

Learning Unit: Pet Bereavement KS3-4

Unit title: Coping with the death of a pet		Teacher:	
Subjects: English; PSHE; General studies; Science		Duration of Unit: 1 week	
Summary: How to support young people suffering a pet bereavement			
Desired Results			
Objectives: To support young people through the loss of a pet		Essential Questions: How does a pet's death make us feel? How can we memorialise our pet? Who can I talk to to help me process my feelings?	
Factual Knowledge: Young people will know: That their feelings are valid. Where to get help if they need support.	Embedding Knowledge: Young people will: Complete the worksheet and have a discussion around the topic of a pet's death. Encourage them to write about their pet. Encourage others to support the person grieving.	Information becoming knowledge: Young people will discuss ideas, then complete the worksheet to help process their feelings, and discuss their feelings with family members.	
Extensions: discuss your feelings with your family or friends		Differentiation considerations: Describe the strengths and needs within the group and how to meet needs and objectives in different ways.	
Learning Plan			
Differentiated Objectives:			

Most will be able to understand that losing a pet can be very emotional

Some will understand that pets can be family members and loss can be very difficult

Some will understand and empathise with feelings of loss

Some will liken the loss to the loss of a human family member such as a grandparent, which can amplify feelings about the loss of a pet.

Plan:

The session plan can be used with a whole class, or an individual suffering the loss of a pet. The worksheet is designed to support an individual suffering the loss of a pet. If you feel the person needs further support, talk to their parents or carers about seeking professional help.

National Curriculum Links KS3 and KS4

English: This learning unit will give pupils the opportunity to:

- **Speak confidently, audibly and effectively, using standard English when the context and audience require it**
- **Work effectively in groups of different sizes and taking on required roles, including leading and managing discussions, involving others productively, reviewing and summarising and contributing to meet goals and deadlines**

Citizenship: Links with the National Curriculum depend on the individual school's response to the guidelines, and their priorities. However 'Feelings' are very much linked to relationship education, not only as part of the SRE curriculum, but also between family, friends and others. Most people with companion animals recognise them as being another personality within their home, therefore exploring how to express feelings, particularly at sad or angry times, and encouraging expression is part of growing up, and definitely part of the hidden curriculum.

Session Plan

Project Name: OTAC education programme

Programme Session Name: Pet Bereavement

Session Date: **Session Time:** 45 mins

Group Name/Age Group: KS3-4

Session Lead/Planner:

Healthy Living	Promoting and supporting healthy life-styles to secure physical, spiritual, social and emotional well-being.
Feel Safe	Ensuring that members of the Community are supported to feel safe.
Life Enhancement & Achievement	Inspirational and exciting learning activities that ensure members of the Community raise their expectations and aspirations, and achieve at the highest possible level.
Participation	Opportunity for the voice of the Community to be heard and to help shape the services available to them, whilst encouraging them to make a positive contribution to their local community.
Learning & Development	Providing access to a range of learning pathways so that members of the Community develop knowledge and robustness.

Session Aims and Objectives:

To cope with the loss of a pet.

Teacher's notes: This session can be conducted with a whole class, or can be used one to one to support a young person if they have come into school or another setting after a recent pet bereavement. Use this outline in conjunction with the Pet Memories worksheet.

If a young person has also suffered another recent bereavement such as a grandparent, this can amplify feelings of loss and make them difficult to cope with. If you feel they are struggling to cope, talk to their parents or carers about seeking professional help.

Session/Activity Outline:

- Ask the group who has pets at home? Tell them that today we are going to talk about when a pet dies. Sadly pets don't usually live as long as us, so at some point we will have to cope with their death.
- Then ask the class if anyone had a pet who died? What was the pet's name? How did they feel about the animal? Encourage the young person to express their feelings about the pet and their death.
- Tell the young person that it is important that they talk about the pet and their loss whenever they like, as losing a pet can feel like losing a family member.
- Ask them to write some words down about how they felt when the pet died, and they may still be having those feelings. Remind them that it is ok to feel very sad when someone close to us dies, and that pets are part of our family too. Also that there is no time limit on grief and we all deal with death in different ways.
- Tell the young person that it is good to talk about how we feel about the pet's death, but it is also good to remember the happy times we had with our pet when they were alive. Encourage them to think about happy times they had with their pet. Ask them to write about 3 happy memories with their pet.
- Discuss other family members who may be affected. Remind them that other people may be feeling sad about the pet too, and even other pets could be missing them. Encourage them to talk to other family members about their loss.
- Ask the young person if there is something they could keep to remember their pet. This could be an accessory like a collar or name tag, a memory box, a plant or tree they plant in the garden or a plaque they make with the pet's name on. It could also be a photo of their pet.
- Ask the young person (in confidence) if there is anything else going on in their life which they are also struggling with? Explain that this can make it harder to cope with the bereavement and suggest they find someone they trust to talk to. This could be family, a friend or a professional.
- Ask the rest of the group how they could help support the person suffering the loss to feel better.

Resources/Materials: Basic stationery box, projector or board for class discussion notes, Pet Memories worksheet

Extension Exercises/Take-Home Activity: Talk to your family at home. Ask your parents or carers whether they miss the pet who died and how they feel. Ask them whether they did anything or kept anything to remember the pet.

Session Evaluation

Participant Comments/Evaluation

Staff Evaluation

Issues Raised/Discussion Points

Follow-up/Action Required

Additional Notes

Staff signature:

Name:

Date: