

End of Life Care & Euthanasia Reimagined

Offering The Most Empathetic Ending

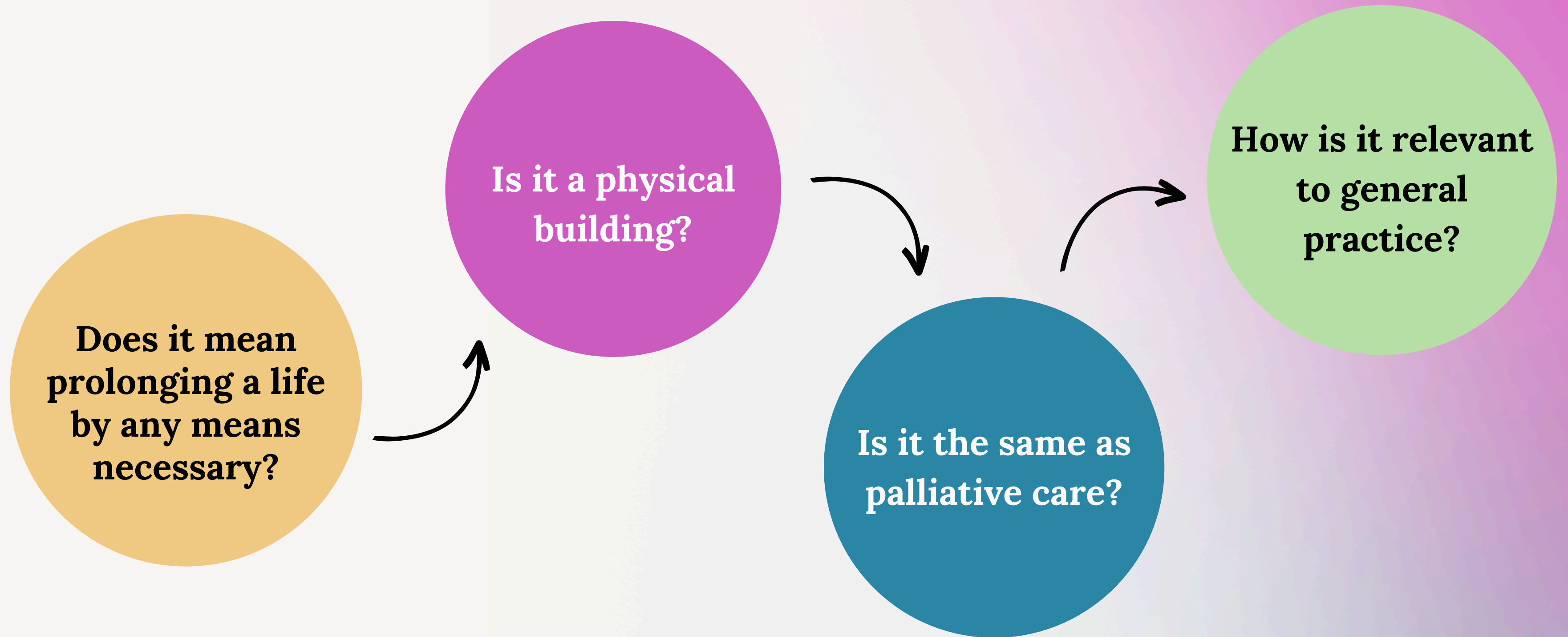
Dr Emma Clark MA VetMB MRCVS
Lead Vet at Roundwood Pet Hospice



Part 1

What is hospice and why is it needed?

What is Hospice?



Palliative vs. Hospice Care

- Palliative care alleviates symptoms of pain and discomfort at **any stage** of a disease process.
- Hospice care is provided **at the end** of a pet's life, prioritising their comfort and dignity for what time they have left.



What is Hospice?



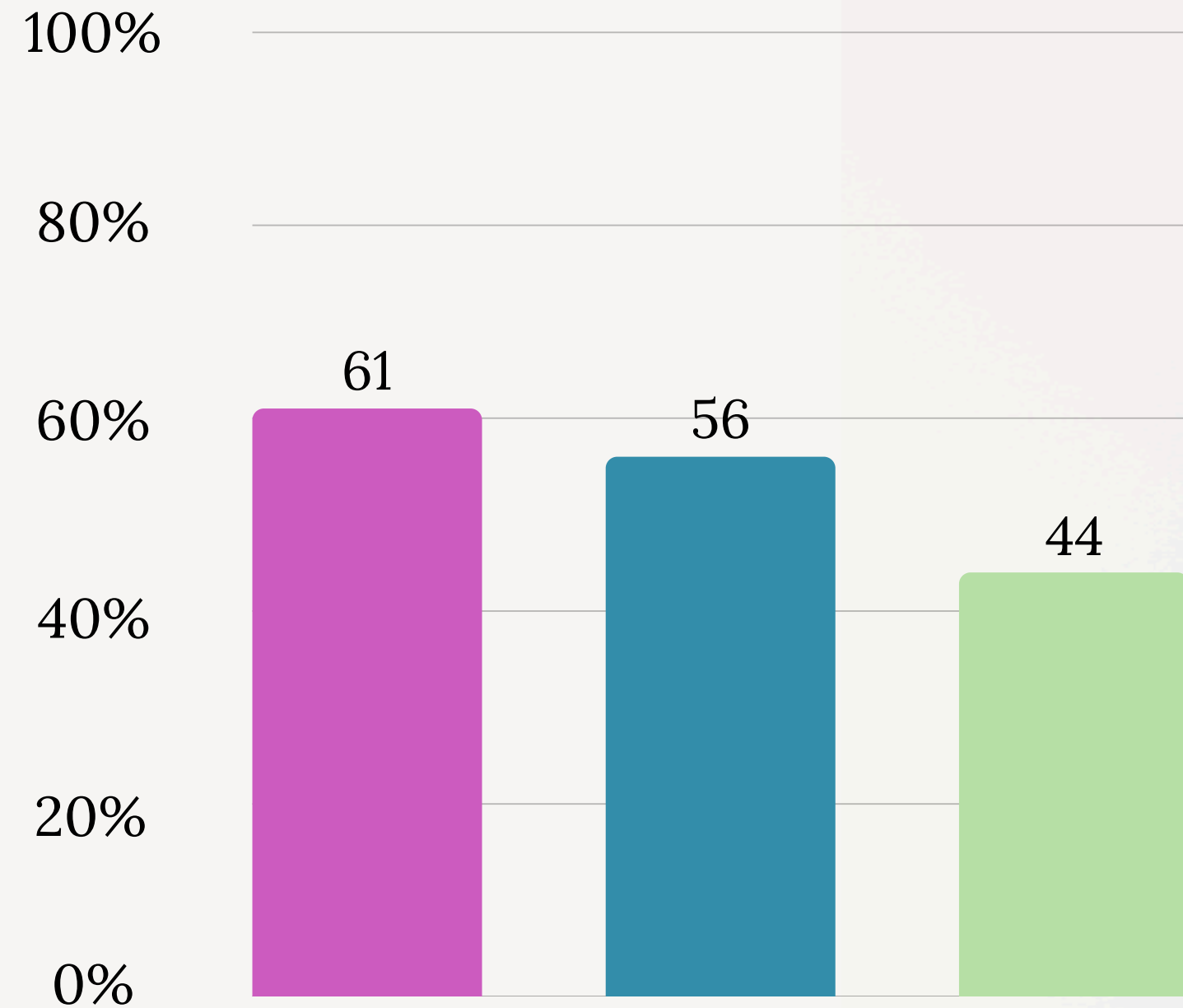
According to the IAAHPC:

Animal hospice is care for animals, focused on the patient's and family's needs; on living life as fully as possible until the time of death [with or without intervention]; and on attaining a degree of preparation for death.

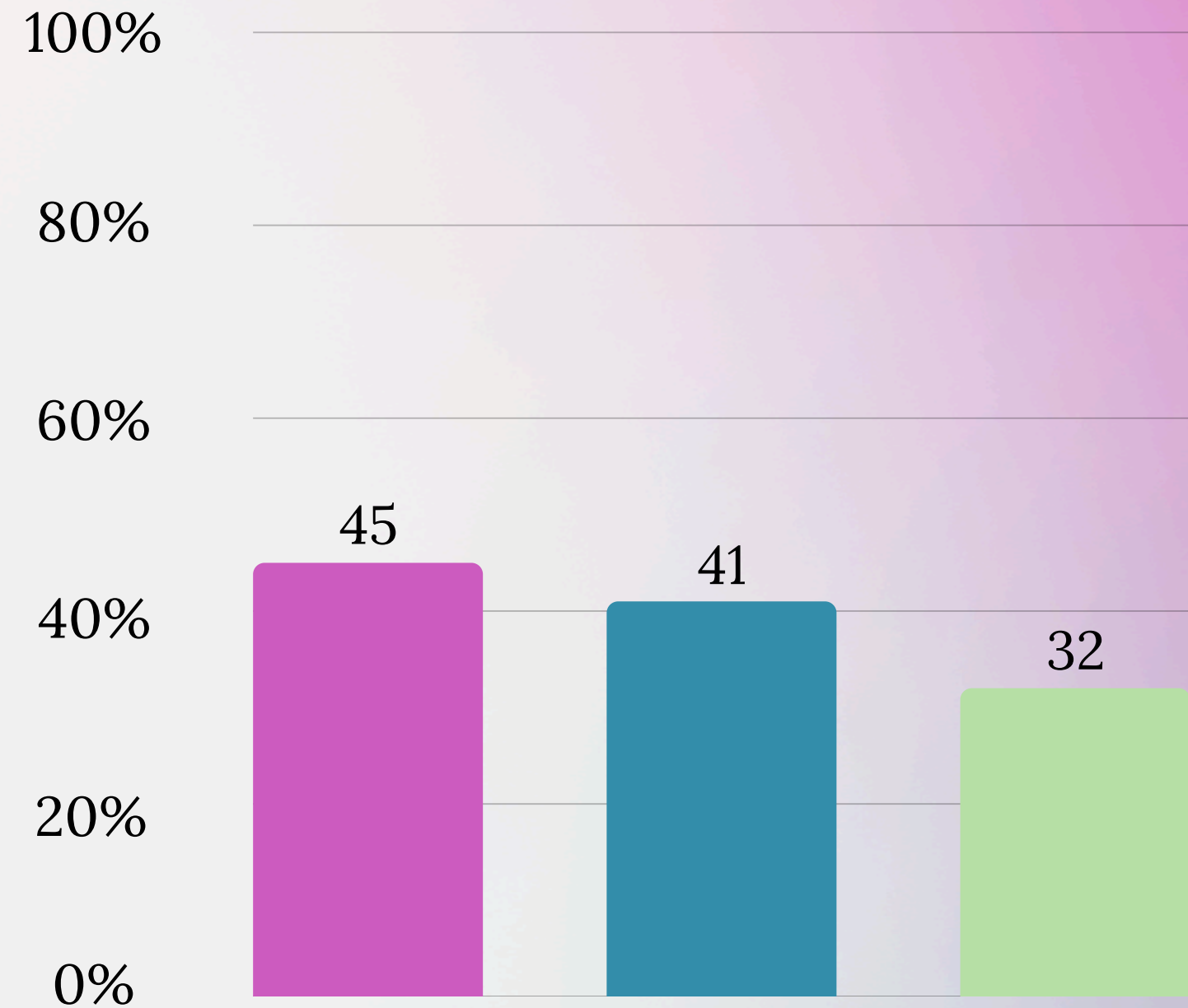
Percentage of Pets Seen Before Euthanasia

