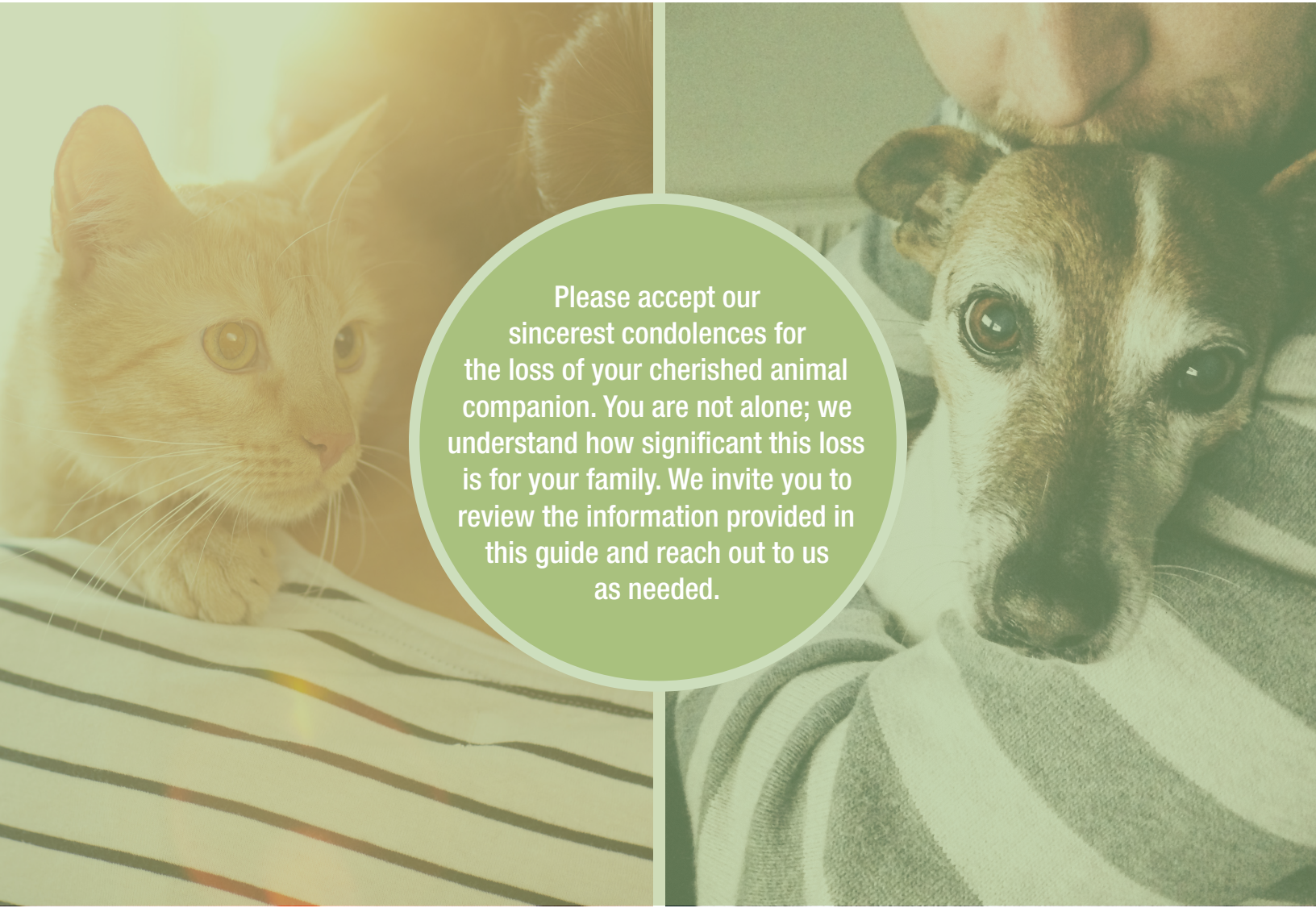


PET LOSS & GRIEF SUPPORT GUIDE



Please accept our sincerest condolences for the loss of your cherished animal companion. You are not alone; we understand how significant this loss is for your family. We invite you to review the information provided in this guide and reach out to us as needed.

