



Helpful Phrases for Condolence Notes

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When a client's pet dies, the words of condolence you choose can be of great comfort. Consider these tips when offering effective condolences:

- use the pet's name (rather than "your cat" or "your dog") and refer to the pet with the correct gender.
- reassure clients they did everything they could for their pet and, in the end, made a timely, loving decision.
- recall something special and personal about the pet.
- offer referrals to trusted, qualified pet loss resources for further support or additional information about the grieving process.
- invite clients to contact you if they have questions or concerns.

When writing a sympathy note, it's important to convey your sincere feelings of compassion and understanding. The best approach is to be honest, while not making any assumptions about how your clients feel or what they need. Some helpful phrases to include in your note might be:

"We are sending you our sincere sympathy for your loss of Toby. She was a gentle, loving dog and we can only imagine the empty space her death has left in your daily lives. We know you'll find comfort in the memories of the love she gave you."

"Toby was special to us, too. We will always remember how she..." (continue with your personal memories about caring for Toby.)

"All of us here will miss Toby, too. We know that you, her family, will miss her most of all."

"We have thought of you often since Toby's death. We know how special she was to you and understand your feelings of grief."

"We believe that your decision to help Toby die was the right one. You did everything you could for her and, in the end, spared her any further pain and suffering."

"We are enclosing some information about resources that address pet loss and grief support. It takes time to adjust to the loss of a family member. Being aware of what normal grief looks and feels like can help. These folks can provide you with that information."

"If you have questions or, if we can be of further help to you, please don't hesitate to call."

"Thank you for letting us be part of Toby's life. We will always remember her."

Clinical experience and client surveys show that pet parents are most touched by handwritten and hand signed notes, rather than those that are pre-stamped with your veterinary clinic's name. So, even if you feel you don't know the "right" words to say, gathering your staff so each person can hand-sign a card will provide comfort and closure for all after a patient dies.

For more information, visit the Veterinary Wisdom® Resource Center at www.veterinarywisdom.com