Source: Dr Mary Gardner (n = 837,000)

● 18 Months ● 12 Months ● 6 Months



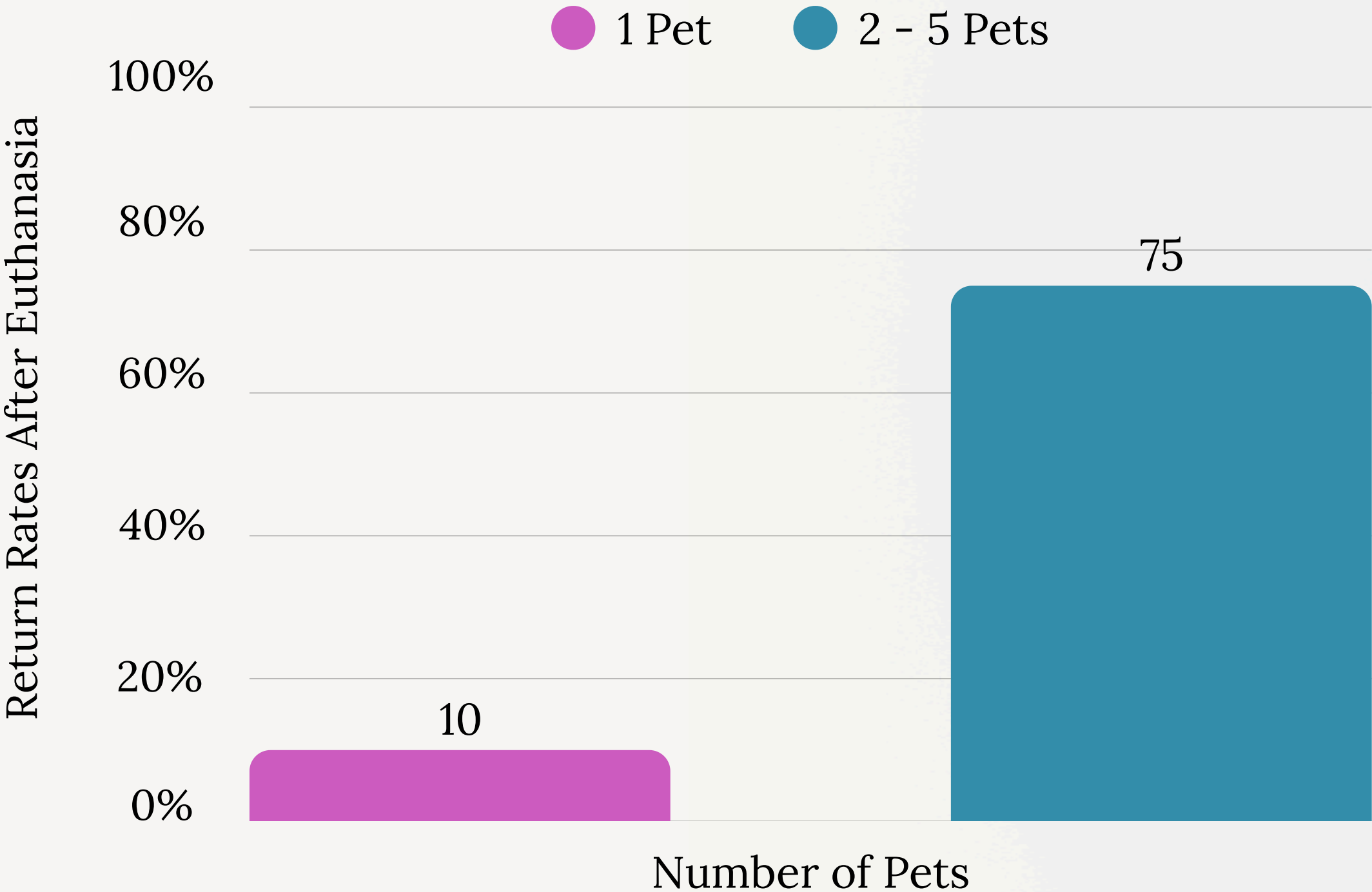
Dogs



Cats

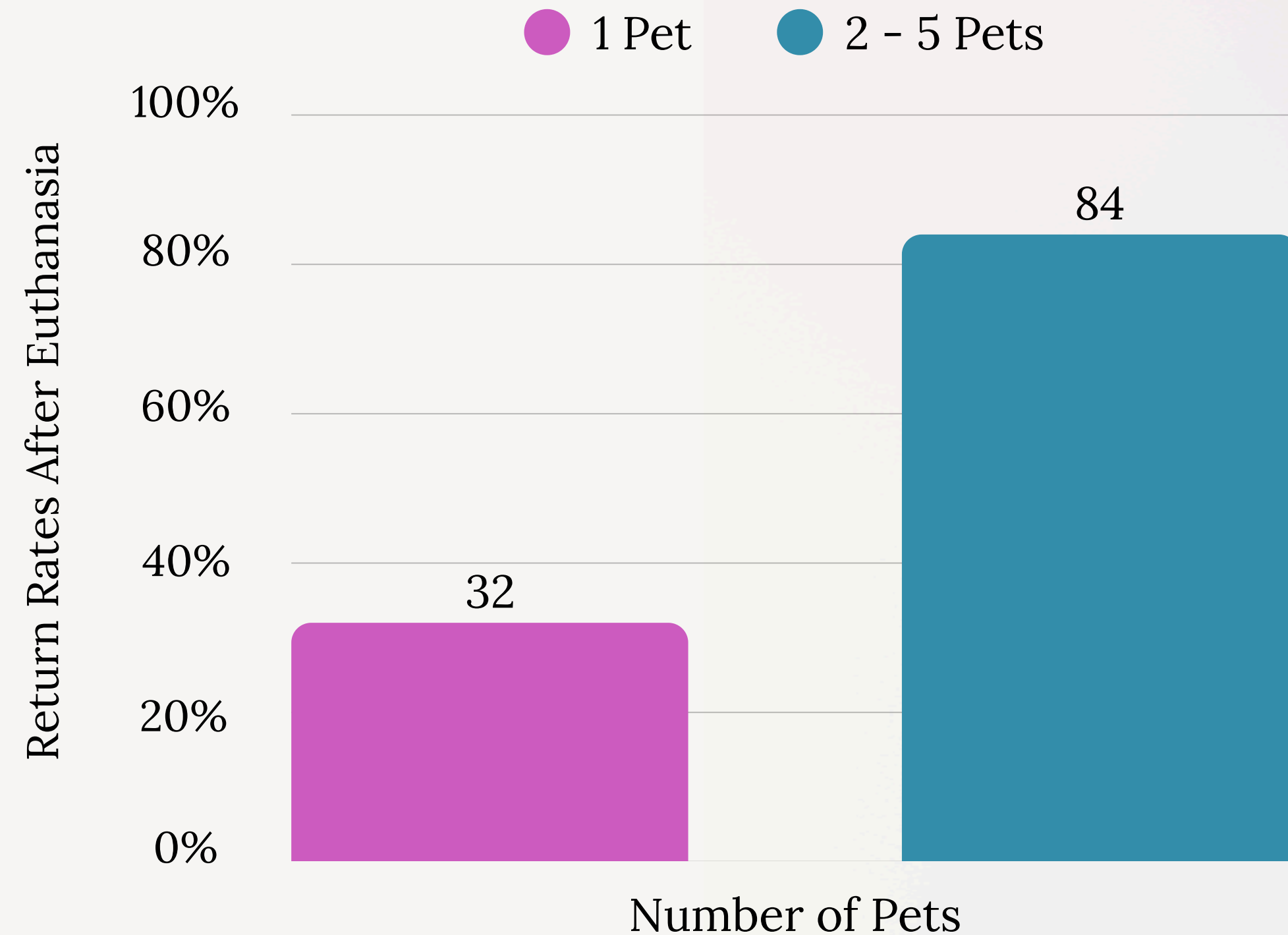
Return Rates After Euthanasia Within 24 Months (744K)

Source: Dr Mary Gardner



Return Rates After Euthanasia Within 24 Months (744K)

Source: Dr Mary Gardner



Clients who visited within 1-6 months of euthanasia and were not charged (25K)



Adrian & Smurf

Part 1 – Summary



Families need to be encouraged to seek veterinary intervention **early** in a disease process to maximise successful outcomes.



