



# Pet Grief & Loss:

*When Will I Feel Better?*

Cōlleen O'Brien, LMSW

# Our Agenda

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- Welcome!!!
- Housekeeping & Time
- Introductions
- Common Language
- Theories & Cross The Line
- Pet Grief & Loss: Key Concepts
- What do we think?
- Wrap Up & Resources



# **Quick Introductions: Lightning Round!**

Your Name

Your Pronouns

Current Professional Role(s)

What brings you here?

# What's the objective?

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- Gain a clearer understanding of Pet Grief & Loss
- Identify common language and concepts around grief
- Explore experiences with pet grief and loss related to your work here at HSHV
- Learn about Cōlleen's work and ways to connect





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Tonight is for you...

A chance to reflect.

To start or continue a  
conversation.

Time to think about how your  
work and connection to  
animals impacts you.

May be review. May be new.



# Common Language

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- **Grief** - "a multi-faceted response to loss that includes psychological, behavioral and physical reactions combined with cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social, spiritual and somatic elements." (Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Schut, H.)
- **Bereavement** - an objective state of having lost someone or something. The term is generally used to describe the state of having suffered a loss due to death.
- **Mourning** - the process by which people adapt to loss; the public expression of grief, which is shaped by social and cultural expectations. It is how a person tries to incorporate the loss into life and keep living.

# Disenfranchised Grief

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- The term describing grief that is not acknowledged by society. Examples of events leading to disenfranchised grief are the loss of a pet, a trauma in the family a generation prior, the loss of a home or place of residence...Wikipedia citation

# Defining “Animal Loss”

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- Since humankind first domesticated animals, the death of a pet or an animal to which one has become emotionally bonded can be an intense loss,[1] comparable with the death of a human loved one, or even greater depending on the individual. The death can be felt more intensely when the owner has made a decision to end the pet’s life through euthanasia. [2] While there is strong evidence that animals can feel such loss for other animals,[3] this article focuses on human feelings, when an animal is lost, dies or otherwise is departed. Animal loss. (n.d.). Retrieved January 17, 2015, from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal\\_loss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_loss)



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# Quick Check In

## ASK YOUR NEIGHBOR ...

What are 2 grief/loss issues you face here at HSHV?  
Or that you have faced related to pets in your own life.

# Grief Theories

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- Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' 5 stages
- Lindemann's "Grief Work"
- Rando's Six R Model



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# Quick Check In All Together...

What are the reactions that you have had to pet grief?  
Or, what reactions have you seen from others?

Let's talk about "typical" reactions.

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We often get little time to  
process our own feelings or  
reactions to pet loss or the  
related grief.

Let's take a little time now with Cross the Line

# Turn to your neighbor ...

## Take 2 minutes...

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- Discuss your reactions to Cross the Line
- Pick something that stuck out to you
- Decide if you want to share with the full group – we'll need 2-3 volunteers

How did it feel to consider these questions?

Were there things that surprised you?

Were there things that were hard to think about?

Were there things that you feel will stick with you after we leave this space?





Let's talk about the most common questions I hear...

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Am I crazy?

When will I feel better?

# And, the Common Threads

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The wave effect

The irritation factor

Negotiating relationships

Dealing with work and other obligations

Managing disclosure and the use of social media

Caring for other pets

The need to be with “your people”

Let's talk processing  
AND  
finding support

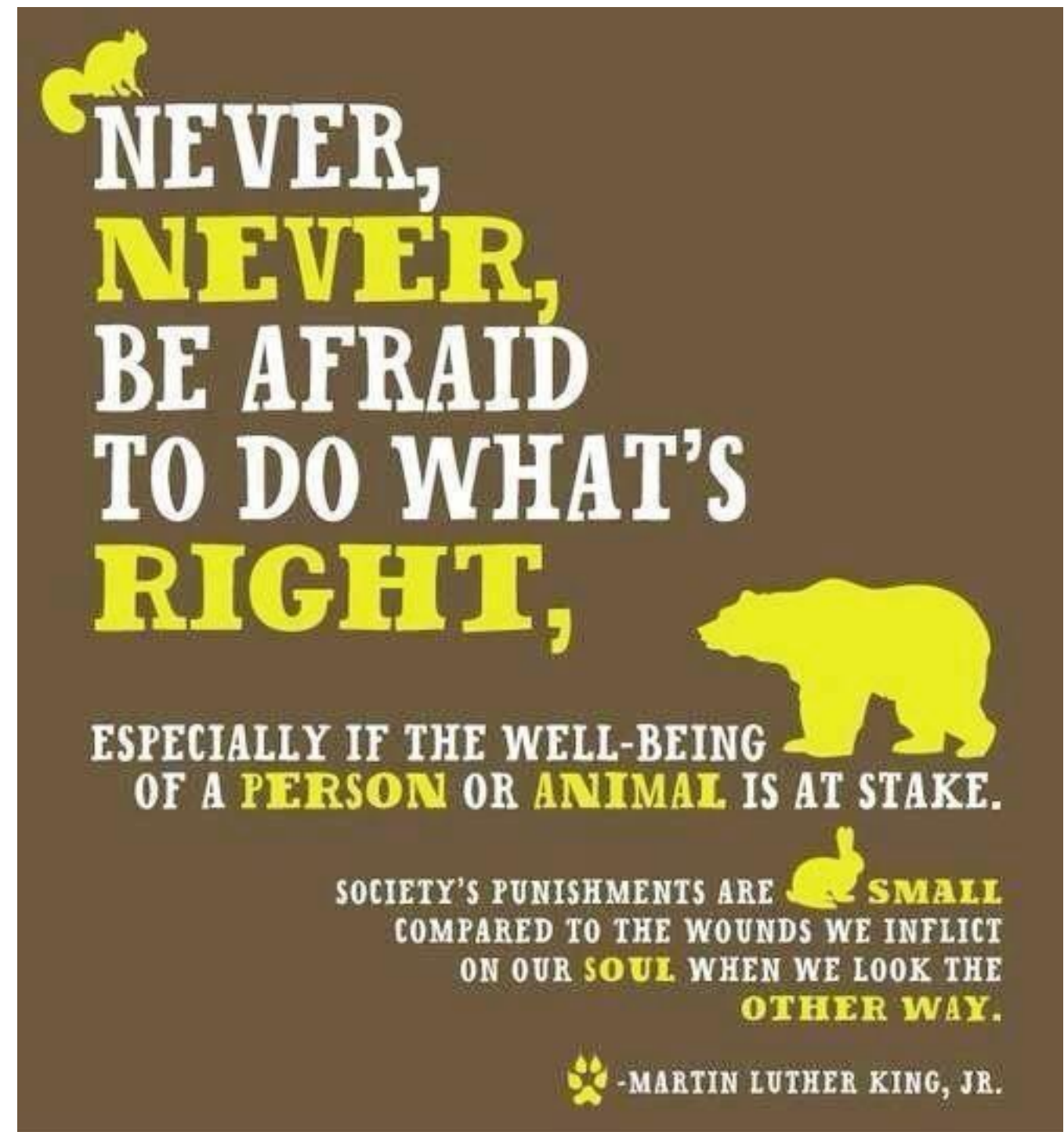
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**Starting with a little  
writing!**

# What questions are on your mind?

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THANK YOU!