**, <https://findanimalchaplain.com>
 - List of certified animal chaplains
- ***The Flower Essence Society**, <https://fesflowers.com>
 - GRIEF RELIEF
 - POST-TRAUMA STABILIZER
 - ANIMAL RELIEF FORMULA
 - FIVE FLOWER FORMULA
 - COMPASSIONATE CAREGIVER
- ***Reverend Ginny Mikita, J.D./Animal Chaplain**, <https://animalblessings.love>
 - Legal advice
 - Chaplaincy work & support
 - Language or assistance with directives and wills
- ***Miranda Wimbush, CPDT-KA, AHT, FDM, The Mindful Canine**, <https://www.mindfulcanine.ca>
 - Support for grief & loss in her Heart Connection program
 - Holistic canine coach
 - Summits, conferences & education about relationships between humans and dogs
- ***Holistic Actions**, <https://holisticactions.com>
 - Holistic veterinary advice for pet parents on hundreds of topics, including spiritual aspects of care
- ***University of Vermont, Companion Animal End of Life Doula Training**, <https://learn.uvm.edu/program/companion-animal-end-of-life-doula-professional-certificate-online/>

ARTICLE FOR DOULAS

Provocation from the Field: A Multispecies Doula Approach to Death and Dying, by Kathryn Gillespie, University of Kentucky, Animal Studies Journal, Vol. 9, No. 1, Article 2, 2020, <https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1467&context=asj>

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