Part 2

The five elements of hospice care

The Five Elements

- 1 Medicine
- 2 Environment
- 3 Caregiver Support
- 4 Quality of Life
- 5 Euthanasia

Guinness

16 year old female neutered Spaniel with mitral valve disease, USMI, hypertension and protein losing nephropathy



Pain Scales

Canine:

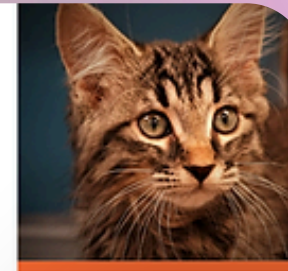
- Glasgow composite measure pain scale (CMPS) and quality of life (GUVQuest)
- The Canine Brief Pain Inventory (CBPI)
- The Helsinki Chronic Pain Index (HCPI)
- The Liverpool Osteoarthritis in Dogs ('LOAD')

Feline:

- Glasgow composite measure pain scale-feline (Glasgow CMPS-Feline)
- UNESP-Botucatu multidimensional feline pain assessment scale short form (UFEPS-SF)
- Feline grimace scale
- HRQL-feline (Newmetrica)

Pain Assessments

FELINE GRIMACE SCALE® FACT SHEET



WHY?

Pain-induced behavioral changes are unique and can be subtle in cats



WHAT?

The Feline Grimace Scale® (FGS) is a quick and reliable tool for acute pain assessment based on changes in facial expressions



WHEN?

Pain assessment should be performed in all cats as often as needed on a case-by-case basis



WHO?

The FGS can be used by the veterinary health care team and by cat caregivers

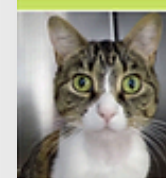
There are five action units (AU)

- Ear position
- Orbital tightness
- Muzzle tension
- Whisker position
- Head position



HOW?

- Each AU is scored 0-2
- The final score is the sum of the AU scores
- Analgesia is indicated when the score is 2 or higher



0 = AU is absent

- Ears facing forward
- Eyes opened
- Muzzle relaxed (round shape)
- Whiskers loose and curved
- Head above the shoulder line



1 = AU is moderately present*

- Ears slightly pulled apart
- Eyes partially opened
- Muzzle mildly tense
- Whiskers slightly curved or straight
- Head aligned with the shoulder line

* The score of 1 can also be given when there is uncertainty over the presence or absence of the AU



Université de Montréal

This factsheet was possible due to an unrestricted grant by

zoetis

Download the FGS App to learn more and practice your skills. Check our linktree for additional information.



Your Clinic Name Here

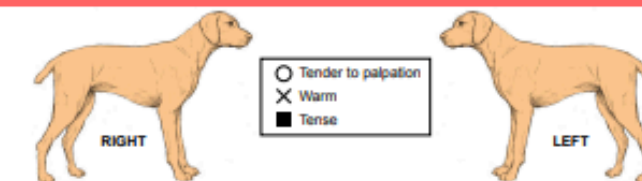
Date _____

Time _____

Canine Acute Pain Scale

- Rescore when awake
- ☐ Animal is sleeping, but can be aroused - Not evaluated for pain
 - ☐ Animal can't be aroused, check vital signs, assess therapy

Pain Score	Example	Psychological & Behavioral	Response to Palpation	Body Tension
0		<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable when resting <input type="checkbox"/> Happy, content <input type="checkbox"/> Not bothering wound or surgery site <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in or curious about surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/> Nontender to palpation of wound or surgery site, or to palpation elsewhere	Minimal
1		<input type="checkbox"/> Content to slightly unsettled or restless <input type="checkbox"/> Distracted easily by surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/> Reacts to palpation of wound, surgery site, or other body part by looking around, flinching, or whimpering	Mild
2		<input type="checkbox"/> Looks uncomfortable when resting <input type="checkbox"/> May whimper or cry and may lick or rub wound or surgery site when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> Droopy ears, worried facial expression (arched eye brows, darting eyes) <input type="checkbox"/> Reluctant to respond when beckoned <input type="checkbox"/> Not eager to interact with people or surroundings but will look around to see what is going on	<input type="checkbox"/> Flinches, whimpers cries, or guards/pulls away	Mild to Moderate Reassess analgesic plan
3		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsettled, crying, groaning, biting or chewing wound when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> Guards or protects wound or surgery site by altering weight distribution (i.e., limping, shifting body position) <input type="checkbox"/> May be unwilling to move all or part of body	<input type="checkbox"/> May be subtle (shifting eyes or increased respiratory rate) if dog is too painful to move or is stoic <input type="checkbox"/> May be dramatic, such as a sharp cry, growl, bite or bite threat, and/or pulling away	Moderate Reassess analgesic plan
4		<input type="checkbox"/> Constantly groaning or screaming when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> May bite or chew at wound, but unlikely to move <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially unresponsive to surroundings <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to distract from pain	<input type="checkbox"/> Cries at non-painful palpation (may be experiencing allodynia, wind-up, or fearful that pain could be made worse) <input type="checkbox"/> May react aggressively to palpation	Moderate to Severe May be rigid to avoid painful movement Reassess analgesic plan

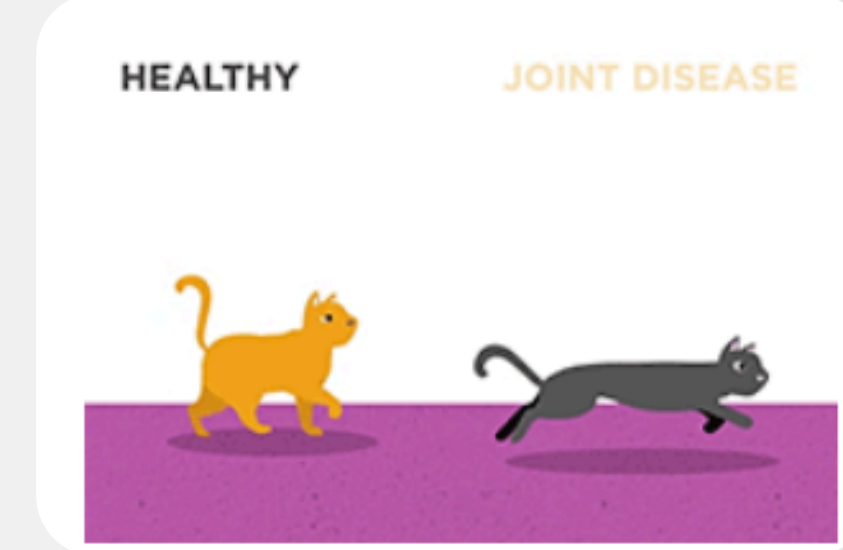
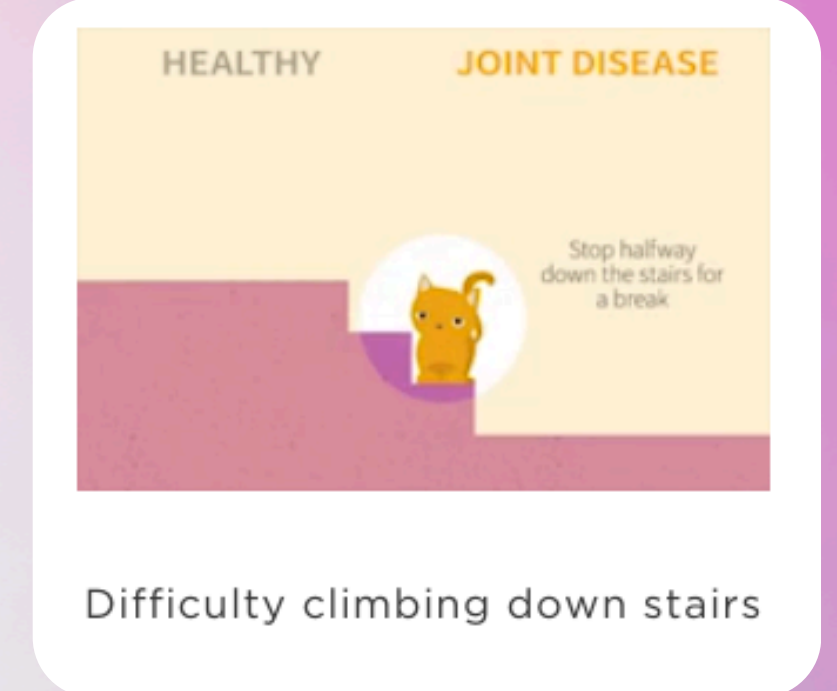
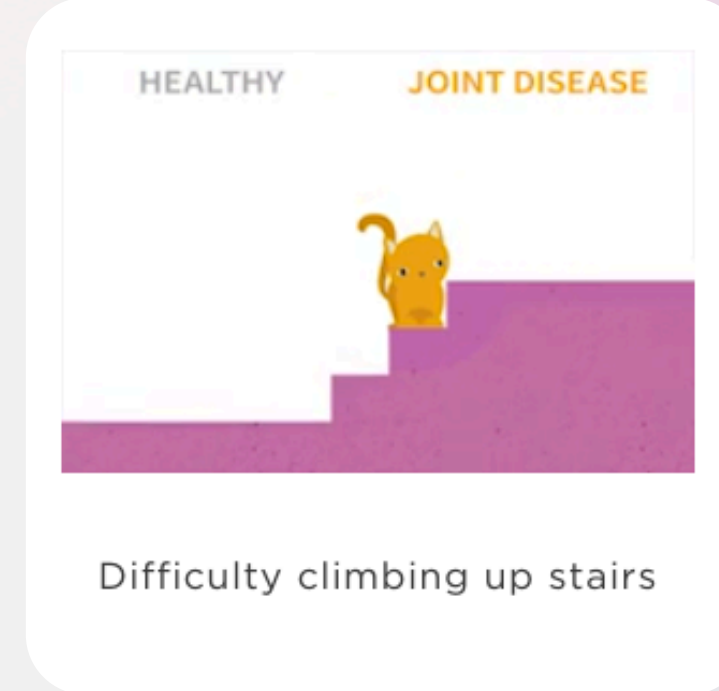
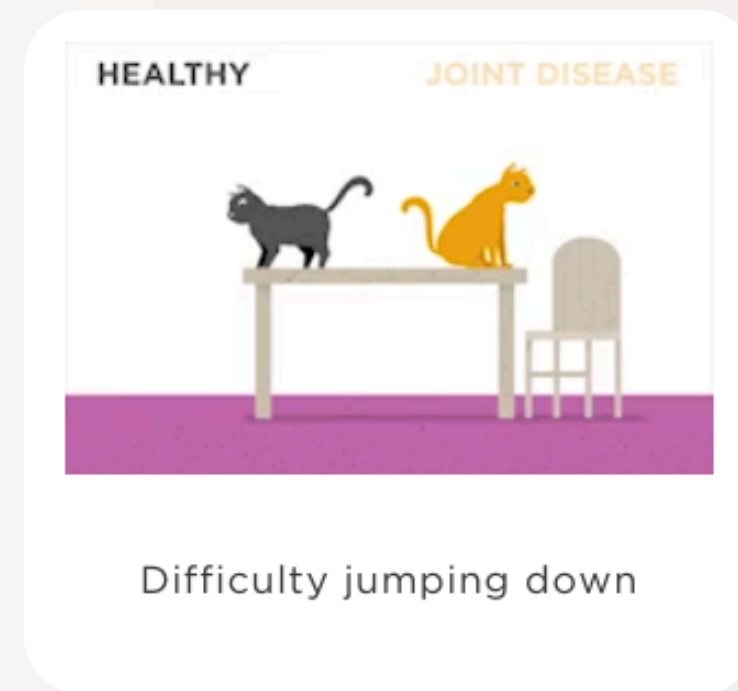


Comments _____

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Pain Assessments

Is your cat showing signs of OA-related pain?