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

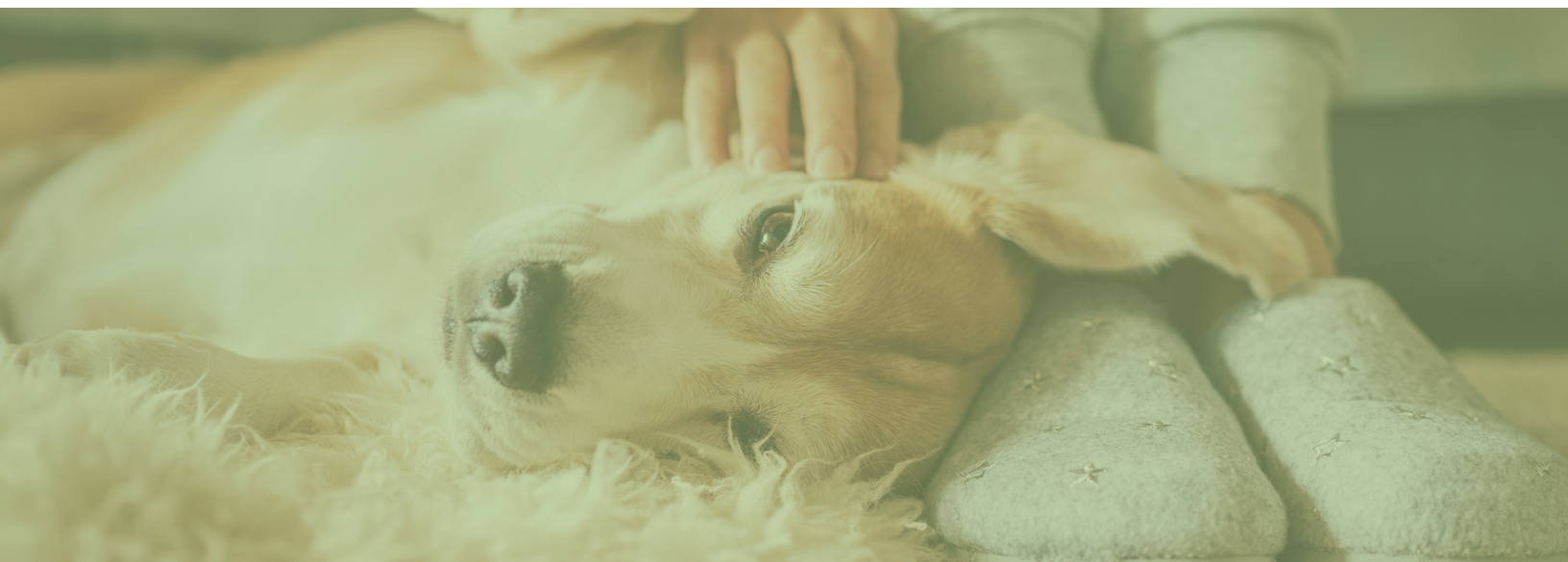
Grief is the response we have to loss, particularly profound when a strong bond or affection was present, such as with an animal. This response is not only emotional, but also can be physical, cognitive, behavioral, social, cultural, spiritual and/or philosophical in nature.

Subtypes of Grief

- ♥ **Disenfranchised:** Also known as hidden grief. Refers to any grief that is often minimized, invalidated, or unacknowledged by social norms, such as pet loss.
- ♥ **Complicated:** Strong grief that goes beyond at least six months and has other underlying factors (i.e., other losses during the same time, trauma, etc.). This type of grief can be tough to handle with everyday life and may need the help of a professional.
- ♥ **Re-Grief:** The theory that we feel all our past losses with new losses; it can come up suddenly and feel very intense. Pet loss, for instance, can bring up not only previous pets, but other losses within the family.

Emotional & Physical Manifestations

- ♥ Shock or Numbness
- ♥ Denial
- ♥ Anger
- ♥ Guilt
- ♥ Relief
- ♥ Anxiety or Panic
- ♥ Depression, Sadness or Loneliness
- ♥ Confusion or Difficulty Concentrating
- ♥ Sleep Disturbances
- ♥ Appetite Changes
- ♥ Muscle Tension
- ♥ Headaches or Stomach Aches



BILL OF RIGHTS FOR GRIEVING ANIMAL LOVERS

You have the right to:

- ♥ **Feel the pain of grief when the bonds with our pets are broken.**

The bonds we have with our companion animals are deep and strong; the pain we feel when those bonds are broken is real and worthy of our grief.

- ♥ **To feel shocked and overwhelmed by the intensity of our grief.**

The grief we feel at this loss can be far more intense than we ever expected, no different from that of losing another special family member or cherished friend.

- ♥ **To understand our grief reactions, feelings and behaviors as normal.**

Grief is a natural, spontaneous response to the loss of a significant relationship.

