



## *IT IS OKAY TO LOVE AND MISS YOUR PET*

The bond we form with our pets is a unique and personal one and so is the grief we feel when they die. Each of us experience and cope with loss just a little differently. Besides your sorrow and loss, you may also experience the following emotions:

~Guilt may occur. It is pointless and often erroneous to burden yourself with guilt for the illness or accident that claimed your pet's life and only makes it more difficult to resolve your grief.

~Denial makes it difficult to accept that your pet is really gone. It's hard to imagine that your pet won't greet you when you come home or that it doesn't need its evening meal. Some find it hard to get a new pet for fear of being "disloyal" to the old friend.

~Anger may be directed at the illness or accident but when carried to extremes, it distracts you from the important task of resolving your grief.

~Depression is a natural consequence of grief, but can leave you powerless to cope with your feelings. Extreme depression robs you of motivation and energy, causing you to dwell upon your sorrow.

The most important step you can take is to be honest about your feelings. Don't deny your pain, or your feelings of anger and guilt. You have a right to feel pain and grief. Someone you loved has died, and you feel alone and bereaved. You have a right to feel anger and guilt as well.

Some find it helpful to express their feelings and memories in poems, stories or letters. Other strategies include rearranging your schedule to fill in the times you would have spent with your pet; preparing a memorial such as a photo collage or and talking to others about your loss.

If you are experiencing a difficult time dealing with the loss of your beloved pet or just need someone to talk to, please call or contact the Pet Loss & Grief Support Hotlines listed below. They understand.

~ASPCA Pet Loss Hotline [877-474-3310](tel:877-474-3310)

~San Diego Humane Society Pet Loss Support Group [619-299-7012](tel:619-299-7012)

~<http://pawsintograce.com/resources/grief-resources/>

~[http://www.aplb.org/support/support\\_groups/california.php](http://www.aplb.org/support/support_groups/california.php)

~<http://www.pet-loss.net/resources/CA.shtml>