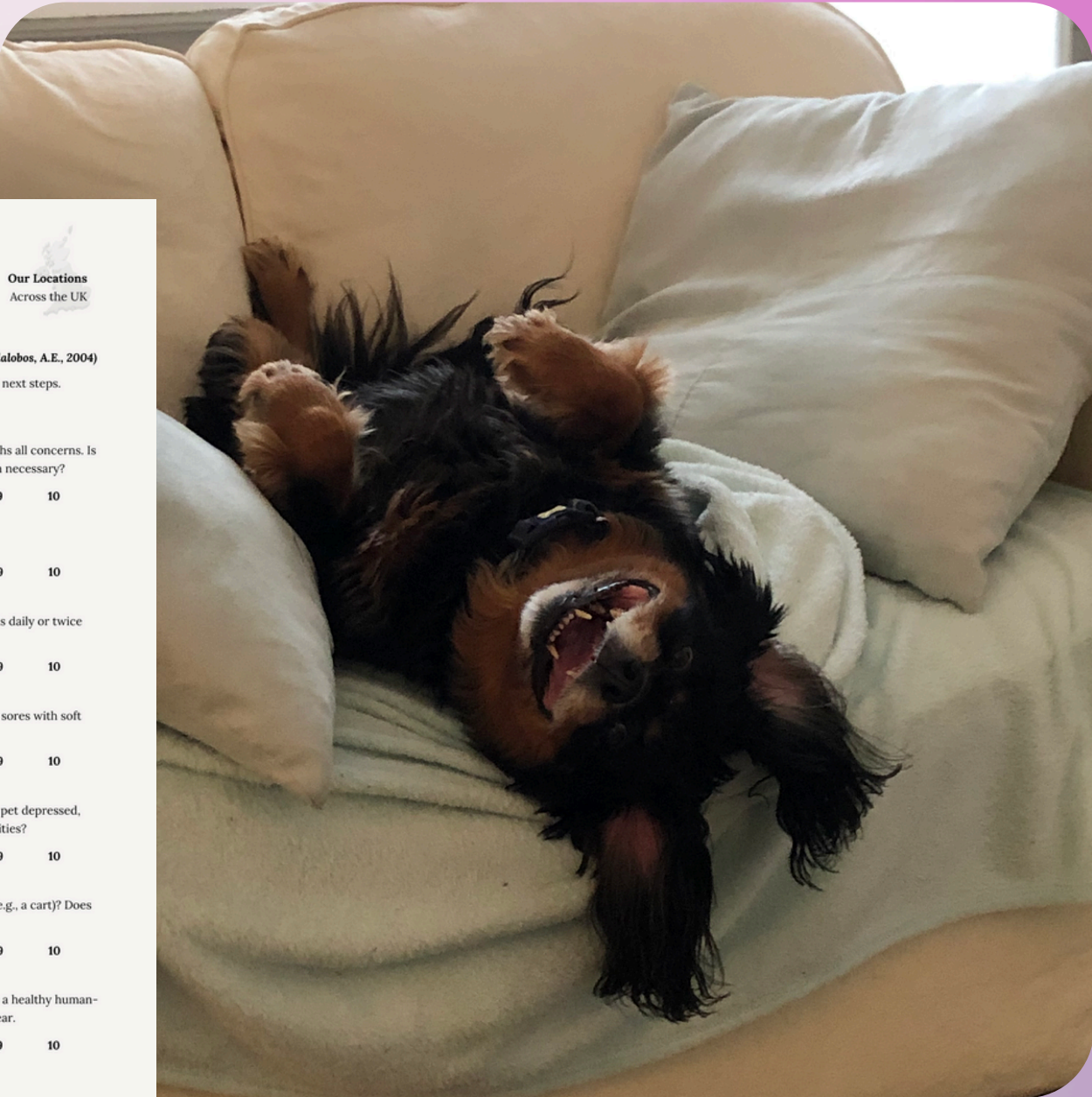



Guinness

16 year-old FN Spaniel | Source: Alice Villalobos 2004

- Hurt 2
- Hunger 8
- Hydration 7
- Hygiene 7
- Happiness 6
- Mobility 2
- More good days than bad 6

Total 38/70





Our Locations
Across the UK

HHHHMM Scale

(Adapted from Villalobos, A.E., 2004)

This scale will help you judge a pet's quality of life and make an informed choice on the next steps. Score patients using a scale of 0 to 10 (10 being ideal).

Hurt

Adequate pain control & breathing ability is of top concern. Trouble breathing outweighs all concerns. Is the pet's pain well managed? Can the pet breathe properly? Is oxygen supplementation necessary?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Hunger

Is the pet eating enough? Does hand feeding help? Does the pet need a feeding tube?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Hydration

Is the pet dehydrated? For patients not drinking enough water, use subcutaneous fluids daily or twice daily to supplement fluid intake.

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Hygiene

The pet should be brushed and cleaned, particularly after eliminations. Avoid pressure sores with soft bedding and keep all wounds clean.

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Happiness

Does the pet express joy and interest? Is the pet responsive to family, toys, etc.? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored or afraid? Can the pet's bed be moved to be close to family activities?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Mobility

Can the pet get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help (e.g., a cart)? Does the pet feel like going for a walk? Is the pet having seizures or stumbling?

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

More Good Days Than Bad

When bad days outnumber good days, quality of life might be too compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware that the end is near.

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10


Total Score: _____

A total over 35 points represents acceptable quality of life to continue with palliative care.

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ROUNDWOOD

Pet Hospice & In-home Euthanasia

Medicine

Element 1



Comorbidities



Side Effects



Analgesia



Drug Interactions



Owner Compliance



Pet Compliance

Guinness Care Plan

Medication

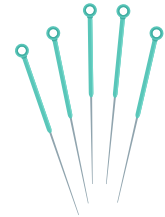
Element 1

- Prioritise:
 - 1) amlodipine, incurin,
 - 2) ipakitine powder,
 - 3) yumove
- Add in:
 - Pardale V 500 mg tid
 - Gabapentin - 100mg tid initially for 5 days, increasing to 200 mg tid if needed
- Consider:
 - Acupuncture, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy, manual therapies.
- Renal diet