- ♥ **To express our grief in our own unique way, within our own time frame.**

The bonds we have with our companion animals are deep and strong; the pain we feel when those bonds are broken is real and worthy of our grief.

- ♥ **To have our grief recognized by others as significant and legitimate.**

The grief we feel at this loss can be far more intense than we ever expected, no different from that of losing another special family member or cherished friend.

- ♥ **To feel supported by others in our grief.**

Grief is a natural, spontaneous response to the loss of a significant relationship.

- ♥ **To honor the memory of our pets in whatever way we see fit.**

The bonds we have with our companion animals are deep and strong; the pain we feel when those bonds are broken is real and worthy of our grief.

*Information adapted from:
National Humane Society.Org*

GROWING FROM LOSS

Self-care is always an important practice to follow, but perhaps even more imperative during this trying time. Take care of yourself by following good nutrition, practicing a healthy sleep schedule, moving your body, and finding ways to relax that you enjoy. Be kind to yourself during this time. Honor your feelings. Allow sadness and joy to occur at the same time. Reach out to any friends or family that understand your bond and grief. Ask one of our friendly Veterinary Social Workers to talk.

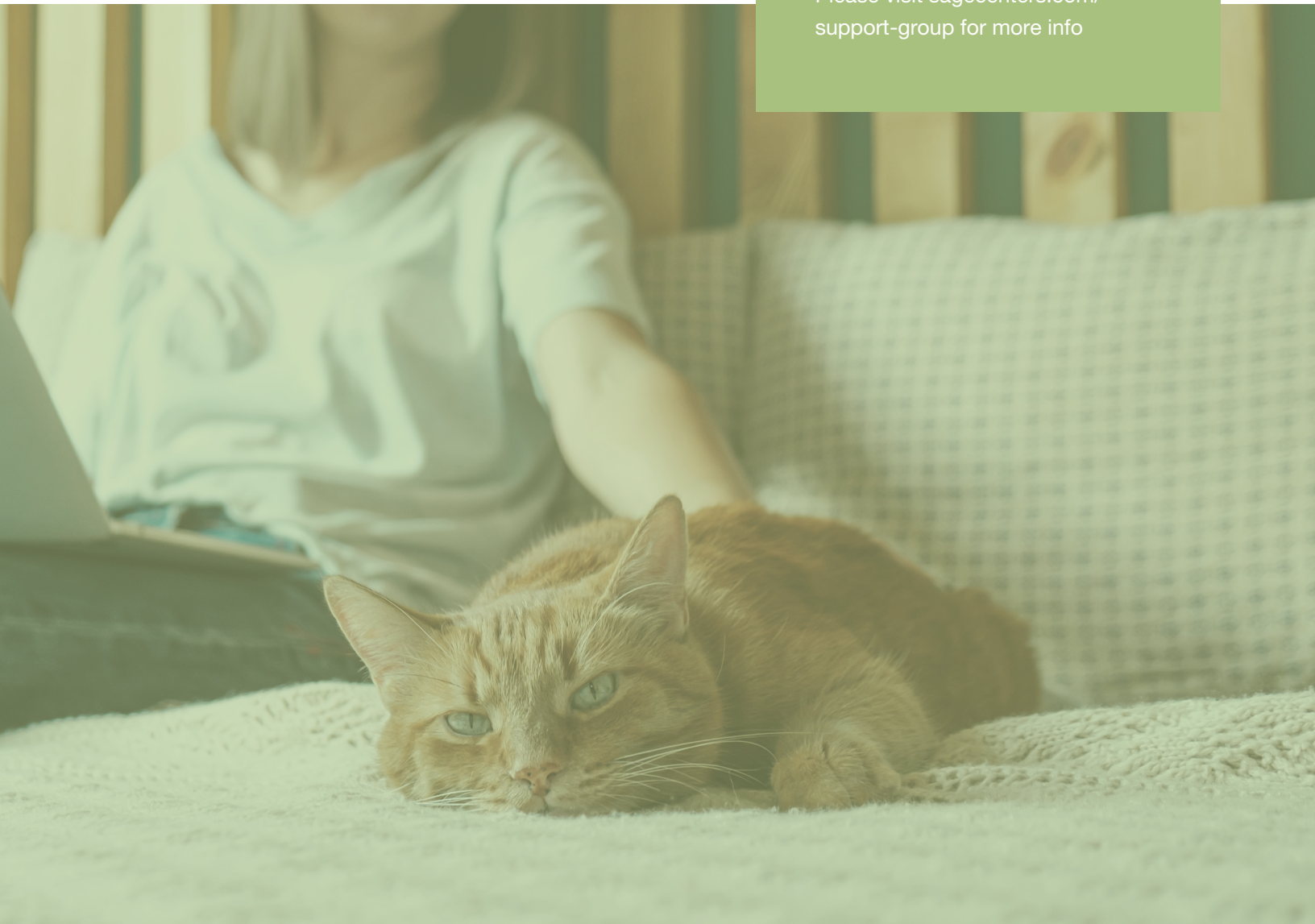


Pet Loss Support Group

We understand how difficult it is to say goodbye to a beloved, companion animal. We would like to offer you the support and help you may need.

