



# Veterinary Wisdom<sup>®</sup>

for practice teams

## A Comfort Room for Clients

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When your clients are facing the serious illness or impending deaths of their beloved pets, there are few words that will make their pain any less. However, there are ways you can help them feel they have some control over their situation. One very tangible way is to provide a “Comfort Room” in your clinic.

A Comfort Room implies just that...a special place in a pet hospital where clients can spend private, quality time with their pets while dealing with a heart-wrenching situation.

Special amenities in your Client Comfort Room may include:

- Private entrance to and an exit from the exam room. When dealing with intense emotions, it's very helpful to have maximum privacy when visiting an ill pet or during the time of euthanasia. For many people it can be quite daunting to face a busy, crowded exam room right after euthanizing their pet.
- Mini-blinds on the exam room window. This affords maximum privacy during times when emotions and grief are running high.
- Lowered lighting. Most veterinary exam rooms have extremely bright lights to allow for good physical exams. However, pets that are ill and people who are distraught are likely to be more comfortable under softer lights. This lowered lighting also creates a more comforting mood during the process of euthanasia.
- Comfortable seating. It's very hard to conduct emotional consultations and to process feelings when you are physically uncomfortable or when there are too many barriers between you and your client.
- Floor mats or padding. Many pet hospitals use blankets or large, soft pads placed in the middle of the exam room floor. This allows your clients and their pets to comfortably sit/lay down together during visitations or during euthanasia. When not in use, the pads can be stored in a cabinet or even hung on a wall behind the Comfort Room door.
- Mobile exam tables to allow for flexibility. This allows you to quickly adapt an exam room into a Comfort Room by making as much floor space available as possible.

- Portable CD player or tape player. This allows clients to bring special music with them that they feel will soothe their ill pets (or them) and make saying good-bye even more meaningful.

Other suggested items include:

- Colorful, but soothing wall hangings
- Plants or greenery
- Facial tissue
- Animal supplies including: pet food/treats, a bowl for water, towels
- [ClayPaws® kits](#) to memorialize their pet
- Scissors for clipping fur, and small bags or envelopes for the fur (can also serve as a memorialization/linking object)
- Telephone (cordless phone or close access to a phone that can be used in privacy)
- “Do Not Disturb” signs for Comfort Room doors
- A dry-erase board on the outside of the door to enable staff to reserve the room
- Pet loss and support handouts
- A lending library of pet loss support books
- A small fan in case the room becomes too warm
- TV/VCR to show videos on various topics (diagnosis, treatment, pet loss, etc.)
- A small mirror (clients who have been crying may want to “freshen up” before leaving the comfort room)

A Client Comfort Room should be in a low traffic area of your pet hospital and when possible have access to a separate exit. Comfort Rooms may be especially effective and useful if your hospital is an emergency clinic or a specialty practice.



(Photo from CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Fort Collins, CO)

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