Complementary Medicine

Element 1



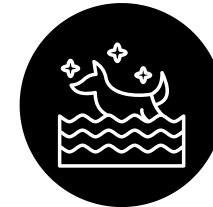
Acupuncture



Physiotherapy



Nutrition



Hydrotherapy

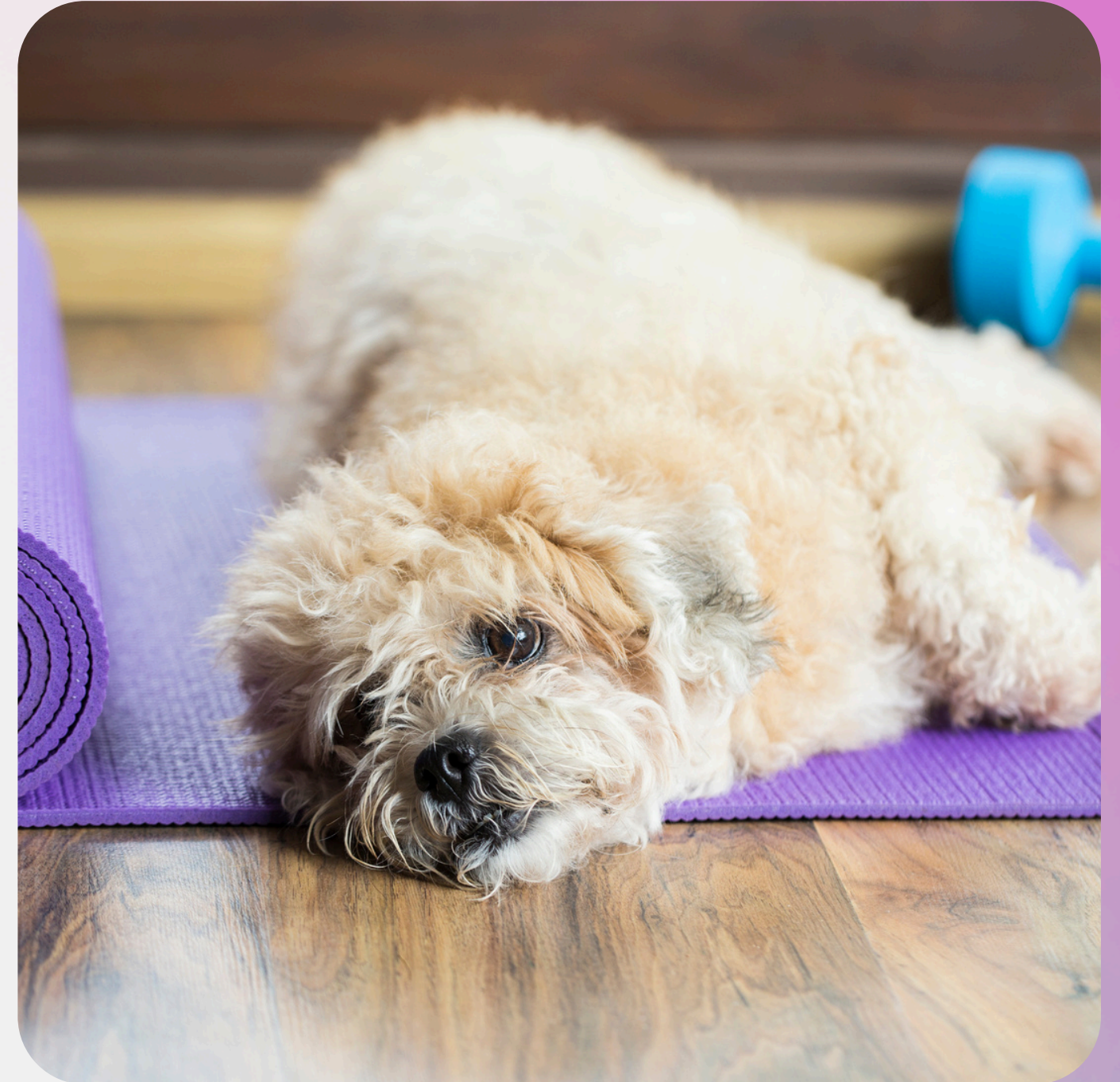


Herbal Remedies

Environment

- Yoga mats on tiled floor
- Stairgate
- Use a towel/'help em up' harness
- Raise food and water bowls
- Go on short frequent walks

Element 2



Caregiver Support

Element 3

1 Financial

2 Physical

3 Emotional

4 Time



Recheck

- Assess how she is over the weekend
- Book a check via PetsApp with Roundwood Pet Hospice



Quality of Life Assessments

Element 4



Our Locations
Across the UK

Dog Quality of Life Assessment

To support dog owners and veterinary professionals in assessing overall well-being, comfort, and happiness, especially for dogs with chronic or terminal conditions.

Pet's Name: _____

0 - Not a concern 1 - Sometimes 2 - Often/Always

Pain or Discomfort 0 1 2 My dog shows signs of pain (limping, whining, flinching, or hiding). 0 1 2 My dog appears restless or has trouble finding a comfortable position.	Appetite & Nutrition 0 1 2 My dog has little interest in food or treats. 0 1 2 My dog is losing weight or having trouble maintaining body condition.
Mobility 0 1 2 My dog struggles to stand, walk, or climb/over line stairs. 0 1 2 My dog slips, falls, or has noticeably reduced coordination.	Hygiene & Incontinence 0 1 2 My dog is unable to keep themselves clean or groomed. 0 1 2 My dog has accidents indoors or soils themselves frequently.
Enjoyment of Life 0 1 2 My dog no longer enjoys walks, toys, or favorite activities. 0 1 2 My dog shows little excitement or enthusiasm for daily life.	Mental Alertness 0 1 2 My dog regularly seems confused or disoriented. 0 1 2 My dog forgets routines or appears unaware of surroundings.
Senses 0 1 2 My dog has decreased vision and bumps into things. 0 1 2 My dog is startled when touched, isn't aware of noise, has decreased hearing.	Breathing 0 1 2 My dog has laboured, noisy, or rapid breathing. 0 1 2 My dog coughs regularly or struggles to catch breath.
Sleep Quality 0 1 2 My dog has trouble settling or sleeps poorly. 0 1 2 My dog sleeps excessively or is difficult to wake.	Mood & Emotional State 0 1 2 My dog seems depressed, sad, or unresponsive. 0 1 2 My dog no longer wags their tail, shows affection, or expresses happiness.

Total Score: ____/40

0-8 Excellent quality of life.
9-16 Acceptable – monitor and adjust care as needed.
17-24 Moderate concern – discuss options with your vet.
25-32 Significant concern – review care goals and comfort.
33-40 Poor quality of life – consider end-of-life planning and support.



Our Locations
Across the UK

Goals of Care

This Goals of Care Plan is designed to help you think about what matters most for your pet's wellbeing, comfort, and quality of life. By completing this form, you'll help the veterinary team better understand your priorities and ensure we provide care that aligns with your values and your pet's individual needs.

Pet Information (Name, breed, age)

Current Health Status (Disease, medication, current quality of life score)

Care Goals & Priorities (Primary goals such as comfort, longevity, quality of life, mobility and what matters most, as well as preferences for types of care)

Quality of Life Considerations (Indicators that your pet is doing well – such as appetite, playfulness, red flags that signal a decline – such as not eating for more than 24 hours, hiding, struggling to walk)

Limits to Treatment (Treatments you do not want to pursue such as hospitalisation, diagnostics, palliative care only, do not resuscitate)

End of Life & Emergency Planning (Farewell planner, what to do in an emergency)


Other Considerations (Financial, caregiver limitations)

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Our Locations
Across the UK




Our Locations
Across the UK

Caregiver Assessment

When caring for a pet with ongoing health issues or nearing the end of life, it's natural to focus on their comfort, but your well-being matters too. This assessment helps us understand how caregiving is affecting you, so we can support you with kindness, without judgement, and explore together what is best for you and your pet. There's no right or wrong here, just space to be honest about what you're feeling and experiencing.

0 - No 1 - Sometimes 2 - Often

Emotional Wellbeing 0 1 2 I'm finding supporting my pet's mental health hard. 0 1 2 I feel guilty leaving my pet alone. 0 1 2 I don't know if they're still enjoying life. 0 1 2 I'm worried my pet is suffering. 0 1 2 My pet seems anxious or unsettled.	Sleep & Fatigue 0 1 2 My pet wakes me up at night. 0 1 2 Their sleep issues affect my health. 0 1 2 My pet's night accidents disrupt my sleep.
Feeding, Drinking & Medication 0 1 2 I feel guilty when I struggle with medications. 0 1 2 I worry about giving meds incorrectly. 0 1 2 I'm worried my pet isn't eating enough. 0 1 2 I'm worried my pet isn't drinking enough. 0 1 2 I'm stressed about finding food they'll accept. 0 1 2 I'm having a hard time getting them to eat.	Hygiene & Cleanliness 0 1 2 I'm exhausted from cleaning accidents. 0 1 2 I'm worried about their loss of dignity (wee/poo). 0 1 2 Cleaning needs are affecting my well-being. 0 1 2 I worry they are sore from soiling themselves. 0 1 2 I feel embarrassed about the smell or mess.
Physical Care 1 2 Others comment on their appearance. 2 I'm worried my pet looks unwell. 2 I've had to block access to parts of my home. I struggle to lift my pet. I struggle to bathe my pet.	Mobility 0 1 2 I worry when they use stairs or furniture. 0 1 2 They struggle to go to the toilet. 0 1 2 It's upsetting to watch them try to walk. 0 1 2 I worry they are in pain. 0 1 2 I'm scared I'll miss signs of suffering.

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Part 3

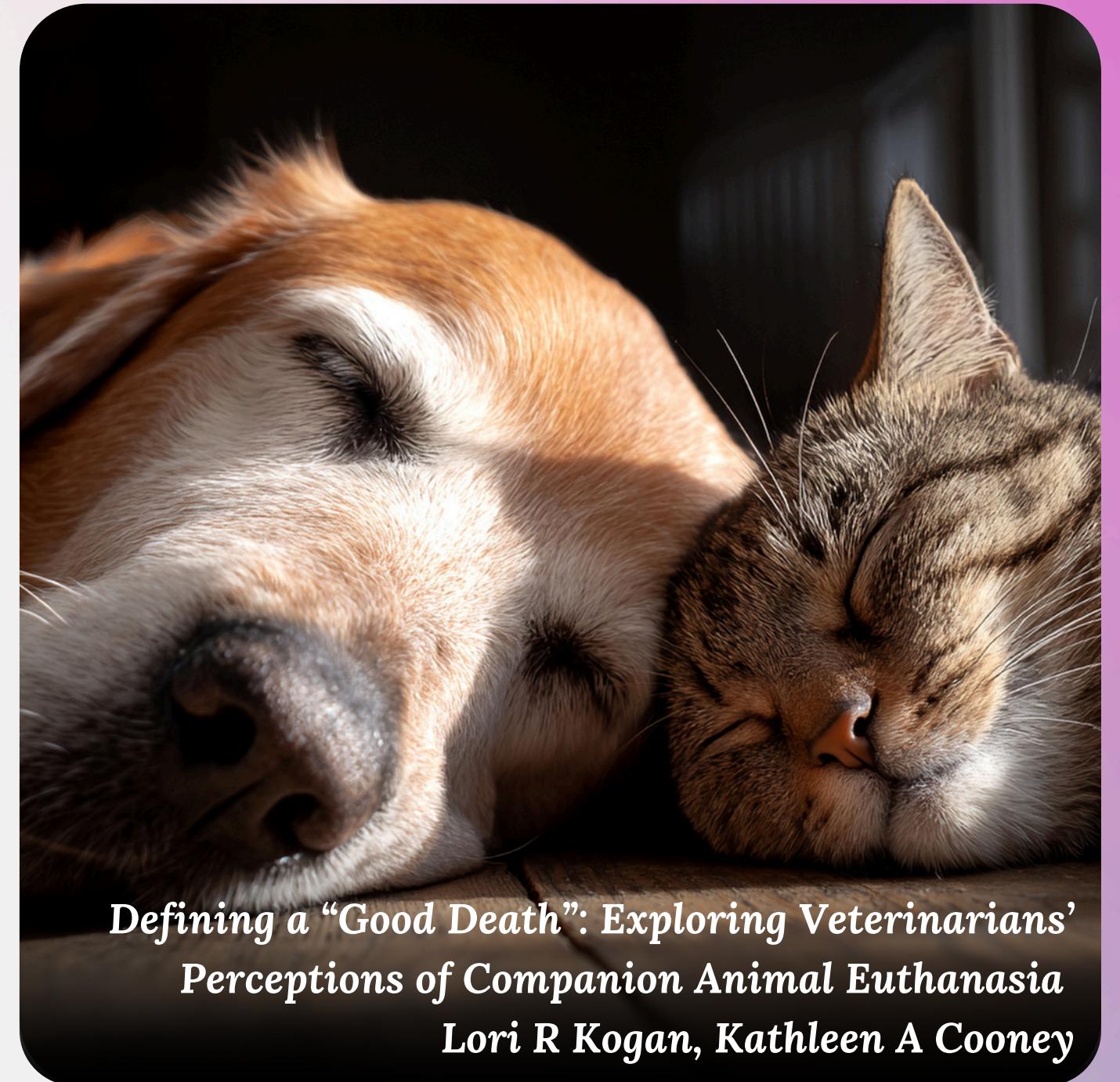
How can we ensure a peaceful passing?



