

Who provides counseling services?

Services are provided by Derek Bergeron, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist employed by Texas A&M Student Counseling Service who works in the College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Bergeron is board certified in Counseling Psychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology. Since services are provided in a teaching hospital, professional students in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program and/or students in mental health disciplines on the Texas A&M campus may also be involved at times as a part of their training.

When can I utilize services?

Availability of services will depend on Dr. Bergeron's schedule. Generally speaking, individual counseling will be available on weekdays, typically during afternoons and evenings. Services are not available during weekends. Counseling will occur either within the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital or in the CVM Satellite office.

What services are offered?

Individual grief counseling is offered for individuals who have experienced the loss of a companion animal, or who are facing potential loss. This counseling is short term in nature, and is intended to only address grief issues. Additionally, a pet loss support group is an option that may be available depending on current levels of interest.

What should I expect?

If you are interested in individual counseling, contact Dr. Bergeron and a time will be agreed upon for a first meeting. At your first session you will complete brief paperwork that reviews the nature of services and gathers some basic information. The first session will also focus on reviewing your current status, general history, and present goals. If it appears that you would be better served by utilizing other referral services for longer term issues, Dr. Bergeron will assist you in exploring potential referral sources.

In regards to the Pet Loss support group, the aim is to provide a time for individuals experiencing grief due to the loss of a companion animal to come together and support each other, express their grief, and honor the bond they shared. The hope is that the group will help in facilitating the grieving process and make adjustment to the loss of a companion animal less distressing. Individuals participating in the group can expect to share stories and memories, describe their feelings in response to their loss, and offer advice and feedback to other members of the group. Active participation in the group is encouraged, along with showing respect to other members of the group and allowing time for others to share their own personal experiences.

How do I arrange an appointment?

If you are interested in utilizing counseling services, please contact Dr. Bergeron either through email or phone to set up an appointment:

Email: DBergeron@cvm.tamu.edu

Phone: 979.845.0806



Grief Counseling Services

Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital - Texas A&M University

*Services provided by:
Derek Bergeron, Ph.D., ABPP,
through the Student Counseling
Service satellite office within the
Texas A&M
College of Veterinary Medicine*

CVM Satellite Office:
Room 060 CVM Tunnel
Phone: (979) 845-0806
Email: DBergeron@cvm.tamu.edu
vetmed.tamu.edu/scs

Other Resources

If you are interested in other resources, the following listing suggests some potential options:

Web Sites and Chat Rooms

www.humananimalbondtrust.org
www.argusinstitute.colostate.edu
www.aplb.org
www.petloss.com
www.deltasociety.com
www.pet-loss.net
www.petvets.com/petloss/

Pet Loss Support Hotline Numbers

1. Tufts University
Monday-Thursday, 6-9 PM ET
508-839-7966
2. Michigan State University
Tuesday-Thursday, 6:30-9:30PM ET
517-432-2696
3. University of Florida
352-294-4430
4. Washington State University
Mon-Thur: 7pm-9pm, Saturday: 1-3pm
1-866-266-8635
5. Iams Pet Loss Support Center
888-332-7738
6. The American Society for The
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Stephanie LaFarge, Ph.D.
877-GRIEF-10 (877-474-3310)
7. SPCA of Texas- 214.461.5131



Helpful Readings on Pet Loss

Especially for Children...

Liss-Levinson, N. and Phinney Baskette, M., **Remembering My Pet**, SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2007
Rogers, F., **When a Pet Dies**, Putnam Publishing, 1988
Rylant, C., **Cat Heaven**, Scholastic, Inc., Blue Sky Press, 1997
Rylant, C., **Dog Heaven**, Scholastic, Inc., Blue Sky Press, 1995
Viorst, J., **The Tenth Good Thing About Barney**, Antheneum, 1972
White, E., **Charlottes's Web**, Harper & Row, 1952

Reading for Adults...

Anderson, M., **Coping With Sorrow on the Loss of Your Pet**, Peregrine Press, 1987
Fitzgerald, H., **The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide**, Fireside, 1992
Kay, T., **To Dance With the White Dog**, Washington Square Press, 1990
Kay, W., et al, **Pet Loss and Human Bereavement**, Iowa State University Press, 1984
McElroy, S., **Animals as Teachers & Healers**, NewSage Press, 1996
Montgomery, M. and Montgomery, H., **A Final Act of Caring: Ending the Life of An Animal Friend**, Montgomery Press, 1993
Neiburg, H., et al, **Pet Loss: A Thoughtful Guide for Adults and Children**, Harper and Row, 1982
Sife, Wallace, **The Loss of a Pet: A Guide to Coping With the Grieving Process When a Pet Dies**, MacMillan Pub. Howell Book House, 1998
Traisman, E., **My Personal Pet Remembrance Journal**, Direct Book Services, (800) 776-2665, 1996

Audio CD

Haymes, P., Lautemann, S., **Healing from the Loss of a Pet**, www.petcaring.com

E-Book

Shanahan, Niki, **The Rainbow Bridge: Pet Loss is Heaven's Gain**, 2006, www.eternalanimals.com

Benefits and Risks of Counseling

Ordinarily, we expect counseling will have a positive impact on clients and their concerns. Benefits may include decreased depression, confusion, anger, or anxiety; grief feeling less overwhelming; and increased acceptance of your loss. In regards to risks, clients may experience some temporary discomfort when addressing difficult issues such as the powerful feelings associated with grief in counseling, although generally people feel better in the long run when they address these issues.

Is it abnormal to mourn for a pet?

No. Humans and animals can develop intense bonds. This is natural, as the relationship between humans and animals is mutually beneficial. Numerous studies have documented the physical and mental health benefits that companion animals can offer. Grief is a natural response to any significant loss; therefore, it is very common for humans to experience strong grief reactions to the death of a beloved companion animal.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations will be made in accordance with the law.

If you require ADA accommodations, please indicate what your needs are at the time you register for services or five business days before the program you plan to attend.