We provide a pet loss support group at no charge.

Please visit [sagecenters.com/support-group](https://www.sagecenters.com/support-group) for more info



How Memorialization Can Help

Memorialization of a lost loved one is a deeply personal and individual process that can help start healing. It can be seen as a form of catharsis that can aid us in coming to terms with the loss. Further, memorial events in particular can allow for a time and place for friends and family to receive more in-depth support.

Memorial Activities

- ♥ Turn pet tags into necklaces
- ♥ Paint your own urn or garden rocks
- ♥ Plant a tree
- ♥ Photo book
- ♥ Shadow Box
- ♥ Tattoos

Memorial Jewelry

Various retailers, such as in-store jewelry artisans and online crafters on spaces like Etsy, offer customizable jewelry and keychains. You can take a photo of your pet's paw/nose print, upload them to the retailer of your choosing, and within a few weeks have a very personal memory of your friend that you can carry with you.

Create a Space

Create a space to honor your pet, to let yourself mourn and heal openly. This can be a garden space where you have buried/spread your pet's cremains, a quiet place in your home with photos of your pet, or even a small table with your pet's keepsakes on display.



**SAGE COMPASSION
FOR ANIMALS**
A CAUSE FOR PAWS

Give in Honor of Your Pet

Make a gift in memory of your beloved companion animal that will help animals and their families who are in need today. SAGE Compassion For Animals depends upon the generosity of donors to help in our work to prevent suffering and euthanasia by providing financial assistance to families with pets in crisis. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, any tax-deductible donation is truly appreciated and can be a beautiful way to honor your loved one's memory. To make a tribute donation and for more information, visit sagec4a.org

RESOURCES



Pet Compassion Careline

855.245.8214, 24/7 Grief Support



[aplb.org](https://www.aplb.org)

Association for Pet Loss & Bereavement



[pet-loss.net](https://www.pet-loss.net)

Pet Loss Support Page by Moira Anderson, M. Ed.



[rainbowbridge.com](https://www.rainbowbridge.com)

A virtual memorial home and grief support community



[lapoflove.com/pet-loss-support-resources](https://www.lapoflove.com/pet-loss-support-resources)

Informational resources to help you cope

“A person can learn a lot from a dog, even a loopy one like ours. Marley taught me about living each day with unbridled exuberance and joy, about seizing the moment and following your heart. He taught me to appreciate the simple things—a walk in the woods, a fresh snowfall, a nap in a shaft of winter sunlight. And as he grew old and achy, he taught me about optimism in the face of adversity. Mostly, he taught me about friendship and selflessness and, above all else, unwavering loyalty.”

— *John Grogan, Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog*

Golden Eyes

Carol Walker

When golden eyes no longer glow,
and we both know it's time to go,
Don't look at me with eyes so sad,
but think of better times we had,
When sunlight did upon us shine,
and happy days were yours and mine,
And through the grass we both did run,
and on our backs we felt the sun,
Think not of this dark final hour,
think not of when our lives turned sour,
Think not of hopelessness and pain,
but think of joy and laugh again,
For in that final act of love,
you released me to heaven above,
Where finally from pain I'm free,
where one day you will join with me,
Where together again we will rejoice,
and you and I as with one voice,
Will in perfect harmony sing,
of the joy and pain that love can bring,
And remember me just as I will,
always think of you until,
At last, again I see your face,
grieve not, I am in a better place.

They Will Not Go Quietly

Unknown

They will not go quietly,
the pets who've shared our lives.
In subtle ways they let us know
their spirit still survives.
Old habits still can make us think
we hear them at the door,
Or step back when we drop
a tasty morsel on the floor.
Our feet still go around the place
the food dish used to be,
And, sometimes, coming home at night,
we miss them terribly.
And although time may bring new friends
and a new food dish to fill,
That one place in our hearts
belongs to them...
and always will.