Euthanasia means ‘a good death’

Recommendations to Improve Companion Animal Euthanasia

- Provide time to discuss owner options, pre-planning, and payment in advance
- Expand appointment time to include owner grieving time
- Leverage home euthanasia where possible
- Focus on patient comfort before and during the procedure
- Place added effort on avoiding pain & anxiety
- Provide pre-euthanasia sedation or anesthesia before restraint



How Pet Owners Define a “Good Death”

Source: Kathleen Cooney, DVM, MS, CHPV, CCFP, Lori Kogan, PhD dvm360 August 2022 Volume 53

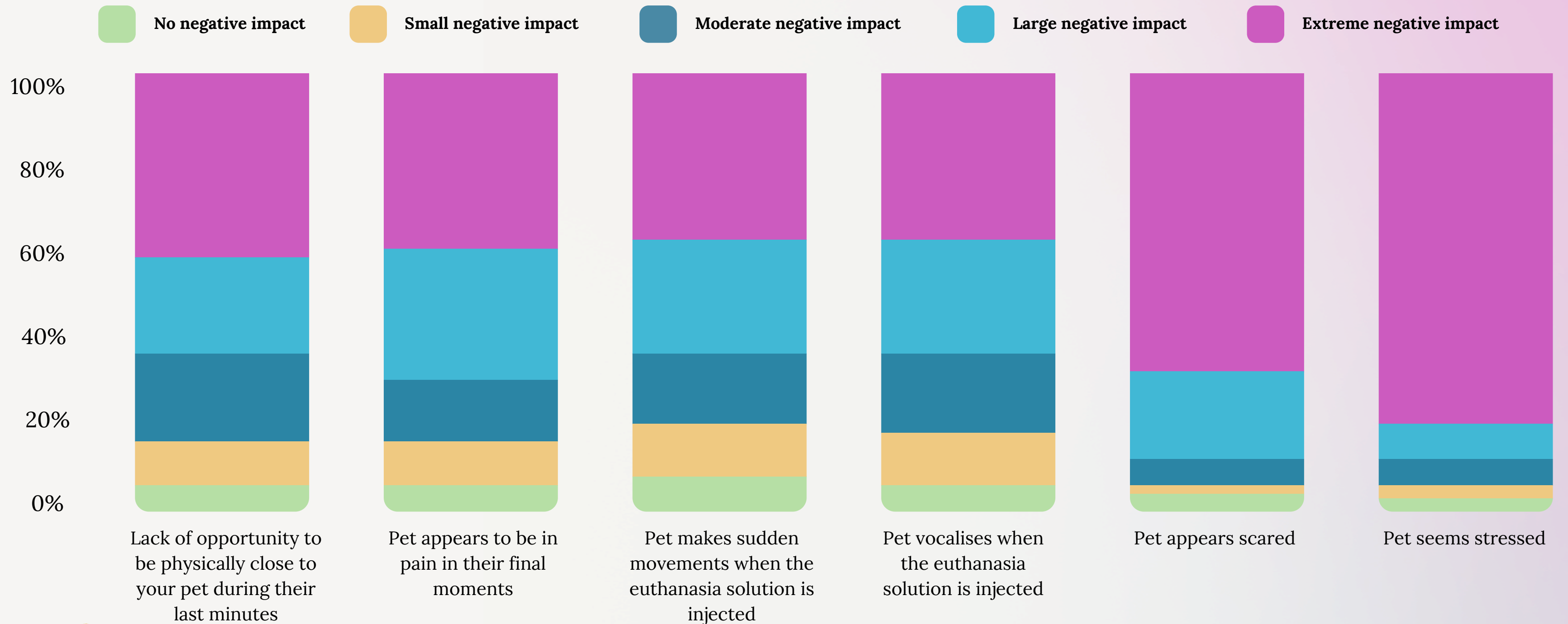


Figure 1. Predictors of a Negative Euthanasia Experience

The Phonecall

- Make notes
- Use the pets name and their name throughout the call
- Guide the client
- Keep the focus on their pet
- Don't overload
- Try to avoid placing on hold
- Understand the process
- Have prices to hand



Empathy vs Sympathy

- Empathy 'feeling with'
- Sympathy 'feeling for'
- Empathy is about connection, walking alongside someone in their pain
- Sympathy is about observation, acknowledging their pain from a distance



Preparation For The Day

From Owner

- Where would their pet like to be for their final moments?
- What do they like?
- What do they dislike?
- Bring a favourite toy or blanket
- A favourite treat or meal



From Clinic

- What to expect on the day
- Consent form
- Cremation and other aftercare options
- Invoice for payment ahead of time



Before The Day

- Farewell planner
- Bucket list - an outing to a much loved place
- A favourite meal the night before
- A cuddle on the sofa or sleep on the bed
- Spend some quality time together



The Bucket List

Dying dog enjoys snow one last time with help from local ice centre

On The Day

Arrival

- Make parking easy
- Book in at a quieter time of day
- Welcome in an empathetic manner
- Help bring the pet into the practice
- Usher straight into the room



Room Setup

- Plants
- Soft lighting
- Soft furnishings
- Something fluffy



Longs Peak Animal Hospital Comfort Room

The Basket

- Tissues
- Treats
- Makeup pads and mirror
- Children's colouring book and pencils
- Bottled water
- Good quality bag for fur clippings and collar
- Doorbell



At the Clinic

- Try to control noise
- Light a candle
- Have a sympathy sign
- Make the team aware



Sedation Before The Euthanasia

Benefits of Sedation

- Reduces stress, fear and pain
- Smoother transition from awake to deceased
- Allows for smoother IV access so the family can stay with their pet throughout
- Allows for more options for euthanasia than just IV
- Can reduce need for additional veterinary personnel



Dogs

Before Visit:

- Gabapentin 10mg/kg
- Trazodone 4-5mg/kg
- per os in 2 doses 12 hours apart

During Visit:

- Medetomidine 0.25ml/10kg (0.025mg/kg)
- Butorphanol 0.1ml/10kg (0.1mg/kg)
- Ketamine 0.5ml/10kg (5mg/kg)
- intramuscular or subcutaneous



Cats (<4.5kg)

Before Visit:

- Gabapentin 200 mg po
- Trazodone 50-100mg po
- Oral buprenorphine
- Feliway spray

During Visit:

- Butorphanol 0.2ml (0.4mg/kg) im
- Medetomidine 0.4ml (0.08mg/kg) im
- Ketamine 0.4ml (5mg/kg) im- give as subsequent second injection im



The Appointment

- Treats
- Preparation
- Sedation
- Euthanasia



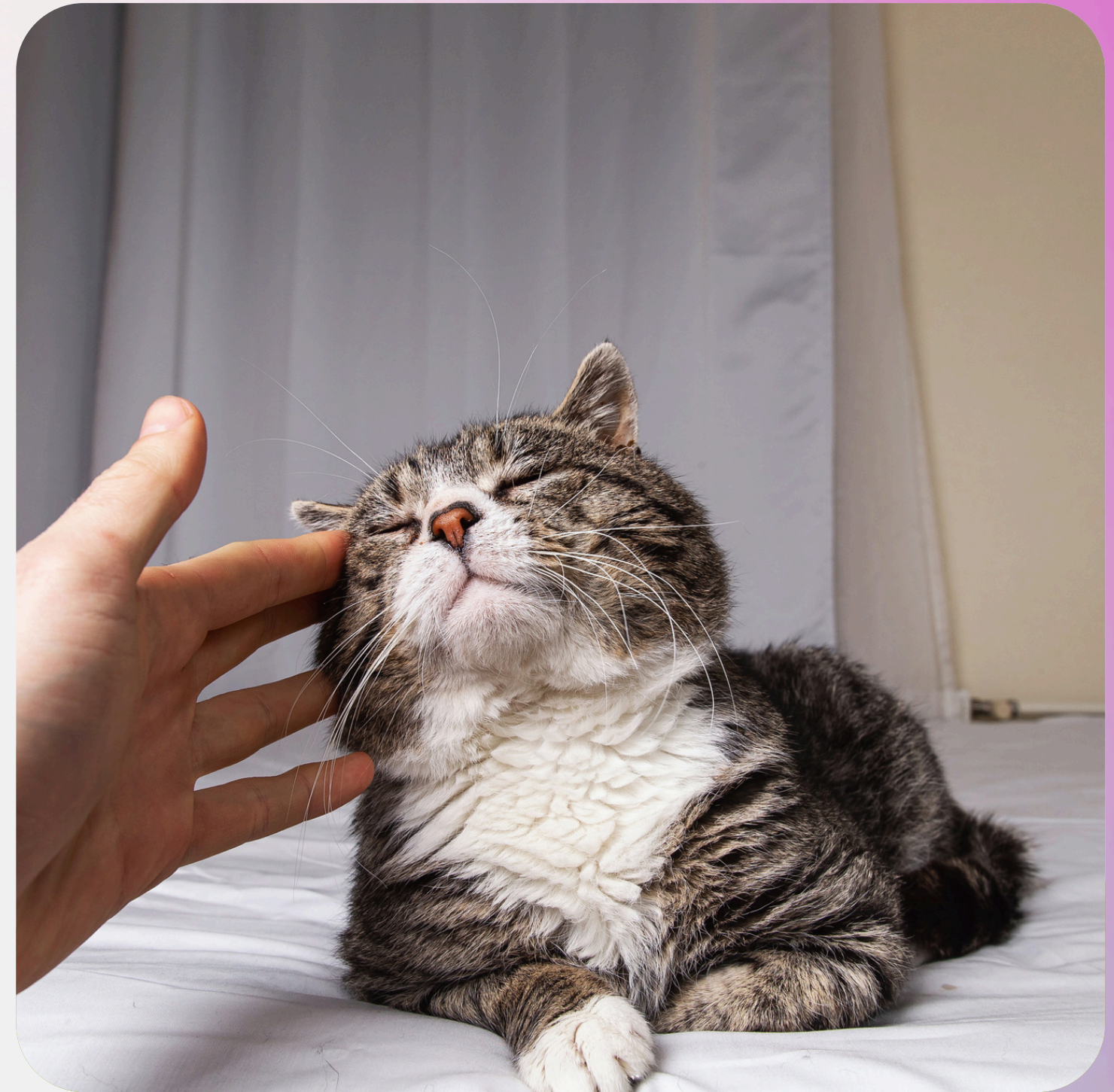
The Euthanasia



I know you'll never be ready but Fluffy is

The Process

- Prepare the owner
- Administer pentobarbitone slowly
- Take your time even when there are issues
- Remain calm



