Professional Support Offers Comfort Through the Loss of a Pet

Veterinary social workers are rare, but experts are working to expand pet grief services

The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine

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NEWS PACKAGE

SUGGESTED TEASE

THE LOSS OF A PET IS HEARTBREAKING, BUT A FEW VETERINARY HOSPITALS ARE WORKING TO EASE THE BURDEN OF END-OF-LIFE CARE.

COMING UP, THE PUSH FOR MORE HOSPITALS TO OFFER PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR THOSE GOING THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT PROCESS.

ANCHOR LEAD

PETS ARE A PART OF THE FAMILY, AND WHEN IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE, LOSING THEM CAN COME WITH A LOT OF GRIEF AND HEARTACHE.

YET VETERINARY HOSPITALS DON'T OFTEN HAVE RESOURCES TO HELP PEOPLE THROUGH A LOSS THE WAY HUMAN HOSPITALS DO.

BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS ON THE WORK BEING DONE TO CHANGE THAT, AND HOW SUPPORT SERVICES CAN HELP PET OWNERS COPE AND REMEMBER THE BOND THEY SHARED WITH THEIR PET.

(PACKAGE START) -----

CG: Courtesy: The Ohio State
University College of Veterinary
Medicine

:00 - :03

Shots of Sally looking at photos of Max

CG: Sally Malaret Grieved the loss of her dog

Shot of Sally looking at scrapbook

Shots of Joelle talking to pet owner

CG: Joelle Nielsen, MSW, LSW

(Nats - Sound):02

SALLY MALARET (mal-uh-RETT) AND HER
THERAPY DOG MAX BRIGHTENED THE DAYS OF
THOSE GOING THROUGH HARD TIMES, BUT WHEN
IT WAS TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO MAX, IT WAS
SALLY WHO NEEDED HELP. :09

"I was just having a hard time dealing with losing my dog, and not being really ready." :06

SHE TALKED TO JOELLE NIELSEN AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY VETERINARY MEDICAL CENTER, A SOCIAL WORKER WHO'S DEDICATED TO HELPING PET OWNERS MAKE END-OF-LIFE DECISIONS AND COPE WITH THE LOSS OF THEIR ANIMALS. :10

"Whether they've lost a human family or friend, or an

Producers and Reporters: To download scripts, video and photos go to:

Ohio State University Veterinary animal family or friend, very often the feelings, the **Medical Center** emotions are the same.":10 NIELSEN LEADS A PROGRAM CALLED HONORING Shots of Joelle talking to pet THE BOND¹, ONE OF ONLY ABOUT THIRTY IN NORTH owner AMERICA THAT STAFFS A FULL-TIME SOCIAL WORKER, SOMETHING NIELSON IS WORKING TO CHANGE: :09 "I would love the standard to be that is just like in Joelle Nielsen (CG'd earlier) human hospitals. That in every specialty medical center, veterinary medical center, there would be at least one social worker.":16 UNTIL THAT TIME, NEILSEN SAYS THERE ARE Shot of Joelle talking to pet SOME THINGS THAT CAN HELP YOU THROUGH THE owner LOSS OF A BELOVED PET. FIRST, TRY NOT TO COMPARE YOUR EXPERIENCE **Graphic: Don't Compare your** TO OTHERS.:07 **Experience to Others** Joelle Nielsen (CG'd earlier) "Probably one of the biggest things is knowing that it is normal. And the grief process, unfortunately, does not have a standard timeline.":04 Graphic: Find an Outlet for your AND WHILE TALKING ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS MAY **Emotions** NOT BE FOR EVERYONE. IT'S IMPORTANT TO FIND AN OUTLET FOR YOUR EMOTIONS.:05 "Make a scrapbook. Make a memory box. There's all Joelle Nielsen (CG'd earlier) kinds of memorial things that people can do.":07 IF THE SADNESS DOESN'T EASE WITH TIME, **Graphic: Ask for Help** DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.: 03 "It's okay to grieve. It's okay to cry. It's okay to be Sally Maleret (CG'd earlier) sad.":05 SEEKING THAT HELP IS SOMETHING THAT Shots of Sally and Fiona at HELPED SALLY OPEN HER HEART TO FIONA.:03 nursing home (Nats - Greeting woman in nursing home) :02 WHOSE CONTINUING THE GOOD WORK SHE BEGAN WITH MAX.:02 "I feel like I'm paying forward for all of my friends that Sally Maleret (CG'd earlier) supported me when I lost Max. And so it's my opportunity to give back to others and to help them.":09 Shots of Sally and Fiona at AT THE OHIO STATE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY

nursing home

MEDICINE, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING.
:03

HONORING THE BOND ALSO SUPPORTS
VETERINARIANS AND VET STUDENTS DEAL WITH
THE STRESS OF LOSING ANIMALS ON THE JOB.
NIELSEN IS WORKING WITH OTHERS TO
ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
VETERINARY SOCIAL WORKERS TO FORMALIZE AND
PROFESSIONALIZE THE FIELD OF VETERINARY
SOCIAL WORK.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Share it! Suggested tweet:

Losing a pet comes with a lot of grief and heartache, and experts at <u>@OSUVetCollege</u> are working to expand programs at vet hospitals to help pet owners through these difficult times. http://bit.ly/33ADhAk

Suggested post:

Whether it's helping with end-of-life decisions or just lending a sympathetic ear, a social worker at The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center helps pet owners through difficult times. Now experts are working to expand these valuable support services to more veterinary hospitals to help people cope and remember their bond with their beloved pet. http://bit.ly/33ADhAk

EXTRA BITES

Nielsen says not enough vet hospitals employ a social worker: "There's about 30 hospitals or medical centers, specialty medical centers within the United States and Canada that actually employ at least one social worker.

And if you think of that, that's not really a lot.":17

CG: Joelle Nielsen Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center Nielsen says animal hospitals don't have the same resources as human hospitals:

"When you go to a human hospital, there is an expectation that you will have the ability to see a social worker and a chaplain if you want. That those services are available. That is not the expectation in veterinary medicine, and my hope is that it becomes that." :21

Nielsen describes the thanks she gets from pet owners: "I will get thank you cards, I will get emails from clients that just say, 'Thank you so much for being there, for recognizing there's grief."":12

Sally says more vet hospitals should have social workers: "I think it should be at more veterinary medical centers because there's so many people that have such a hard time grieving, and they feel like they have no one to talk to." :13

CG: Sally Malaret
Grieved the loss of her dog

Sally says she now volunteers with Honoring the Bond:: "I volunteer at the Memorial service every year. We set up a table for group support. I take scrapbooks to show people that you can remember your dog or cat or your horse.":11

Sally says Joelle provided support she didn't know she needed: "It was obvious he was not getting better. And Dr. McCool said, 'We're going to send someone in to talk to you.' And I thought, honestly, I don't need to talk to anyone. I know I'm saying goodbye to my dog." :11

References

¹Honoring the Bond Support for Animal Owners, **The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center.** Online:

https://vet.osu.edu/vmc/companion/our-services/honoring-bond-support-animal-owners

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