



Pet Hospice – The Art and Science

This workshop provides support for people in providing hospice care for pets by becoming familiar with the options that can provide additional years of quality living as well as ease your pet through the natural process of death or euthanasia.

Being there for our animal as it completes the life cycle can be one of the most challenging, and at the same time most rewarding experiences in pet ownership. Many of us are not familiar with the process or how to best support an animal going through it. There is great importance in understanding the processes of euthanasia as well as dying naturally and is best to be learned before an actual hospice situation arises.

When a pet becomes ill we bring them for Veterinary Care with two opposing challenges:

1. There can be a quick recommendation to euthanize when a pet when their condition is either considered terminal, care for the animal seems to become too involved, or the only treatment option presented to the animal's owner are financially not affordable.
2. Possible treatment recommendations in which side effects can outweigh the positive effects for an animal with measures that are based on the doctor and/or owner not wanting to "give up" when realistically an animal is past the point of possible recovery, is suffering and has no quality of life.

Many pets belonging to caring owners are euthanized before the time for hospice even arises, months and years before their life force would run out. This can be hard to imagine for many of us as we love our animals so deeply, and it certainly is in contrast to how we care for our human family members. Whatever the situation might be, oftentimes a decision to euthanize is said to be done to prevent or release an animal from suffering.

None of us wants an animal to suffer. We will look at both sides of the paradigm, taking a closer look at what we categorize as suffering, and what the most common reasons are to euthanize, including looking at options of how we could support an animal to continue to live a happy and content life.

Topics we cover are:

- *Integrating our personal experiences on death and dying*
- *Easing pain- conventional and holistic options*
- *Foundational principles in human hospice care*
- *Building a network of support*
- *Creating an environment conducive to a peaceful transition*
- *The Dying Process: stages of dissolution and support options*