Primary Intravenous Routes

- Accessory cephalic
- Cephalic
- Dorsal pedal
- Lateral or medial saphenous
- Ear
- Tongue



Alternative Routes

- Intrarenal - 3ml for 4.5kg **fast**
- Intraperitoneal - 3ml for 4.5kg **20-45 mins**
- Intrahepatic - 2ml for 4.5kg **5 mins**
- Intracardiac - 1ml for 4.5 kg **fast**
- Intraneoplasia
- Orally for feral animals - 2-3ml for 4.5 kg in sweet food



A Beautiful Goodbye

Casper, a 16 year old domestic short hair with oral squamous cell carcinoma



The Ending

The Ending

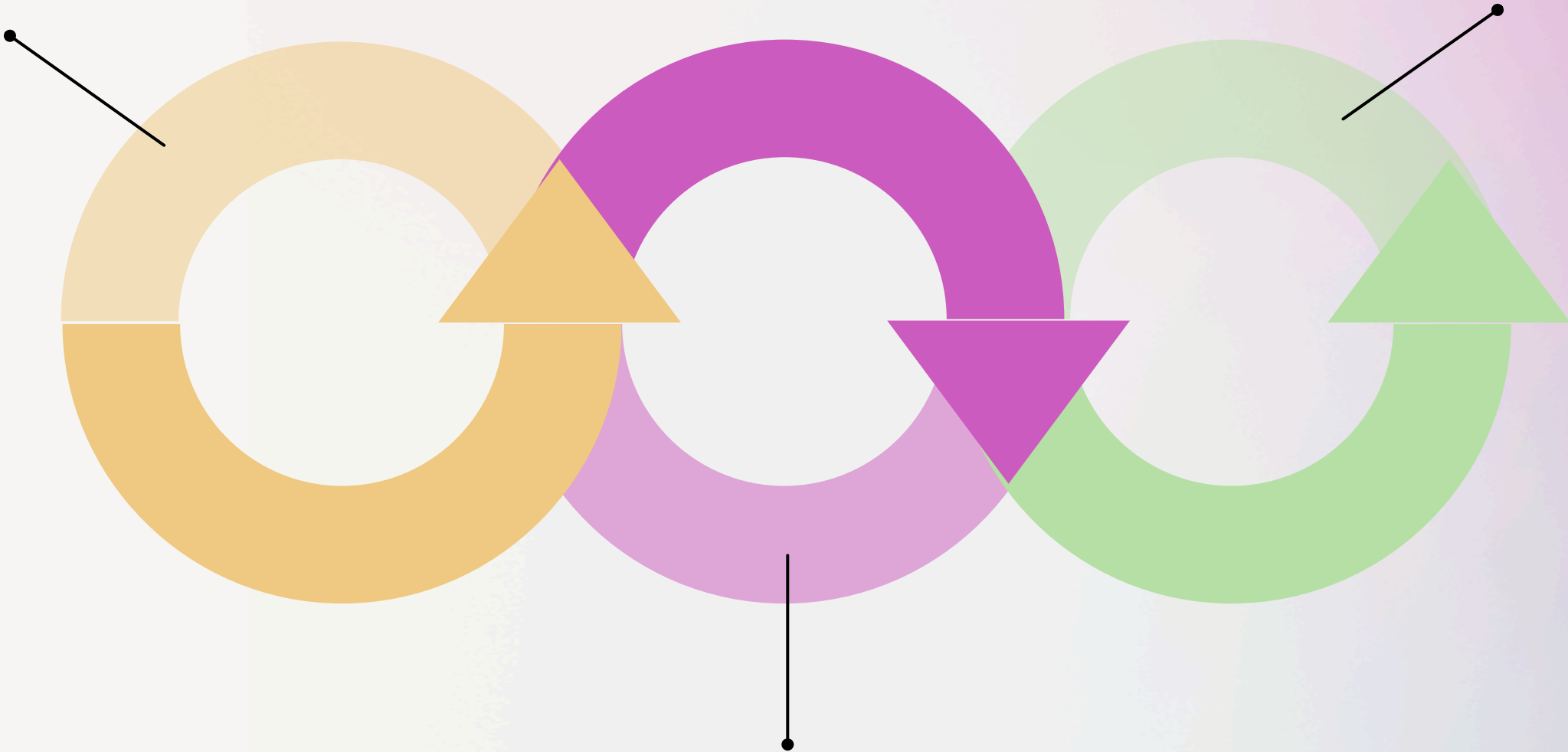
- Check the heart
- Arrange the body
- Give the owner space
- Remove the collar
- Take fur clippings, paw prints, nose prints



The Exit

“To hug or not to hug,
that is the question”

Give reassurance



Stay with the body or see
the client to the door



*Thank you so much for
making the passing of Daisy
such a pleasant experience.
Knowing that she didn't
realise what was happening.
It was more than we could
have wished for...*

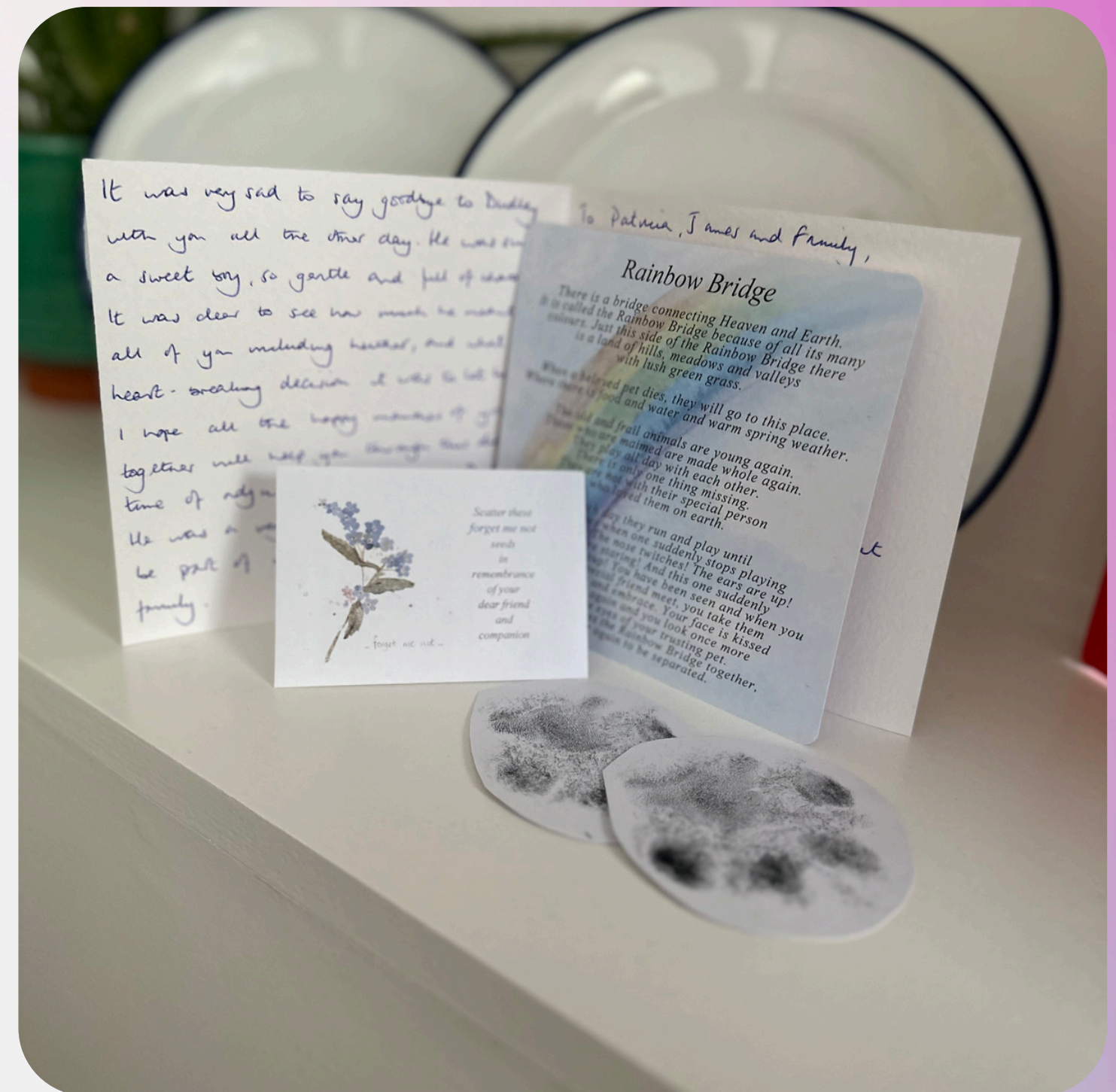
From Caroline Bourhabi, Daisy's Mum



After The Event

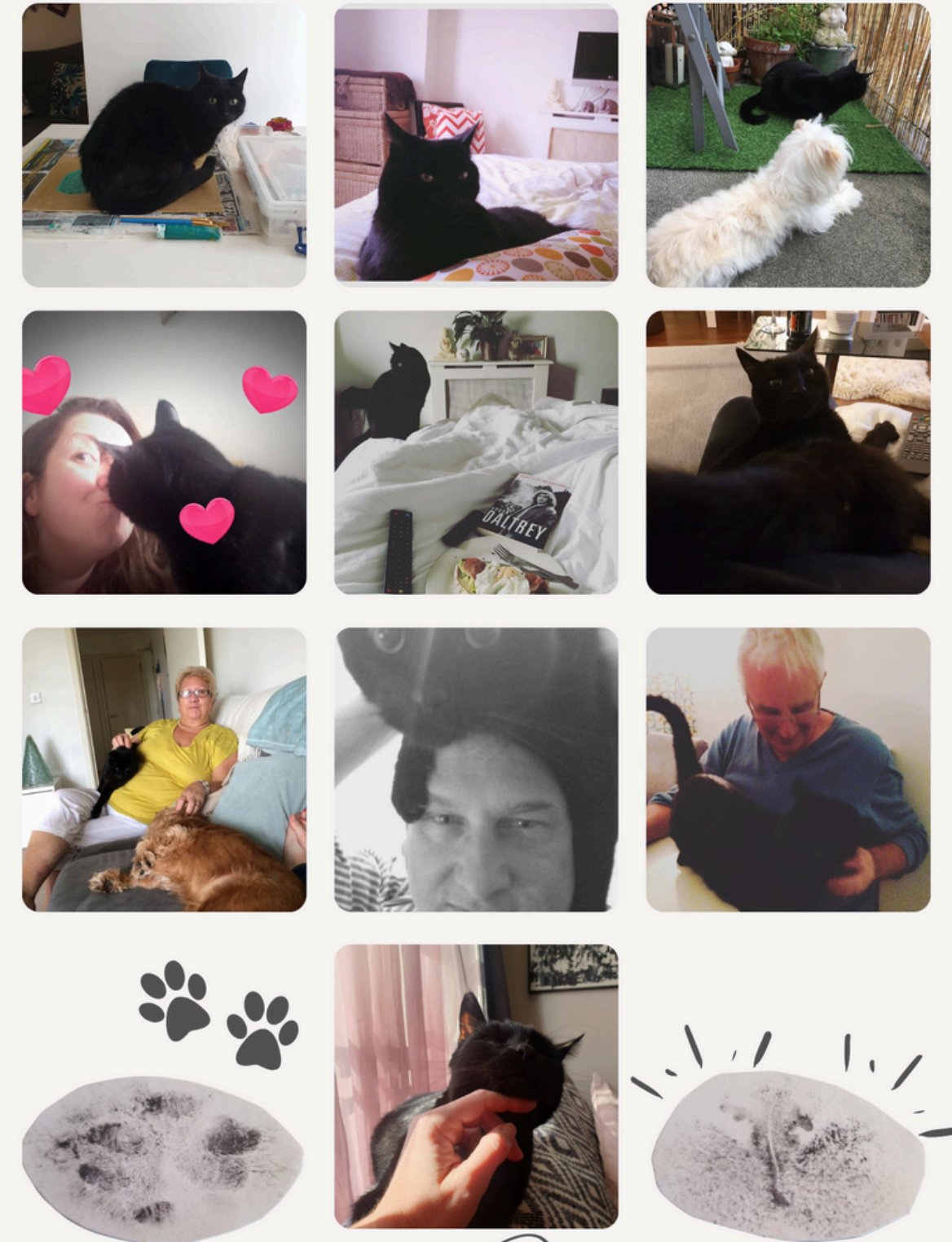
Memorialisation

- Ashes
- Paw prints
- Fur clippings
- Sympathy card
- Poem
- Forget-me-not seeds
- Website memorial



Lenny Dennis

14 years old, DSH with abdominal mass

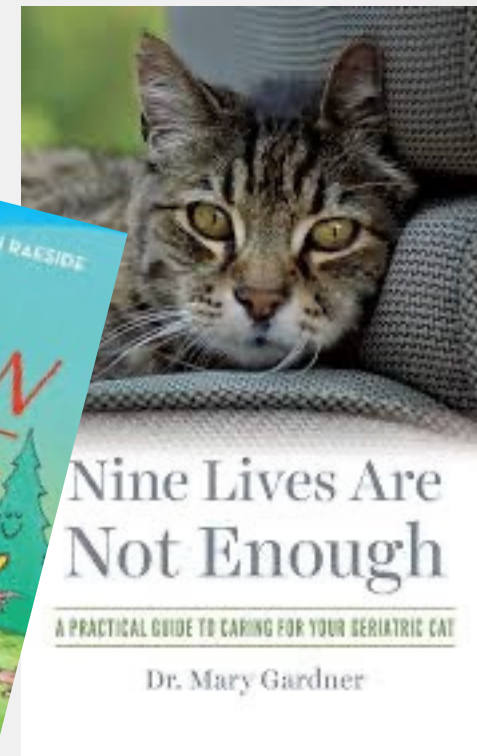


Lenny Dennis

7 April 2009 - 2 March 2023

Pet Owner Grief Resources

- Bluecross Bereavement Support
- Cats Protection Paws to Listen
- Lap Of Love Pet Loss Support Community (Facebook Group)
- It's Never Long Enough & Nine Lives Matter by Dr Mary Gardner
- The Rainbow Bridge by A Raeside
- The Invisible Leash Series by P Karst
- Memorial options



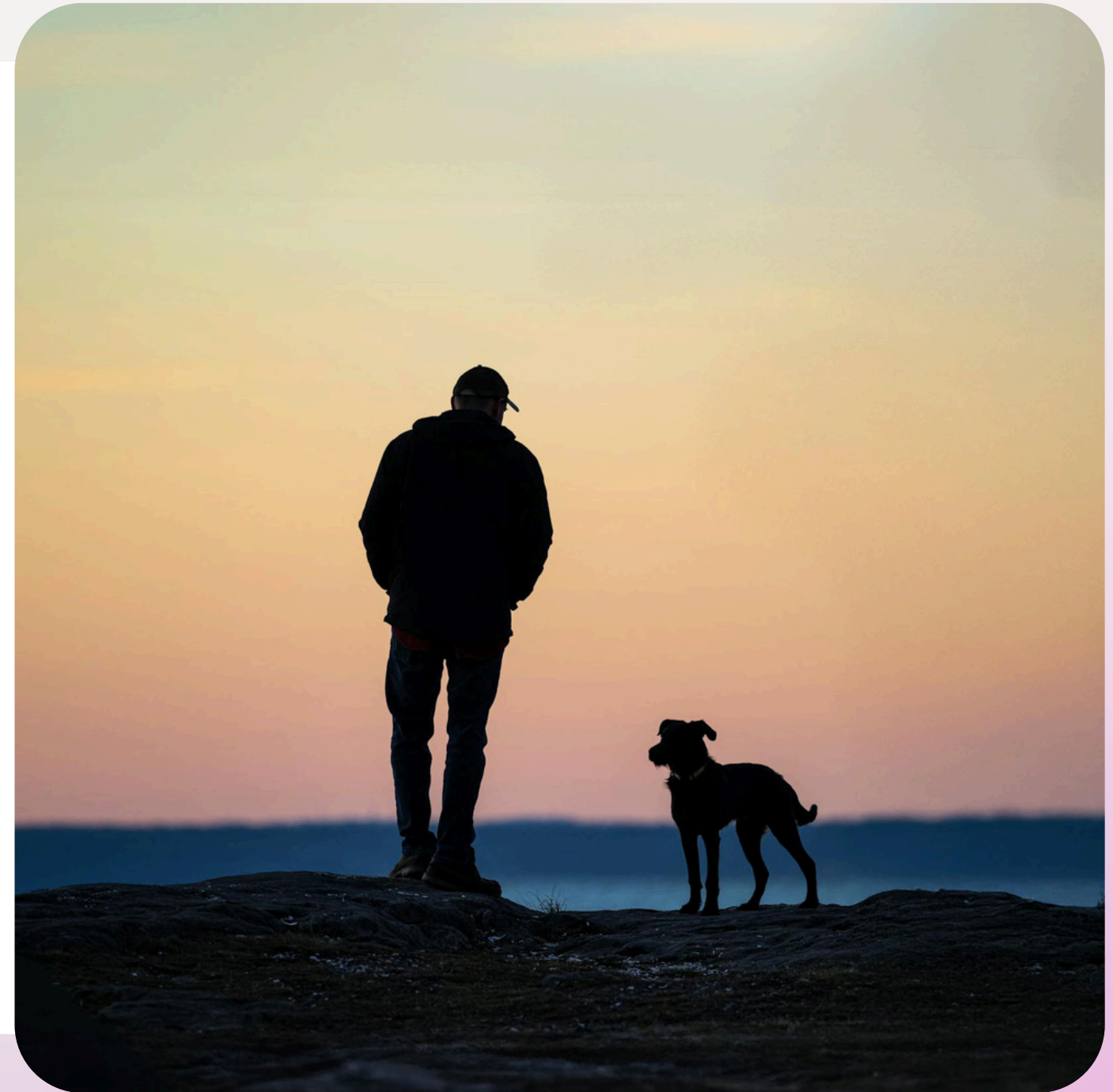
Summary



End of life care requires an investment of
time and emotion.

In-house euthanasia training is **crucial.**

Thoughtful, small touches go a long way
to **showing you care.**



A dog is silhouetted against a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow and a faint rainbow. The dog is looking towards the left. Bare tree branches are visible in the foreground and background.

**Providing a peaceful passing is our final act
of kindness as veterinary professionals**

Any Questions?

Our Prices

In-Home Euthanasia

£410

In-Home Euthanasia

£450

This includes a 45-minute quality-of-life assessment with a vet, a written report, and a 15-minute telehealth (via phone or video link) follow-up appointment.

Telehealth Appointment

Standard (30 minute)

£120

Repeat (15 minute)

£60

Communal Cremation

Prices vary depending on size.

0 - 14kg

£108

15 - 29kg

£113.50

30 - 44kg

£126

45kg+

not available

Individual Cremation

Prices vary depending on size.

0 - 14kg

£199.50

15 - 29kg

£231


30 - 44kg

£262.50

45kg+

not available

Thank You

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